

Hydration During Practice and Gatorade vs. Water

I've noticed lately that we have a lot of Gatorade bottles at practice and I wanted to provide you with some insight that might help our parents and swimmers. First, every swimmer **MUST** bring a water bottles and/or a Gatorade/type sports drink to practice. However, that is simply not enough. Many of our swimmers are bringing them but they are either still unopened at the end of practice, or they are still over half full. In addition, sports drinks can get pretty darn expensive, especially when you're providing 1-2 every single day! So please.....keep reading!

Hydration only works if you do it **BEFORE** your work out! The key is to drink a big glass of water (or of my solution below) before practice or from a water bottle while you're on your way to practice. Do not wait for the workout to start drinking. Remember.....if you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated! Good hydration is about prevention, and that allows your body to better serve you as you're demanding a lot of it throughout a vigorous workout.

Now, speaking of prevention, it is not necessary to ingest all of the sugar and electrolytes that you get from a sports drink during a practice. Many swimmers do not like it because they are too sugary, and I don't blame them. It's tough to drink that when you're working hard. But some swimmers also don't like to only drink water. If we were training longer than 2 hours (i.e. on days when you have strength training afterwards), then a sports drink would be a good idea, but in reality it's not necessary unless we were competing in a two hour or longer race like a triathlon. There is, however, one perfect solution that I suggest everybody try.

Jonathan's Perfect Solution.....try half and half. We need the water to be hydrated, but some sugar and electrolytes provided with a sports drink are good as well, especially if you only have a moderate snack before practice in the morning (**EVERYBODY SHOULD EAT SOMETHING.....ANYTHING.....BEFORE PRACTICE, EVEN IN THE MORNING!**). So, the solution is to prepare you bottles ahead of time with half sports drink and half water. The flavor is more manageable in the middle of a workout, it provides enough water to stay hydrated, and it costs the parents half as much. Finally.....this doesn't work if you don't drink it! So drink this half and half solution on the way to practice, refill with water when you get there and you'll be good to go for the rest of the workout! Then, during the workout take sips every 10 minutes or so. It's not necessary to drink more, and try to avoid big gulps that may upset your stomach.