

The York Y Rambler
By Coach Michael
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WHO DO YOU SWIM FOR?

At one of the major meets we attended this past year, the swimmers and I stayed a day late and worked out with the host team the morning after the meet. I was astounded that only about five or six out of their forty swimmers wore their team cap – the rest wore generic caps, triathlon caps, high school or summer league team caps, etc. I felt proud that our swimmers wear our team cap to practice and race in. But lately we have had a rash of non-team swimming caps at practice, and I've been feeling a little like I did at that meet, only the shoe is on the other foot. No more. I want to be able to tell what team I am coaching when I look at our swimmers. From here on out, your only two options for caps are the black York Y cap, or a USA National team cap with the American flag and your name under it. If you show up to the pool wearing anything other than these two acceptable options, I will hand you a York Y cap and bill your escrow account accordingly.

FUNDING EXCELLENCE

Most of our swimming families have had an opportunity to see the new Graham Aquatic Center since the outdoor pool opened last month. Our future home is quickly being built, and I for one am so excited I can't sit still. Soon we will have a beautiful, new, and much much bigger facility to use as the home base for our team. We will have room to grow, and room to train at a very high level without being crushed into lanes like sardines. We have come a very long way over the past year and a half, and we are poised to take an even bigger leap forward and upward as we move to Graham.

Everyone on the team has been receiving blast emails regarding the upcoming team gala in October. I hope everyone also understands just how important this gala is to the future of our team and its excellence. Recreational teams can be done on the cheap; excellent national-caliber ones cannot. If we are going to provide our swimmers and coaches with the opportunities to reach high levels of performance in this sport, we have got to have the support system behind them. That costs money. And it does not matter if you are eight years old or eighteen, a rising tide lifts all boats, and a truly excellent program helps a 10 & Under just as much as a Senior National level swimmer, even if the senior swimmer uses more of the team's resources right this second. The higher our older swimmers climb, the more opportunities will be available to all of our swimmers down the road. This gala involves the whole team, it will benefit the whole team, and it requires the whole team to make it successful.

If you have not already done so, please review the solicitation materials you have been sent, and please get out there and bring in some donations. We need to do much better than we have on both our silent and live auctions, and we need to do so quickly. So far a

few folks have done the brunt of the work and the fund-raising, and we definitely need to spread the burden. Remember, that this is YOUR team, and YOU derive the benefit of the process of excellence that we are teaching. Please help.

JUNIOR OLYMPICS COMING SOON TO A POOL NEAR YOU

The Middle Atlantic Junior Olympics are coming soon, from Thursday 24 July to Sunday 27 July. Entries are due this Monday – yes, the last day of the NBAC meet. That means the coaches have been working on them already, as we have little time to waste. Over the next couple of days we will email everyone the tentative entries, then almost immediately have to get our final entries in, so please let the coaches know IMMEDIATELY after you receive the tentative entries if there are any problems. If you know now that you have qualified but will not be able to attend, please let me know now and do not wait until the entries have been posted and distributed. This is going to be a quick turnaround.

As a general rule, those swimmers who are attending the Far Western meet in California right after the JO's will be entered in a limited selection at JO's: enough events to sharpen them but not so much as to exhaust them. Also note that the summer JO's are open to 19 and unders; this is different from the spring short course JO's which are only open to 14 and unders.

THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY OF OLYMPIC TRIALS

In a separate memo I wrote some of my thoughts about the Olympic Trials meet just concluded in Omaha. I was very impressed and pleased by the number of our swimmers who watched not only the daily finals coverage in the evenings on NBC and USA, but also the prelims coverage on the computer. This shows we are definitely developing educated and enthusiastic swimmers – the kind who get VERY fast! Over the next couple of weeks (as soon as I can get the VHS and DVD and miniDV material into my computer), I will be showing video from the meet during our dryland time as we ramp up into our championship meets. Can anyone think of a better way to get psyched to swim superfast than by watching superfast swimming?

FURTHERING YOUR SWIMMING EDUCATION

... And speaking of educated swimmers. You can learn a lot from swim meets, especially big ones, and most especially championship meets. Use a meet not just as an opportunity to race and improve your times, but also to learn about what makes fast swimming and fast swimmers. If you do not qualify for an evening finals session, attend it anyway, and watch carefully what the best swimmers are doing: what they look like when they race, what their splits are, how their walls are, how the races develop, etc. Analyze what they do as if they were lab rats in a science experiment. And start thinking about what you need to do in practice the next week so that you can swim that fast – and

faster. If you are attending a national-caliber meet and get a chance to watch Michael Phelps or Natalie Coughlin race, don't waste that chance playing Nintendo. Come home from the meet a smarter swimmer, and one motivated to reach their level.

I understand the desire of parents to get home and return to normalcy, and I understand the long hours spent at a meet waiting for two or three swims (by the way, this time goes by much quicker if you are an official and have your attention focused on each race, but that is another story). But you as a parent should value not only the thirty seconds your child spends in the water during the 50 free race, but you should also value the process: of your child staying loose and relaxed and hydrated between events, properly warming up physically and mentally, the pre- and post-race discussions with the coaches, the warming down and recovering and preparing for the next race. All these things, seemingly extraneous to the thirty seconds of frenzy, affect the outcome of the races tremendously and are part of the process of excellence, and of consistently excellent racing.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**The difference between people isn't so much
that some CAN and some CAN'T,
but rather that some DO and some DON'T.**