

September 14th, 2009 Weekly Update-

Practice Updates:

Schedule updates for week of September 14th through September 20th:

Regular Schedule Monday through Friday. Please remember that the SHARC is officially closed so all athletes will need to enter the facility through our dryland room back door.

There will be NO practice on Saturday, September 19th for ALL Squads.

Schedule updates for week of September 21st through September 27th:

Regular Practice Schedule all week for all squads.

Senior Gold will be helping out with Special Olympics on Saturday, September 26th.

Sunday, September 27th: Senior Silver/Gold practice from 3-4:30.

From the USA Swimming Website (www.usaswimming.org):

Tyler McGill: Chasing his Dreams (9/10/2009)



BY MIKE WATKINS//Correspondent

Even though Tyler McGill returned home from World Championships in Rome last month with a gold medal, in his mind, he didn't win it like he would want.

The medal, which he garnered by swimming the butterfly leg during morning preliminaries of the 400 medley relay, came his way when Michael Phelps, Eric Shanteau, Aaron Peirsol and David Walters set a world record in the evening final.

But as far as McGill is concerned, he won't be able to truly say he *won* a medal until he's the one swimming to victory in the finals.

“It was really exciting to come home to family and friends with the gold medal, but until I win the medal myself in the finals, I can't really say that I won this medal but I did earn it,” said McGill, a senior at Auburn University. “My teammates and I in the morning did put the relay into the finals, so I definitely feel a part of the whole thing. But not swimming in that night final makes me want to improve so that one day I am swimming the butterfly leg for gold.”

Leading up to World Championship Trials in late July, McGill's focus was solely on making sure he was in the best position to contend for a spot on the team despite not making the finals in his signature 100 fly race at the 2008 U.S. Olympic Trials.

Since Trials, he has concentrated his training on paying close attention to the details – working on the smaller things in his race and overall technique – to help elevate his performance and consistently improve.

He accomplished that with his second-place finish behind Phelps in the 100 fly at this summer's ConocoPhillips USA Swimming National Championships, and then backed up that performance with a finals showing at World Championships – although he admits he didn't swim the race he knows he's capable of.

“I wanted to be better than I qualified in that final, but I ended up trying too hard to be better, and it was disappointing,” said McGill, who was seventh in the final behind Phelps' sub-50-second showing and world record. “To be in that field where Michael broke the 50-second barrier was amazing, but I really wanted more from myself and I didn't accomplish that. Going into the final, I expected everyone to swim faster, but I didn't swim the race I know I can, and I didn't race and be competitive like I can.”

With Worlds behind him, the Illinois native, who grew up in Big Ten country but chose to compete for a Southeastern Conference (SEC) program, is now focused on his final campaign for the Tigers. Because he has yet to win an individual NCAA title (second in the 100 fly last year), a championship in his best event would end his collegiate career in high fashion.

Overall, however, his goals for the 2009-10 SEC and NCAA seasons center around helping his teammates capture team titles for Auburn, and he feels this year's group is as strong as it's been during his time in Auburn.

“I want to continue to improve individually, but my focus and drive are all about the other guys on my team,” said McGill, an economics major who will graduate in 2011 with a degree in economics and has post-swimming aspirations of working in the front office for a professional sports team or maybe even the United States Olympic Committee. “I know that we will come together and find ways to get faster and better as a team to win SECs and NCAAs. It's all about working together to get better, and we do that well at Auburn because we trust each other and do it for one another rather than just for ourselves.”

With a professional post-college career on his mind, McGill stays motivated by the challenge that with hard work and focus, he can also join the elite sub-50 second club and contend for future World and Olympic teams.

“My motivation comes from the challenges handed down from my coaches,” said McGill, who swam summer league for years before swimming year-round at 11 years old. “Coaches who can challenge you to be better make you challenge yourself to also be better. I just want to swim for as long as I can, and that means after college, finding ways to support myself while training competitively. It will take some doing, but I know if I can find balance, I can make this a reality.”

From Your Head Coach:

To the Membership:

First things first... if you read anything in this update, please take the time to read Coach Mark's update. It's some of the best reading I've had in a long time and my hope is that everyone will take the time to read it. You won't regret it.

Secondly, welcome to the 2009-2010 swim year! This is the beginning of my 9th year with the HEAT. It's been an interesting ride throughout the years. It seems like just yesterday (September 9th, 2001) that I walked out on deck to begin my first practice with the Blue Squad. A lot has happened since then.

I am very proud of the direction and progress of the team over the years...

--We have gone from a program of 100 swimmers to a program of 220+ swimmers.

--We have gone from a program of never having a National Qualifier to a program that consistently is creating new National Qualifiers year after year.

--We have gone from participating at Senior Sectionals to being one of the top teams at the competition.

--We have gone from never scoring a point at a National level meet to consistently doing so.

--We have gone from a staff of three coaches to a staff of seven coaches.

I could go on all day, but bottom line, we have come a long way. So far in fact that I believe many coaches and programs would be content with the progress we have made. I, and the staff, are proud of our progress, but we are ever vigilant in striving and reaching for more. We are determined to continue to grow and thrive; to learn from our mistakes and become stronger from them; to become the very best program from top to bottom.

I believe we still have a lot more we will, and can, accomplish. I'm excited about taking those next steps. I hope you are as well. Bottomline, it is a process we will all go through together.... a process that can only be successful with each and every one of you on board and excited to help push onward and upward.

Senior Gold-

One of my first goals and tasks with this squad this season is going to be the concept of TEAM. Many of our talks and discussions with each of you is how you, and WE, can help to make the team better than it already is. You are the leaders and I wish for us to set the example for others to follow. Some activities have already been set to help with this....

On September 26th our squad will be volunteering with the Special Olympics during our regular practice time. I am excited about this opportunity for each of you and I believe it will be a great experience in giving back to our sport that each of you will remember for some time.

Our yearly Boot Camp has tentatively been scheduled for the weekend of October 15-18th. This will be a great physical challenge as well as a huge squad bonding weekend and I am excited for it yet again this year.

We have 10 seniors this year, and with that the beginning months of our season will be a little crazy with many of them taking recruiting trips around the country. It's going to be that much more important that we as a squad are supportive of these athletes as they take the first steps in the next phase of their lives AND be supportive of the athletes that are not yet at that phase. As usual, the success of the squad is directly related to the support and atmosphere that the squad as a whole inspires. Let's make it an amazing year.

Devy Gold-

I'm excited about having the opportunity to work with the Devy Gold Squad! This will actually be the first time in many years that I will not be working with one of the Novice squads. I am actually very excited to be working with this squad as I have coached virtually all of you at one time or another as you rose through our Novice programs and I am excited to be able to help you take the next steps. I have a LOT of very high goals for this squad and I am excited to get the season going to start working towards those goals!

Come ready and excited to have a great season, and please remember that our squad will be practicing in the outdoor pool on a daily basis. Also, Coach Kaitlin will be acting as your dryland coach on a daily basis, please make sure that for EVERY practice you are dressing down quickly. Besides just better technique, dryland is one of the quickest and easiest ways to quickly improve! Make sure you take advantage of every minute of it.

From Coach Mark:

How we go from GOOD to GREAT:

Our team has become a very good team in the past years. We have improved on every level. In some cases, we have improved drastically. I think that we are still a ways away from becoming a great team. Unfortunately, good is the enemy of great. To give a metaphor: imagine you are going to climb Mount Everest and you have only 1500ft to go. Those final 1500ft are what will determine the true success of your climb, not the bulk of the distance covered so easily in the weeks previous. It would be far easier to render the last mile as “too hard,” or “not realistic.” However, we must take the first step up the mountain if we are to truly find out how great we can be.

If I could choose one aspect from my summer reading (I use my time away from the pool to bolster my ideology) to apply to our continued escalation to greatness, it would be how we deal with adversity. This is a team that has been forged from adversity. It is amazing to me that not more than 4 years ago, this team was training in a multitude of locations, had less than 75 swimmers in tow, and may have been the most inconvenient team in Oregon swimming. Many families that are with us now can look at those days and produce a sigh of relief that those days are behind us. This team has gone through a nearly complete coaching turnover in the past 3 years. This is a maneuver that commonly spells the doom of even the best swimming programs. This team has been through a lot of adversity. We have been the “Transformers” as James put it in our Awards Banquet in 2008.

We are now faced with a far different kind of adversity. How do we make the moves to be the best in the state, best in the Northwest, best in the Western USA, best in the Nation, and best in the World? We must create adversity for ourselves. We must train ourselves to be ready to move to well beyond our current means. We must challenge the best in every realm. We must change our perception of what we deem we are capable. We must be faithful that WE WILL WIN!

Most often in our lives, we go out of our way to avoid adversity. We hope that it never enters our lives. Mostly because of the fear that we are not prepared to deal with it and the inconvenience that it causes. In practice, it is the will of the coaching staff to show the swimmers that they can conquer adversity one lap, one set, and one practice at a time. When it is time to seek out the adversity of competition, those who have been tested will rise and conquer. When it is time to face TRUE adversity (injury, illness, cancer, loss of

a parent, loss of a home, etc.), those who have been tested will rise and conquer. It has nothing to do with A times or B times...it has everything to do with CHARACTER! Was I too vague? I'll give you a few allegories:

- As we were preparing to compete at this summer's 11&Over State Championships, the Zone team members were announced on the OSI web-site. A rival swimmer of a few of our fastest age group swimmers was named to the team going to Hawaii. One of our swimmers went into an immediate panic, "Do you think she will still swim in the state meet?" The rival was slated to swim the meet, but our swimmer wanted to be sure as she was adamant that she needed that rival there to make the meet a worthwhile experience. She needed the adversity to make the meet "fun." Ultimately, our swimmer beat the rival swimmer in every "showdown" situation, but this isn't the point of the story. The moral is entrenched in the true spirit of competition. Other swimmers may have wished that the rival would skip the meet and allow them to waltz to higher finishes; conversely, our athlete desired the adversity and welcomed it with open arms, regardless of what the result may have been.
- I am currently watching a recap of the 2006 Iron Man Triathlon World Championships held in Hawaii. The amount of adversity that is dealt with in this event is immense. The race involves a 2.4 mile swim (which is almost 5,000 yards), 112 mile bike, and then a 26.2 mile run (a marathon) all done in the heat and humidity of the lava rock beds of the big island of Hawaii. The surprising thing about the coverage of this event is that the ACTUAL coverage of the event probably amounts to about 15 minutes of the hour long show. The rest of the show is filled with stories of previous failures, bad luck, hideous bike accidents, and a one-legged athlete who lost a leg in Iraq. The interviews are riddled with tears, sacrifice, and major life-changing decisions. It would be easy to look at these individuals who lay it all on the line for athletic success and say, "These guys are crazy." I think in truth we must say, "These guys are exceptional." The stories inspire us because it exposes what it is to be rigorous in our pursuit of excellent. It is about what it means to push yourself to your limits. How many people can say they have ever intentionally brought that kind of adversity into their own lives?
- My last example has nothing to do with swimming or competition or choosing your adversity. It is the story of Admiral James Stockdale who is best known for his service to his country while stuck in a POW camp in Veitnam in the mid-1960's. Stockdale devised a method of communication to the outside world, he was routinely tortured and never broke information to his captors, and he purposefully disfigured himself so that the enemy could not use his face as an example of a well taken care of prisoner. He went on to do extraordinary things after his years in captivity and was interviewed about it

later. Here are some enlightening comments about his time spent in adversity: “I never lost faith in the end of the story, I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade.” When asked who didn’t make it through this adversity, Stockdale answers, “Oh, that’s easy, the optimists. Oh, they were the ones who said, 'We're going to be out by Christmas.' And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go. Then they'd say, 'We're going to be out by Easter.' And Easter would come, and Easter would go. And then Thanksgiving, and then it would be Christmas again. And they died of a broken heart. This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

I am writing this after an hour of optional dryland practice, in which I witnessed many of our athletes countless break down into a walk while on a 3.5 mile run. The run was meant to be light. It was meant to be easy. The only goal was to stay moving at any level to keep the heart rate up. For some, the adversity was too much, meaning that they were unprepared to push past the pangs of comfort running through their minds. The good in it was that every athlete completed the distance. That was good. Many walked a good portion of it. Some walked more than half of it. Where we need major improvement is the personal determination to face the adversity and work to the best of our ability. We need to be desperate and rigorous in our pursuit of being the best. We need to be self-disciplined in our desire to face this adversity. We have to seek it out and beat it down. We have to relish these opportunities so that when the adversity of our championship season arises, we will rise and conquer. We have to make major personal development in these situations so that when REAL adversity rears its head in our lives, we with rise and we conquer.

Please do not take this as a call to arms that our team members are “soft,” “weak,” or “wimpy.” This is not the case at all. We have the tools. We have the personal traits necessary to be great. However, much like our young people’s musculature, it is simply something that must be continually developed. This is a call to arms that our team members must “get comfortable with being uncomfortable” if we are truly going to go from being good to being GREAT! We can do it if we expect adversity, desire adversity, savor adversity, and (on a routine basis) defeat adversity! I can’t wait!

From Coach Caitlin:

Welcome back everyone! I'm excited to see all of you again and meet all the new swimmers! I hope you feel rested and ready to get back in the pool.

Novice White

We'll spend the first week working on kicking, breathing, ready position, and streamline. Maybe we'll do a streamline contest and some games too!

Novice Blue & Black

The first week we'll do lots of drills, shorter swimming, kicking, and maybe some dives. There are lots of new swimmers in these groups and some who moved up from Novice I. I bet you'll make some new friends!

Devy Silver

I hope you're ready to be challenged! The first week in the water won't be too tough. We'll focus on drills, streamline, underwater kicks, and turns. For dryland you'll get to do fun exercises, use equipment (balance pads!, hurdles!), play games (all my neighbors, gigantic soccer), and learn stretches. It may not be 105 degrees out in September but you'll still need a water bottle. I want you to feel your best at practice and that means staying hydrated.

From Coach Kaitlin:

Novice Silver

Welcome back to a new season of HEAT swimming! I hope everyone has enjoyed their time away from the pool, but is ready to get back to swimming. I am excited about the group of swimmers in this group, as I believe we are going to see some great things this season. This group consists of swimmers from Novice Bronze and Silver and even some swimmers that are brand new to the team, so many of you will be swimming with people you have never swam with before. I believe that this will be a great thing, as it always fun to swim with new people.

During our first few weeks back, we are going to talk about some goals that I have for the group and that each of you have for yourselves so please be thinking about some goals that you have. They may be time goals, or stroke goals, or even personal/behavior/attitude goals.

Remember that for the first week of practice we will be swimming outside as the pool inside has no water in it, so be prepared for that.
See you Monday!

AG Gold

Welcome back to a new season of HEAT swimming! I hope everyone has enjoyed their time away from the pool, but is ready to get back to swimming. I am really excited about the group of swimmers in this group, as I believe we are going to see some amazing things this season. Most of the people in this group have swam together before, but we do have 2 new people coming into the group. Leslie is moving up from AG Silver and

Jasmine is joining us from New Mexico. Please be sure to welcome these people as we start the new season.

At some point during September, I will be talking about and handing out goal sheets. Goals are incredibly important to your success in swimming so please be thinking about some goals that you have for yourself. We will also be making group goals so think of some goals that our whole group can achieve.

I look forward to seeing everyone on Monday!

From Coach Matt:

Welcome back! I hope that everyone had a great break from swimming and that school has started off on a great note for all of our swimmers. I am looking forward to getting back on the pool deck and build off of the great accomplishments we made during our summer season. Our first weeks back should be exciting with all of our new groups and our new bulkhead in the outdoor pool.

I will be the lead coach for AG Bronze and will also be helping out with a few other groups during the week. Remember to take a look at our equipment list and try to pick up everything as soon as you can. I understand it may be difficult for some to get everything before the first week of practice but let me know if you are having trouble or have any questions on equipment and I can help you work through it. Also, take a look at our meet schedule ASAP and get signed up as our first meets will be here before you know it. We are expecting about 1 meet a month for AG Bronze with our first being the THILLS meet in October.

Another thing I wanted to get our swimmers ready for is dryland. For many swimmers it may be the first time doing dryland or it may be a bit different than you are used to. The most important thing to prepare for this is clothing. Try your best to wear comfortable pants or shorts (no jeans, skirts, dresses, ect.) and shoes that are comfortable to run around in (no sandals, crocs, etc.). Our dryland will have a lot of aerobic running, jumping, and body weight exercises so think about that when picking out an outfit. Lastly, the weather will change fast and we will be doing mostly outdoor exercises so bring warmer clothing as needed.

See everyone at the pool this week!

From Coach Ryan:

Pre Senior Black:

Welcome back to the pool swimmers and I hope you all had a fun and relaxing break. My name is Ryan Myers and I am the newest addition to Heat coaching staff. I will primarily be working with the new Pre Senior Black group as well as serving as a deck and dryland

coach for several other groups.

I've had a chance to talk with Coach James and Mark about this group and it sounds like a talented group with loads of potential. I'm excited to really get to know all of you in the coming weeks and to start setting up the foundations for what it's going to take to elevate your skills to the next level this season.