

Coach's Report:

Howdy!

The end of the season is right around the corner. So far as a team, we have dramatically improved in practices and at swim meets. When are we tapering? Are we tapering yet? . . . "Taper" is a word that so many swimmers look forward to and it's almost time for me to say, "Yes we are tapering."

For those of you that don't know what taper means, it is the time of the year when practices get shorter, weights and dry lands greatly decrease, and your kids have a ton of energy! It also means the exciting meets are right around the corner that we have been preparing for the entire season. Those meets include, **Regionals** (Feb 20-22), **12 & under State Championships** (Feb 27-March 1), **13 & over State Championships** (March 5-8), **Speedo Sectionals** (March 12-15) and **Junior Nationals** (March 17-21). **Sleep** is critical during taper so please make sure to get to bed as early as possible and stay off your legs as much as possible!!!

Congratulations to everyone who made it through the long grueling month without eating junk food! Hopefully swimmers that are concentrating their efforts on regionals, state, speedo sectionals and junior nationals can continue to eat as healthy as possible! The date for the Pizza Party will be announced soon. Please continue to dress warm before and especially after practice.

Events:

January featured three meets. First was the SWAT meet in Pleasant Prairie. This was a prelim/finals meet hosted at a very fast pool. Some fast swims included Drew Testin's 50breast a 8% improvement, Josh Wu's 100Breast a 12% improvement and Madison Yellstrom's 25Breast a 9% improvement.

Next was the EBSC meet for 12&Unders. This was an exciting meet as our 12&Unders continued to swim strong. We had many best times across the board with stand out swims from Connor Benoit who dropped 4.85 seconds in his 50fly a 8.98% improvement, Emma Brooks who dropped 12.68 seconds in her 100fly for a 10.32% improvement and Ava Heimler with a 15% improvement in her 25fly.



The Waterlog *February 2015*

Last up was the Shorewood meet, a really fun meet that gave our kids an opportunity to swim longer races and compete in an IMX Challenge. The IMX promotes and rewards versatility in age group swimming while advocating greater participation and development across a range of events. The goal is to enable long-term success in swimming. We had a ton of high point winners at this meet, nice job swimmers!!!

Looking Ahead:

This weekend the seniors will compete in a closed invite at Pleasant Prairie. Sunday the 15th we have a meet at UWM. The weekend after that, we have Regionals. Everyone is allowed to swim at Regionals, it is basically a last chance state qualifying meet and great end of season meet. So if you are looking to compete one last time this season Regionals would be the place to do it. There are no qualifying times for this meet. Sign up online today!!!

Clinic this year: The coaches and myself will be running a Start, Turn, Finish, Relay Start style 4 day clinic at the end of March which is the week before the start of the next session. We encourage everyone (SN to GS) to participate; the clinic will be one hour long every day and cost \$40 for all four days (*No Pre-comp swimmers please*). It will be a great opportunity for a lot of 1 on 1 work with the kids and they will be split into groups of similar ability. Please watch for the registration/information form, I will email it out soon. Seniors will only take part in the clinic 3 days and the cost will be \$30.

- ***Coach Scott Mueller***

Swimmers of the Month:

William Madzrak–Bronze Age

Trevor Gundrum – Silver Age

Becca Schoenauer– Silver Senior

Making Waves ~ Featuring Silver and Gold Age

Silver and Gold Age is having a great season. We have a number of new state qualifiers and have achieved a lot of best times. As of right now we have ten 11-12 year olds with individual state cuts, which is the most we have had in that age group in the 6 years I have coached for MFSC. We also have a number of other swimmers from Silver and Gold Age who are within a second of a state cut, and I am confident that we will be able to take that time off before the end of the season to hopefully have our biggest state team yet!

The past month the kids have been working really hard and I know they are all looking forward to taper. Over the next 3 weeks we will be focusing on starts, turns, finishes, and speed to prepare for regionals and state. This is my favorite part of the season because the kids really start to get excited about racing and they seem to be just a little more focused at practice so they can reach their goals for the season. I am looking forward to a great end of the season for all of the groups!

- ***Coach Jennie***

Spring/Summer Registration:

Long Course registration will open to current members on February 23 and close on March 9, 2015. After March 9th, we will be opening registration to swimmers on a waiting list, so please register before the 9th to secure your swimmer's spot.

Long Course season will be broken into 2 sessions - at registration, you can opt to swim the entire season or just one of the two sessions. Long Course will start on April 6 and finish on July 31, 2015. Session 1 dates - April 6 - June 12 and Session 2 dates - June 15 - July 31, 2015.

New for Long Course registration - Online registration will now apply an existing credit in your account to the amount owed at registration.

If you have any questions regarding registration, please contact Liz Scargill at Liz_Scargill@yahoo.com

February Birthdays

Kendra Simson	Connor Benoit
Shawn Brown	Carson Chavannes
Bella Harthum	Becca Koch
Catie Simmons	Dylan Luckmann
Jayden Knight	Maya Desai
Emily Hadland	Lauren Jex
Mitchell Hicks	Andrea Wu
Sammy Seiler	Lucas Moran
Mia Pagel	Caelin Ungerer

Z IS FOR ZEN THINKING

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Like

I am not a Zen Master by any means, but back in the day I read "Sacred Hoops" by Phil Jackson and got hooked on Zen philosophy. Books exist relating just about any topic to Zen teachings. This article is not meant to be a lesson on Zen. The purpose of this article is to present an approach I sometimes take with clients who have trouble letting go of thoughts or accepting the challenges they face.

There Is No Try

The great Yoda once said, "Do or do not. There is no try." I have worked with more swimmers than I dare to count who finish a race with gas left in the tank. One thing many of these swimmers have in common is an UNCONSCIOUS fear, typically of pain, sometimes of either failure or success. This fear holds them back from fully committing. Instead they often hope or wish, rather than going all-in. Whether it's a new event, an attempt to set a record, or pushing your body beyond what is comfortable, at some point in your swimming career you have to say "I will do it". No hesitation, no what-ifs, just a complete stubbornness to make something happen. Zen is about trusting and doing.

Go With the Flow

There is a sport psychology concept known as “flow,” also often referred to as “being in the zone.” This is the rare occasion when you swim and finish a race with a remarkable time and have no idea how you got it or what you were thinking. It just happened, and it happened easily. To achieve this type of performance, you can't actually try not to think. Instead, you have to literally go with the flow; have a plan for what you want to happen, and don't second guess it. Dive in and swim. Typically, the moment people realize they are swimming “out of their mind,” and are on track for a PR is the moment when they leave the flow state of mind. This doesn't always hurt their time, but it just removes you from that Zen-like experience.

Accept and Release

If you've ever taken yoga, instructors often teach you to focus on your breath or the muscle you are working. Zen thinking is very similar. Basically, if you have a thought that is irrelevant to your race/practice or detrimental to your performance, you don't judge it or dwell on it, you accept it as simply a thought and then let it pass quickly through your mind, returning your focus to the task at hand. For example, if you say to yourself, “What if I don't win? These other swimmers are just as good as I am,” you wouldn't want to follow that by thinking, “Why am I thinking that?!? I should be confident!! Maybe I really won't win. What would others say?...”. Instead, you simply accept you had a thought, imagine it departing from your head, and focus on your breath/race/clear your mind. Don't give thoughts extra energy unless you want them to stick around.

Connections and Togetherness

Zen followers often believe we are connected to everything else in the universe and that we have shared energy. Think about it. If your coach is in a bad mood, doesn't that impact you in some way? If someone swims a better time than you, it impacts what lane you will be in and (if you weren't mentally tough) could impact your confidence. While the Zen concept of universality is much more philosophical than my simple take on it, I believe that recognizing how your behaviors, thoughts, and emotions influence others is an important awareness to have. When you know that coming to practice with a strong work ethic and an optimistic attitude can positively impact those you train with, you may choose to work even harder. This ultimately has a positive impact on you as well. If you are a leader, you are more likely to behave in ways that will help teammates compete their best so that you also will reap the benefits of raising the bar.

Zen and Peak Performance

In Zen, the ego is lost. There is no judgment. There is no aversion to losing or desire to win. You do not compete as a means to an end. You immerse yourself in an experience and simply

have whatever that experience may be. Many swimmers have such a fear of losing to someone they shouldn't that their ego gets in the way. They unknowingly handicap themselves from performing their best because they focus so much on the outcome they create anxiety. In a Zen state of mind, the focus wouldn't be on, "what will happen at the end of the race and how will that outcome reflect on me?" Instead, your thoughts would be in the present moment and focused on doing what you have trained to do. It's a combination of everything I have mentioned. You go with the flow, you trust that your training and your preparation will pay off, you let things happen, and you stay positive. Instead of trying harder, you actually try easier because you essentially allow your peak performance to happen. It's not that you don't want success; it's just that you don't put energy into thinking about it as you are on the blocks. A Zen-minded swimmer would define success as diving in, swimming and letting your mind tell your body what to do without you having to direct it.

Wrap Up

Like I said, I am no Zen master. This is just how I like to interpret very simply some of what I know about the philosophical nature of Zen. I love the idea of being passionate but not allowing the passion to override the experience. I love the idea of wanting something, but not forcing it to happen. What I love most about Zen is the thought of trust in yourself and enjoying each moment you are engaged in your activity.

I hope you have enjoyed my ABC's of Mental Training series. If there are other topics or specific questions I haven't addressed, feel free to contact me. I need some new article ideas!!

Make it great!

Dr. Aimee