

CAMPS/CLINICS, COACHING PHILOSOPHY, AND FUTURE VISION

Camps and Clinics

We always have parents and swimmers interested in the summer camps and clinics offered (mostly) through universities. For that reason, I thought it would be beneficial for our team to provide some insight and guidelines when considering some of the options.

First and foremost – while we all would like to think there is some quick fix for a specific technique issue, the truth is, the quickest fix is for the athlete to be focused on the correction. College/Universities use the camps for two main reasons. 1. It is the largest fundraiser for their programs that they do (except alum donations). (200 camp kids at \$650/wk) 2. It gets prospective student-athletes on their campus to experience their facilities and staffs.

The question is, what do we want our athletes to accomplish from these camps? And the answer to this is simply – we want them to have a motivational experience that allows them to come back home and be motivated, to make a step up, in the way that they practice their skills and the effort they are willing to put into EVERY training session.

What we do NOT want is our athletes to come back – out of shape – or with erroneous technique ideas that do not work within our program. This can cause our swimmers to take a huge step back in – who to believe and what the “right” way to perform a technique. In that, swimmers and parents must understand that there are as many philosophies as to how swimmers should train from 4 years old to 18 as there are swim coaches.

For our 12 and under ages – we suggest University of Louisville. It is not that far away for our younger athletes first time away from home. They also, for the majority of skills addressed, REINFORCE what we do at our program. Other camps are a risky choice at best. For our teenage swimmers the only camp we suggest is our own training trip. At around 13 our swimmers move into a program designed to improve technique and create an aerobic base. A week off of this is detrimental to our season. Many camps on contact will allow additional training sessions, but they simply are not the same as what we do. Our Training Trip has many advantages, some of these include: an opportunity, unmatched to create team unity, specific technique enhancement in a focused training group, and the coaches overview of nutritional intake for the week. Our teenage swimmers/families do themselves a disservice in both training consistency and technique advancement at camps.

Coaching Philosophy

We strive to make NSC an environment for swimmers to find successes at their own pace. There are many clubs in Indiana and in our immediate area that are – status quo – and that is to be successful NOW. It makes the club and the coach look good to have these early successes, but at what cost? There have been numerous studies done by USA swimming and researchers that show a very small percentage of young champions (12 and Under) are still competing in senior swimming and even fewer make it to the college programs. A 10 year old state champion that has not equipped themselves with the process

of constant technique improvement and light volume training to allow for increases as the body grows will simply not be swimming or at best not be swimming happily later on in life.

We have had and will have more families in the future leave our program for the promise of creating that young champion. What needs to be observed in this situation is the longevity of the success. Do the other programs boast successful high school and then 4 years of improvement at the collegiate level?

What must be weighed is as simple as this – when your child is 22 looking back at their swimming career, will they look back with a love of the sport and recognizing the character traits they have learned to make them successful – or will they have boxes of trophies and medals to prove that they were good when they were 12, can't wait to get out of the sport, and look at it all with an unfortunate distaste to both the sport and many times to the parent(s) that pushed them rather than provided them with encouragement and support.

Our goal is to provide all ages of our athletes a group that is similar in age and ability level to allow them to excel. For 11 and unders the group focus is on technique and skill development. As swimmers age up in the program, their commitment level will become more and we want our swimmers to look forward to and “buy into” the increased time and effort required. We have younger swimmers who are as fast or faster than our Senior level swimmers, but moving quickly to the top of our program leaves no where for them to go. We don't want swimmers to spend years in the same group, we have to leave room for an increase in training load and more importantly we want them to be around their peer group.

Vision of the Future

We have packed many kids in lanes for all the time that I have been coaching at NSC. This obviously is not the greatest situation. Crashing into each other, waiting, and the simple sensory overload of a pool that is at capacity from 3:00-8:30 is now coming to a close. Through the efforts of many of our parents we have a new facility coming our way. While some of the most obvious things will improve (air quality, water temperature, and scheduling), some other areas should not be overlooked. For our younger groups, the coaches will be able to see each swimmer better. In our current situation, managing a large group in one or two lanes leave the coach able to only make limited correction-by the time the coach has sent off the last swimmer, the first ones in the group are already at the other end. For our older swimmers, we have a similar situation, the intervals must be adjusted to our slower swimmers, sometimes leaving our faster swimmers unchallenged. For all ages, more room simply allows for more concentration on skills, rather than worrying about the person in front or behind you.

The new pool will provide our club team with the next critical step in providing, without comparison, the best environment for success.