

April 19th, 2010 Weekly Update-

Practice Updates:

Schedule updates for the week of April 19th through April 25th:

Regular Practice Schedule for all squads Monday through Saturday. Senior Gold and Senior Silver have an optional Sunday practice from 3-4:30pm.

Schedule updates for the week of April 26th through May 2nd:

Regular Practice Schedule for all squads Monday through Thursday. On Friday, April 30th, there will BE NO practice for the Senior Gold, Senior Silver, PS Blue, PS Black, AG Gold and AG Silver Squads. Novice Blue and AG Bronze will practice at their regularly scheduled time. There will be NO Saturday practices for any squads due to the various swim meets.

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

Marcus Titus: In the Zone (4/16/2010)

BY MIKE WATKINS//Correspondent

An athlete is said to be in the zone when he or she is able to block all external distractions and focus solely on the tasks that lie ahead.

That's never been a problem for Marcus Titus, who, because of hearing loss as a baby, has always found solitude and tremendous tunnel vision on the starting blocks. He uses a strobe light either at the base of the block or to the side of the pool to trigger his start, and since light travels faster than sound, he usually has a head start into the water.

What others might have deemed a disadvantage or disability, Titus has clearly developed into a game-changing asset. The fact that he's on the 2009-2010 U.S. National Team and one of the best breaststrokers in the world is testament to that.

"I have made my deafness an advantage when it comes to swimming," said Titus, who will graduate from the University of Arizona this year and intends to work toward his master's degree in rehabilitation counseling while he continues training.

"Swimming is not just a physical sport, but you also need a mental edge,"

he said. "I know a lot of swimmers listen to music to block out the noise of the crowd to help them get in the zone. For me, I'm immediately in the zone, concentrating on how my body feels and how I mentally feel. I can picture what I want to do once I hit the water."

And while he's been the subject of numerous stories focusing on his hearing loss – which he manages with hearing aids, sign language and lip reading – Titus doesn't mind the attention.

He knows every time he is recognized for his achievements, everyone in his corner also gets some time in the spotlight.

"I don't get tired of talking about how I became a successful deaf swimmer because this story isn't just about me but is also about all the people around me who helped and supported my efforts to get me where I am," Titus said. "It's a collective success. Also, I feel that people can learn from my story, and I hope that it can inspire other deaf children to achieve their dreams."

No one in this group of cheerleaders has had Titus' back more than his mom, Meiko, and his dad, Mark. It was Meiko who fought for his education, knowing that he belonged in the public school system and lobbied as only a parent can to get him an interpreter and the opportunities to grow up like any other kid.

She also encouraged him to get involved with swimming and make friends, and to never feel ashamed of who he is..

"When I was younger, I hated myself for being deaf because I often felt different and excluded. But as I grew and became more involved with swimming, that feeling significantly changed," said Titus, who played soccer, basketball and golf before finding his niche in swimming his freshman year of high school. "I became a better person, appreciated what I had and knew that I could take advantage of my deafness in sports unlike others.

"So that is what actually made me so competitive. First, I had to learn to accept myself and then learn that I could fight and receive the same opportunities as everyone else. Seeing myself being successful in swimming was validation and encouraged me to become even greater. Swimming served as an outlet that allowed me to find and believe in myself."

Titus has capitalized on that self-belief and confidence, and at 23 (24 in

May), is swimming the best and fastest times of his life.

After finishing a disappointing third at last summer's World Championship Trials, just missing making the World team, he extracted a bit of revenge and self-satisfaction two weeks ago at the Columbus Grand Prix when he edged Olympian Eric Shanteau to win the 100 breast.

It was his first win against Shanteau, who beat Titus by five-tenths of a second to make the 2009 World Team. It's a victory that gives him a tremendous amount of confidence as he prepares for ConocoPhillips USA Swimming National Championships in August.

And with his NCAA swimming career finished, Titus is excited and ready for the next phase of his swimming life as he works toward his ultimate goal: a spot on the 2012 Olympic Team.

"It was exciting to beat someone (Shanteau) who has gone to the Olympics and World Championships because he's achieved something that I constantly aim for," said Titus, who is also considering competing in the 2013 Deaflympics in Greece. "It's a good feeling that I had the chance to beat him only because I know that my hard work is paying off, and I'm improving myself."

And as someone who started in the sport much later than most world-class swimmers, Titus is confident his best times are ahead of him. He uses his near-miss at last year's World Trials as motivation to train harder, get stronger and ultimately swim faster so he can realize his dreams.

"I have made huge improvements since I started swimming my freshman year in high school, continuously shaving seconds in my events," said Titus, who improved from 20th in the 100 breast at 2008 Olympic Trials to third last summer at World Trials. "I think the biggest jump in times, though, have been in college. The training in the pool and dry-land work has been intense.

"I feel like I'm most physically fit now. I enjoy the challenge, and I'm motivated because I know I started swimming late and feel that I haven't peaked yet. I still have room for more training, and focusing on my technique and learning from other professional breaststrokers."

From Your Head Coach:

~~The HEAT Will Rise~~



To the Membership:

With a new season all of our athletes should be focused on coming up with goals to accomplish in the coming months. Below is an article I pulled from the USA Swimming website with some advice to parents in helping their children to come up with their goals. Please tune in next week for an update on the recent Hawaii Five-O meet!

Pick Your Target

Goal setting. Commitment. Accountability. These three keys unlock every swimmer's potential for success. They may sound obvious and simple, but they are vital. So vital, in fact, that diving into the pool without them is like taking a drive without knowing where you're going.

This was the message Bob Bowman, men's head coach at the University of Michigan, gave the Ann Arbor Swim Club at its awards banquet in Ann Arbor, Mich., recently. Although his words were addressed to that particular group, they ring true for swimmers, parents and coaches of any club. As for their effectiveness, there is no better proof than Bowman's most famous swimmer, Olympic phenom Michael Phelps.

"Every swimmer needs three things to succeed in this sport. Ignoring them prevents athletes from doing what they are capable of," Bowman said. Embracing them, on the other hand, opens doors, overcomes obstacles and helps athletes soar to their full potential.

Set a Goal

The first key is setting a goal. "Imagine if you got in your car and just started aimlessly driving. That's what not having a goal is like. Goals are the targets that direct your aim," he said.

The end goal is the big question that must be answered first. Where are you headed? Do you want a state cut? An Olympic gold medal? Once you determine your destination point, the other stops along the way will automatically follow.

"When I sit down with my swimmers at Michigan, I tell them, 'Once you've answered the big question, the small ones are easy. You want to be an NCAA champion? OK, there are some things that go into that. You're not going to miss a practice, ever. Because on that level, everybody trains. You're going to get rested. You're going to eat right, and more.'"

Knowing where to set goals is an art that can be refined with the help of your coaches. Ask them, if you haven't already, because the stakes are high. Goals that are too easy remove the sense of challenge. Goals that are too difficult lead to discouragement. Either extreme produces the same result: swimmers who lose interest in the sport. Basically, goals should have enough risk so they are exciting, but enough chance of success so they are achievable, Bowman said.

The whole process is a bit like playing a game of ring toss. "If I gave you rings to throw at a target, there would probably be a group who stood right over it so they would hit it every time. And there would be another group who wanted to stand as far back as possible for the challenge. Then there would be a third group who would stand somewhere in the middle so they had a 50/50 chance of hitting the target. That's where you want to set your goal."

Make a Commitment

The next key to success is making the kind of commitments that help you reach your goal. How many times a week are you going to practice? How hard are you willing to work? Don't make your commitments week by week. Make them for the long haul and make them ahead of time. Then stick with them.

While adolescent swimmers only need an occasional reminder, youngsters may need something more. "This is where parents come in," said Bowman. Their supporting role not only provides the time, finances and energy that drives swimmers to practice and equips them with goggles, fins and other tools of the trade, it provides the emotional backbone needed to keep commitments.

Bowman spoke from experience.

"I remember times as a young swimmer when I would say, 'I'm not going to practice today.' My mother would tell me, 'You are going to practice because you made a commitment.' Then I would say, 'I'm going to quit.' And she would counter, 'You can quit at the end of the season.'"

But when the end of the season rolled around, Bowman found he had developed a very different attitude. "Because I went to all the practices, I always did better and never wanted to quit at the end of the season," he said, chuckling. "I'm no different than many of you. Everyone has times when they don't want to follow through. I'm here to tell you to keep going," he said.

Be Accountable

The third key is accountability. Once you've set your goals and made commitments, own up to them and take responsibility for the results. "Ultimately, it's you who is going to decide where

you end up in this sport," Bowman said. "If something doesn't go right, claim it. Say, 'It's my fault. I'll do better next time.'"

Accountability can be discouraging when goals are not met and there is no one else to blame, or it can be exhilarating in the face of triumph. While the emotional responses vary, one fact does not: accountability is an essential part of growth. Owning up to your results cultivates a take-charge attitude that can give you a jump start on your competition.

"When my guys are getting ready for an international meet, I tell them: 'When it comes time to get on that block, it's just you. You better know who you are, and what you're all about.'" Swimmers who have stared accountability in the face without flinching, have developed that inner strength, he added.

Ann Arbor Swim Club head coach Dan Ohm agreed, adding that these practices benefit all aspects of life. "Setting goals, making commitments and being accountable are character-building traits that not only make you a better swimmer, but a better person," Ohm said.

Bob Bowman's Experience as a Young Swimmer

There's more to swimming than fast times and momentary triumphs. The benefits extend well beyond the pool and into life. Just ask Bob Bowman, men's head coach at the University of Michigan.

Bowman had no idea, when he first got involved in swimming at the age of 11, how much it would positively impact the rest of his life. But it has, and it can do the same for any serious devotee, he told swimmers, coaches and parents at a recent awards banquet hosted by the Ann Arbor Swim Club in Ann Arbor, Mich.

When Bowman first joined a summer swim league in Columbia, S.C., his initial focus was on performance in the pool. Like many youngsters, he was impressed with fast times and records.

"I still remember attending my first big meet at the University of South Carolina in 1978 and witnessing a record-breaking swim. I thought, 'Wow, this is great. It must happen all the time.'"

His enthusiasm propelled him to practice harder, and he ultimately went to Florida State University, where teammates, inspired by his determination, made him captain of the swim team. "It was unusual because I was one of the slowest swimmers on the team," he said.

As he matured, however, his eyes were opened to the enduring value of swimming.

"There's more to swimming than records and fast times. The ability to set goals, make commitments and be accountable for your performance benefits everyone. And unlike records, they last a lifetime."

From Coach Mark:

This week we will start going through the goal-setting process. I have been doing this as long as I have been swimming and the process is becoming second nature for me; however, many of you are still learning how to do this and need to practice this every season. I have embedded an article to help some of those more novice to this practice to understand. Most of you experts could probably draw something from this, as well.

Here is an article by Dr. Aimee Kimball PHD, Sports Psychologist working with USA Swimming that may help. It is part of the "ABC's of Mental Training." Goal Setting is an obvious letter "G." Here you go!

G is for Goal Setting

"Every athlete has a goal. Whether it's to win races, achieve a personal best, or simply make it through a grueling practice, the goals we set undoubtedly exert influence on our performance.

"However, there's a lot more to goal setting than just stating what it is you ultimately want to achieve. To get the motivational support and performance boost that goals can provide, athletes must set goals systematically and have various types of goals.

"This article will lead you through steps to setting goals so that your performance, satisfaction and quality of practice can all be enhanced. While this article is geared to your sport-related goals, the same steps can and should be used to set goals for all areas of your life.

Step 1: Know where you are headed

"Five years from now, what do you want to be doing? One year from now? At the end of this season, what do you want to have achieved? All of these long-term goals are important to sit and write down because they give you something to commit to. It is also important to identify why you want to achieve these goals. This "why" should be something that is valuable to you more than it is to others. Once you identify your goals, close your eyes and picture yourself achieving them. Try to experience the feelings you expect to have when you achieve these goals.

"On a weekly basis, reexamine your end-of-season goal. It is okay if you need to adjust it and make it more challenging or more realistic based on your circumstance. Make sure you keep your season goal in mind as you practice so you are aware that what you do today connects you to what you want to achieve in the future. At the end of each season, re-visit your yearly goal and at least once a month imagine yourself achieving your 5-year goal.

Step 2: Know how to get there

"Ever get lost on the way to a meet? If you have, typically you knew where you were supposed to end up, you just didn't have a very accurate map of how to get there. Having a path towards your long-term goals is extremely important because what you want to achieve weeks, months, or years from now can only happen if you take the opportunity

each day to make progress towards your longer-term goals. Each day ask yourself, "What can I do today to get myself one step closer to where I want to be?" Make sure you always have a short-term, specific goal you are working on. Whether it's a technique goal, a mental goal, or a nutritional goal, keep focused on your daily and weekly objectives so you can give yourself the best chance to reach your ultimate goals.

Step 3: Identify milestones of success

"Having intermediate markers of success can help enhance motivation (ex., swimming a PR, qualifying for a specific meet, mastering a fundamental skill). These markers serve as points on your goal route that are important to you and are achievements you will be proud of. These milestones provide set standards so you know you are progressing along your goal path. They let you know that your hard work is paying off and give you confidence, encouragement, and enhance your commitment.

Step 4: Identify obstacles

"Reaching long term goals is a very challenging process and there are a lot of uncontrollable factors that may keep you from reaching these goals. Look at your long term and short term goals and identify obstacles that may prevent you from reaching these goals. Injury, strength of the competition, and burnout are common obstacles swimmers face when trying to win meets, improve time, or work their hardest. If you list an obstacle you can't control, cross it off your list (if you don't control it, don't worry about it). If it is something you do control, make a plan for dealing with it when it comes up. By identifying obstacles and being prepared to overcome them, you are helping to ensure obstacles do not become excuses.

Step 5: Create a system

"Everyone is a little bit different in how they set goals. Some set daily goals while others focus on what they want to accomplish on a monthly basis. Create a system that you can stick to that allows you to: a) Set specific, challenging goals, b) Measure progress towards these goals, c) Gain motivation and encouragement from your goals, and d) Focus on these goals every practice.

"I suggest setting, at minimum, weekly goals. Maybe every Sunday write three specific areas you want to improve on. Share these goals with coaches, parents, and/or teammates so you have someone to hold you accountable to working on these goals and who can recognize when you achieve your goals. Each day before practice review your goals and remind yourself what you are working on and how this week's goals connect to your goals for the season. At the end of the week, assess whether or not you achieved your goals. If you didn't accomplish what you set out to do, make sure you honestly figure out why you fell short and try to control what you can in the future. If you did achieve even some of your goals, take a moment to reward yourself and feel proud that your hard work paid off.

Step 6: Set different types of goals

"One of the biggest mistakes athletes make is setting goals focused only on the results of meets. While these outcome-oriented goals are important, they are often out of your control. Therefore, it is essential to set process and performance goals as well.

- Process goals-fundamentals totally under your control (stroke, turns, attitude)
- Performance goals-"statistics" based on individual improvement (drop time, increase in sets)
- Outcome goals-focus is on comparisons to others (winning races, being the best)

“Ultimately, you want to focus on your process goals since the more of the fundamentals you master, the more likely you are to reach your performance goals (good technique + good mentality=better time). When you reach your performance goals, you give yourself a better chance of achieving your outcome goals (you don’t control if you win, you only control if you swim your best). By focusing on the process and what you control, you are trusting that the way you swim will lead to the performance you want.

Process → Performance → Outcome

Summary

“Whether you are 14 or 41, goals are vital in providing direction, creating motivation, and enhancing commitment. Some people shy away from setting goals because they are afraid of being disappointed if they fall short. Other swimmers only set goals for meets or for their careers. It is important not to see goals as the ultimate indication of success or failure; rather they provide you with guidance so that you can stretch your abilities as far as possible. Very few people achieve every goal they set; therefore it is the progress you make towards these goals and the effort you exert in their pursuit that is the determinant of your success. If every day you get a little bit closer to where you want to be, consider that to be a successful day.”

Age Group Silver: I really like the racing atmosphere that we are starting to build within the AGS and AGB squads. Remember that we are always FOR racing and never AGAINST anyone else. We are practicing good sportsmanship in all we are doing by being CELEBRATORY regarding our own efforts, but COMPLEMENTARY towards others efforts.

This week it was clear that Nicky Z came to play. He is my honorable mention for leading most of the sets and was consistently racing in grand style. Most impressive!

Pre-Senior Blue: We are mixing up a lot of our “normal” training regiment this week with short, fast bursts of speed. This isn’t just to break up some of the monotony of aerobic training, but also to teach you guys to switch gears. Don’t spend all of the long, hard stuff wishing you were doing the shorter faster part. That’s like eating the vegetables just to get desert. I want you to enjoy desert (short and fast stuff) but I want you to LEARN to enjoy your vegetables (long and hard stuff) too.

I was really taken with the performance of Ryan C this week. This week’s honorable mention is doing things a little bit better all the time. He is always ready to throw down an honest effort on timed swims, but I really like that he is getting better at the little things! Don’t ever stop!

Senior Silver: Pre-Season is over, folks! Let’s get to work! If you feel like you aren’t in good enough shape to do EVERYTHING we are doing in practice, you really need to take a step back and examine the “why” of the whole situation. Are you injured? Are you still sore? Are you not used to this kind of work? Are you compensating for weaknesses? Figure out what the problem is and come up with a solution to fix it! We are laying a pounding on that pool water in the very near future!

This week, it looked like Logan Neal is already pushing her limits at this point of the season. She deserves the honorable mention for her consistently great sets, this season. She is doing a great job at EVERYTHING we have been doing and I’m sure that none of it has been comfortable. Keep doing it!

From Coach Caitlin:

Novice White

Since we have a few new swimmers in the squad, we're going to spend extra time working on basic freestyle drills - breathing to the side, kicking, and long strokes. Patrick's side breathing is improving! Logan, Lily, and Beau have really strong kicks. Chloe, Sundari, and Marcus have long strokes. Besides those freestyle drills, you also did some dolphin kick and streamlining. Streamlining is very important! It makes you a better swimmer! Every time you push off the wall (except when you have a kickboard in your hands) you need to do a streamline. Put one hand on top of the other and squeeze your head with your arms. To practice that tight streamline we did our weekly streamline contest. Lily was the winner! She pushed off the wall hard, held a tight streamline, and went the furthest of everyone. For our other contests last week, Logan won treading water and Beau won a 25 freestyle kick.

Novice Blue

We spent last week practicing basic freestyle drills. We worked on breathing, kicking, long strokes, and body position. To help with your body position I had you doing lots of situps. Situps make your abs stronger. When you have strong abs you're able to keep your body in a straight line. Without tight stomach muscles your hips will wiggle back and forth. You need all your energy to swim forward, not wiggle through the water. Kicking also helps you maintain good body position. If you forget to use your legs, they'll just swish back and forth. And correct side breathing helps keep your body in a straight line - keeping your head low when you breathe and breathing every 3 strokes. Ivy, Alys, Jewelz, and Shreya had the best body position!

Novice Black

We have lots of new swimmers in the squad! Since we have so many new people, we spent last week practicing basic freestyle drills. We worked on breathing, kicking, long strokes, and streamline. I noticed several of you holding your breath when your face was in the water. That's going to make you so tired! And it's tough to do side breathing when you have to blow air out and breathe new air in. When your face is in the water, constantly blow out your air. It'll come out as bubbles through your mouth and nose. When you're able to blow out all the bad air, you can turn your head to the side and quickly get a breath of new air. Taking a quicker breath will help you keep your body in a straight line and your legs up. Anna, Kyle, Kyra, Brianna, Madison, and Ian had great side breathing!

Devy Silver

For breaststroke we're working on fast hands. When your hands push forward through the water it needs to be the fastest part of your armstroke. To help get your hand speed up we tried some underwater breaststroke drills. All of you loved it! Bryttney, Jordyn, Catherine, Astha, and Jennie all had super fast hands.

The 200IM test set last week was awesome! You were paired up with a buddy. You had to cheer for your buddy and also watch for DQs. You were able to pick out what was wrong and what looked good. Catherine, Bryttney, Katelyn, Jordyn, Jennie, Emily N., Astha, Allyson, Brianns, and Sarah all swim their 200IM without a DQ! Here are the results:

John 5:13
Catherine 4:36
Emily C. 5:20
Amy 5:21
Bryttney 4:52
Katelyn 5:07
Jordyn 4:14
Luke 4:43
Jennie 4:30
Emily N. 5:11
Astha 4:23
Jasmine 4:46
Allyson 4:25
Brianna 4:44
Sarah 4:27

From Coach Kaitlin:

Novice Silver

Welcome to Semi & Sylas who joined our group this past week. Please make sure to introduce yourself and help them feel welcome to our group.

This past week we have spent a lot of time working on streamlines and dolphin kicks. It is important to remember to do them at least past the flags each time you push off the wall. We went further as the week went on so please don't forget to do them from now on! We also had a big butterfly day on Wednesday. We did a lot of butterfly drills and I saw significant improvement from everyone. A few key things to remember: use those big kicks to help you and don't let them stop when you are breathing, keep your arms long and relaxed when you bring them over the water, pull your arms under the water below your body, not outside of your body, and put your face back in the water before the T. Zamilla did a wonderful job on working on her long arms and Ellie did a great job of keeping her arms nice and long. Way to go girls!

Age Group Gold

Theme for week 3 is,,,,streamline and dolphin kicks! I can not even tell you how big of a difference I have seen in practice when people remember to think about the theme and then apply it. Everyone is now making it at least past the flags and most times further. I think this has been my favorite theme so far because everyone has remembered to do it throughout the whole week thus far. Now we just have to remember to do it even when it is not the theme of the week...or at meets! A few common mistakes: not very tight streamlines and big slow dolphin kicks. If you want those dolphin kicks to be the most effective, make them small and fast with a tight streamline.

Last Friday we did our first combined set with Pre-Senior Blue. We will be combining with them for a main set each Friday so we can have more racing opportunities. Some people loved it, others not so much. The set that we do will change each week, but the main idea behind combining groups will not....RACE. Swimming with or against Pre-Senior blue gives us a much needed opportunity to race people that are not in our group, as we will at meets. Please make sure you take advantage of the racing opportunities that are given to you, as that is something we need to practice for meets. And we can have the chance to show Mark and Pre-Senior Blue just how fast Age Group Gold is!

From Coach Matt:

AG Bronze/Silver:

This week we got ready for the Forest Grove meet. I took half of the group and worked on breaststroke and freestyle breakouts. For freestyle, we tried to hit the surface as quickly and with the most speed as possible off the blocks. Remember to kick “through” the surface of the water and try to get to full speed as fast as you can. Also, you want to be able to have your tempo at full speed on your first stroke and don’t spend too much time under water when you are doing sprints. On breaststroke we did run dives and tried to have the biggest pullouts we have ever done. Don’t rush your pullouts! Once you hit the water in a tight streamline, count to 3 before you start your pullout. We also did knock outs with the following results:

Freestyle:

Winners – Ian and Dasha

Breastoke:

11 year old winner – Nathan

12 and over winner – Elijah

Overall Winner - Nathan

Bronze:

We are getting better with streamlines and doing flipturns without me asking, and it looks like people are actively thinking about how they are swimming. Keep it up! Also, we worked last week on tempo as a group with AG Bronze. This is a new term for a lot of our squad but I think they got a grasp on it pretty quickly. We are working on swimming with faster strokes but keeping the same number of strokes across the pool. I feel that our squad swims with a much slower tempo while sprinting and once we speed it up we can drop a lot of time. Just remember to count your strokes and try not to take more than one or two strokes more than when you are swimming easy. We want to have big fast strokes not slow small strokes or fast small strokes.

From Coach Ryan:

Pre-Senior Black

We are really starting to take flight as a group this season, as the competition in both dryland and in the water are starting to heat up. This week we tested military abs in dryland (as many as you can in 1:00):

Marysia: 45

Janelle: 34

Maddy: 35

Brandon: 40

Catherine: 53

Christina: 39

Nicole: 40

Lane: 45

Sam: 39

Lucy: 50

Over half of those results were PR's for people, congratulations! I'm starting to see a lot more interest from PS Black swimmers in what their previous results were and what their teammates are doing. This is creating a healthy level of competition amongst the group.

On Thursday and Friday, we did some 50's racing and I saw some fast and well spirited swims. On Friday, we actually split up into three teams of two, with each swimmer swimming a 50 of

each event. I combined the teammates' times to create an overall time for each team and the results were as follows:

Catherine/Lucy: 5:39.7

Jonathan/Maddy: 5:21.0

Marysia/Sam: 5:28.6

Congrats to both Jonathan and Maddy and props to Marysia, who swam a 50 breast get-out swim at the end of practice with the time of 43.4 (1.1 seconds faster than she did earlier in practice!).

Best of luck to everyone swimming at the always fun and entertaining Hawaii 5-0 meet this weekend!