

Bike Ride to North Pole

The kids got a kick out of this so I thought I would pass on this story to everyone. I decided to bike out to North Pole Saturday morning for the swim meet. I woke up at 4AM, ate breakfast (oatmeal and tea) and watched the Office (British version). Once I got myself together I set off on the road. I left my house at 5:15AM and the first hour went by pretty easy. I figured this would be no problem. One thing I had not noticed driving out to North Pole was that there is a steady incline the entire way. It started to get harder but I figured I was almost there. I saw lights down the road and started to peddle faster, it was not North Pole. I kept going. About 15min later I saw some more lights, started to peddle faster, still no North Pole. I kept going. I saw some more light, started to peddle faster, realized there really were no light, cursed, said a little prayer and continued on. To give myself a little energy burst I had purchased a Monster energy drink. At about an hour and forty minutes into the ride I heard a hiss. My first thought was I had a flat tire. Then my Monster drink exploded! Freaked me out a bit but I kept going. I saw light again but figured I was seeing things. Then I saw golden arches. Had a religious moment, and then realized it was McDonald's. Ate Breakfast and finished on to the pool.

I left my house at 5:15AM and arrived at the pool at 7:45AM. I made my goal. People thought I was crazy to even try, maybe I was. The point is I would rather fail in the attempt than not to try at all.

"Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness."

Rules To Live By

Over the years, I have come up with three basic rules for swimmers (and parents and coaches) to live by. Most of the kids already know them and many of you have seen them from me before, but I give you this opportunity to review them:

1. Listen when someone is talking to you (BE RESPECTFUL.) This is not just for when the coach is giving the directions, it also applies to when a swimmer has raised their hand and been called on or when mom is talking to someone else. Not only is it rude to interrupt, but I have found that you can't learn anything if you don't stop talking.

2. Worry about yourself. Of course I am not suggesting that we shouldn't care about one another as people, however many of the kids (and adults) spend a lot of energy worrying/discussing what other people are doing, rather than focusing on what they themselves are doing.

3. NO FREAKING OUT! Getting DQ'd, missing an event, making mistakes, not going a best time are all part of the learning process. When things do not go as planned or turn out the way you wanted them to, you have a choice in how you deal with it and often times there are many ways to turn the negative situation into a positive learning situation. Very rarely does something happen in swimming (or in life) for which the best response is to "freak out."

"If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live."

How Do You Train?

On many days you begin your training thinking that you would rather be in bed or anywhere else other than stepping into the pool. Many around you including the coach are enthusiastic, motivated and ready to go. The question is what do you do next? Are you willing to do the opening set better, stronger and more focused than anyone else so that you will have the winning edge? Are you going to be the best in your lane today? You must hold yourself to a higher standard than anyone else in your lane is prepared to do. Are you prepared to challenge yourself to more significant goals daily? The difference between the very good athlete and the average athlete is often their approach to training. The training plan may be important yet the real path to success is HOW you do the work which is totally dependent on your attitude and approach. The good athlete will do the workout on the board in the fashion that is described. The very good athlete does the same workout and sets personal goals along the way to gain more from the workout. The great athlete will do the workout demanding a level of excellence to gain maximum benefit recognizing that today's training session is an opportunity to improve. They will keep a positive spirit while striving towards stated goals.

The spirit of an athlete was described once by Theodore Roosevelt who said:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the one who points out how the strong stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to those in the arena; who strive valiantly; who fail and come up short again and again; who know great enthusiasm and great devotion; who at the best know in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if they fail, **at least fail while daring greatly**, so that their place shall never be with those timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

"I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

To Be The Best

How To Be The Best Team In The USA? We start by increasing all of our expectations. This includes the coaches, swimmers and parents! In order for us to be a team we NEED to have all of our parts contribute to the Team. Swimmers going to meets, parents doing the volunteer work and coaches being at their best both on the practice deck and on the meet deck.

Having FUN. In my book of swimming this is accomplished by swimming FAST. Each individual swimmer must expect their BEST and provide support for their teammates to do their BEST. It's funny, when everyone is swimming well, there is little else to do but enjoy it!

Delayed Gratification. This is what a Great Team deals with on a constant basis. The hard work done in today's practice will pay off, if not now, in the FUTURE. The long term is how we should look at our sport. Goals and Dreams have to be seemingly, almost unattainable in order to achieve personal excellence.

Start simple. Make your practice requirements; do not give yourself an excuse. Live a life of NO EXCUSES! Get to practice and the coaches will get it done with you, together we will be the BEST Team in the USA!!

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."