

WORLD CLASS UPDATE

JANUARY 2007

WINNING - A COACHING LESSON by Bill Sweetenham, National Performance Director British Swimming

During my career I have had the great fortune to work with an outstanding group of coaches who have had a tremendous and positive influence on my development as a coach. Many of these are without the knowledge of the profound effect that they have had on me and my philosophies during my coaching career. I believe the following story provided me with a lesson in winning that I would like to share with other coaches who may benefit also from this experience.

At the 1976 Olympics, as a young coach of only 25 years of age, I had the good fortune of coaching a great athlete in a world record time onto the Australian Olympic team. As a coach of the highest ranked swimmer on that team, I had, some would say, arrogantly wanted and expected to be on the Australian Olympic team. Due to my lack of experience I was overlooked in this appointment and was left on the outside.

Frustrated and somewhat annoyed, I had desired the opportunity to be with the athlete to look after his training and preparation in total leading into the Olympics. While today I still feel strongly that I should have been given more access to work with the athlete, I now realise I needed far more development as a coach and experience to be given the privilege and recognition at such an early age as a national coach.

So with the frustration and the torment of not being included in the team or being part of the athlete's final preparation for an Olympic performance, and at my own expense, I was sitting in the grandstand as a spectator to the Olympic swim programme. On one of the nights I was sitting in front of a group of American swimming personalities, one of which was a coach named Peter Daland.

Having an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, my ears were listening to the conversation behind me while my eyes soaked up the experience of watching the feast of great athletes perform in the pool.

Peter Daland had several swimmers on the American team at these Olympics but like me was not on the national team and was sat in the spectator section of the Olympics. Having realised he had swimmers winning Olympic gold medals at this meet, I introduced myself and asked whether he had the same anxieties and frustrations as I had in having swimmers on the team but not being with them to coach and care for them.

He explained in detail that he had great faith in the abilities of his peer coaches on the USA Olympic team and that he felt secure that he had prepared his athlete to be able to handle the environment themselves and any distraction that the Olympic competition and situations threw at them. My immediate thought was how could this coach feel this way and why wouldn't he wish to be there to look after them in every possible way.

Only after about 12 months of further coaching did I realise two things. One, that I made a great friend in a coach that would teach me many more lessons in my development as an international coach, and two, that I had an accountability and responsibility to develop all the athletes that I would work with in the future to have an independence and maturity without my constant supervision and presence. I learned to have faith in other coaches and that their knowledge and experience when shared with me and the athletes that I was working with could be beneficial to all concerned.

I would acknowledge Peter Daland for this lesson and all the work that he did with me in my development in those all-important years. I went on to work with Peter and seek and receive his advice on many other occasions, and I continue to do this. I would like to thank and acknowledge Peter for these lessons.

In my coaching today, I now have the courage to pass athletes on to other coaches and to have faith in that other coaches can professionally prepare athletes with their best interests at heart as well as I do. In this regard, coaches should learn, mature and realise that there is not only one way to produce a result nor that you are the only person who can get the best results from your athletes provided you prepare the athlete to be independent and accountable and responsible for their own performances without your continual presence.

Many coaches have not learned this lesson and they continue to think that they are the only coach who can work with, prepare and provide leadership to their athletes in their attempts to attain winning performances.

It has been my findings that coaches who cannot learn these lessons, or fail to learn these lessons, deny themselves the opportunity to fully appreciate their own coaching talents or develop the maximum potential of the athlete that they work with.

The ability of a coach at any level to pass a swimmer on to another programme, who they feel and know can assist in the athlete's development, is a strength and provides the coach with a feeling of confidence and fulfilment in the knowledge that they have put the best interests of the athlete first.

This applies equally to the coach who can establish within their athletes the knowledge confidence and leadership that while they as a coach have to believe that they are the best person to coach the athletes in their squad that they are not the only coach that can contribute to the athletes success.

Coaches failing to appreciate these lessons are continually observed working with athletes who under achieve at the podium level due to the lack of understanding and acceptance of these essential winning skills.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Peter Daland and all the other coaches who have shared with me winning experiences and valuable lessons.

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2006 European Long Course Championships Coaches Medals

Coach	Club	Individual Medals			Relay Medals			Total
		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Gold	Silver	Bronze	
Ben Titley	Loughborough		1	2	2		3	8
Fred Vergnoux	City of Edinburgh	1	1	1	1			4
Ian Turner	Loughborough					3	1	4
Bill Furniss	Nova		1		1			2
Bill Pilczuk	Swansea Performance			1			1	2
Frank Busch	Arizona					1	1	2
Chris Martin	Stirling					1	1	2
Dave McNulty	Durham Aquatics		1					1
Stephen Hill	City of Glasgow			1				1
Marc Spackman	Lincoln Vulcans				1			1
Colin Stripe	City of Liverpool				1			1
Adam Ruckwood	City of Birmingham				1			1
Eileen Adams	City of Aberdeen					1		1
Ian Oliver	City of Newcastle						1	1

British Swimming 2006 Development Tours incorporating the Queensland State Swimming Championships

Two end of year Development tours took place from the 24th November with the teams returning to the UK on the 21st December.

The male tour trained at the Millennium Institute of Health and Sport in Auckland for two weeks, while the female tour trained in Singapore at the Toa Payoh Centre of Excellence for the same period. Both tours then moved onto Brisbane for four days of training prior to the commencement of the six-day Queensland State Open and Age Swimming Championships that commenced on the 14th December at Chandler pool. Full training was maintained throughout the period prior to the Championships commencing, with swimmers not tapered or shaved for the competition. The teams also joined forces with the British Swimming Offshore centre programme at the Championships ensuring Great Britain had a big presence at the meet.

Considering the training levels coming into the championships, the team enjoyed outstanding performances, which can be summarised as follows - 26 swimmers were members of the Development end of year tour and competed at the Queensland Championships, they returned with a grand total of 68 medals, the Offshore swimmers also won 4 medals. Therefore British Swimmers came away with 72 medals - 26 Gold, 26 Silver and 20 Bronze medals.

From the 26 swimmers on the tours, 25 returned with a medal giving the team an impressive medal strike rate of 96.1% (The females all won a medal therefore they had a 100% strike rate and the boys strike rate was 91.6%). The target strike rate for any British team is 60 to 70% of the team to return with a medal. Therefore this was more than achieved. And 13 of the 26 swimmers on the end of year tour team won a Gold medal at the championships.

The strike rate of improvement from heat swims to final swims was also very impressive with 70 from 82 swims being faster which is an improvement strike rate of 85%.

The end of year tours had 206 individual entries of which 115 were finalist's swims, which equates to almost 56% of all individual swims making finals. From the 115 finalists swims, 68 medals were won, this makes another impressive statistic of 59% of all final swims winning medals.

With only two visitors allowed to progress to age group finals and only three visitors allowed to progress to open finals the British performances were even more impressive.

There were many outstanding performances from the British Swimmers at the Championships, too many to list in one report, however the most medalled female and male swimmers from the tours were,

Ellen Gandy (Beckenham) returned to Great Britain with 12 medals (8 in individual events and 4 from relay swims). Xavier Mohammed (Bexley) led the way for the male swimmers from Great Britain returning with 10 medals (7 in individual events and 3 from relay swims).

A total of 11 of the 68 medals won by the Development tours were in relay events, as the team was allowed to enter the club relays, which were 4 x 50m for 16 years and under and the full Olympic programme of relays for the open events. This again has provided the swimmers with valuable experience of competing in a championship meet in individual events and having to back up in relays as well.

Looking ahead, the swimmers now focus toward the British LC Championships in March 2007 as well as maintaining the training standards as established on the tour. I would like to thank the tour staff who did an outstanding job for the best part of a full month away representing Great Britain and congratulate the swimmers on their performances knowing they are now back into full training preparing for the next British LC Championships.

John Atkinson
Director of World Class Programmes
British Swimming

SUPERIOR IN SKILL, INVINCIBLE IN ATTITUDE

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Development Male Team

Staff

Head Coach	Rhys Gormley (Barnet Copthall)
Coach	Shelly Camy (Bexley)
Coach	Jon Rudd (Plymouth Leander)
Manager	Helen Slatter
Tutor	Dr Alison Mowbray, Auckland Camp

Swimmers

Xavier Mohammed (Bexley)

- 6 Gold, 3 Silver, 1 Bronze = 10 medals

Chris Walker-Hebborn (Ipswich)

- 4 Gold, 2 Silver, 1 Bronze = 7

Peter Thompson (Middlesbrough)

- 3 Gold, 2 Silver = 5

James Doolan (City of Salford)

- 3 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze = 5

Andrew Hodgson (Swansea Performance)

- 2 Silver = 2

Robert Matthews Stroud (Ealing)

- 2 Silver = 2

Max Partridge (City of Sheffield)

- 1 Silver, 1 Bronze = 2

Andrew Sheppard (City of Sheffield)

- 1 Silver = 1

Matthew Shead (Millfield)

- 1 Silver = 1

Adam John (Plymouth Leander)

- 1 Bronze = 1

Andrew Rodgie (Carnegie)

- 1 Bronze = 1 medal

Theo Hirst (Stockport Metro)

Steven Beckerleg (Plymouth Leander)

- Did not compete in the championships, due to injury

Development Female Team

Staff

Head Coach	Mark Rose (Derwentio Excel)
Coach	Adam Ruckwood (City of Birmingham)
Coach	Steve Cox (City of Sheffield)
Manager	Nora O'Brien
Tutor	Linda Darbon (Singapore camp)
Nutritionist	Gill Horgan (Singapore camp)

Swimmers

Ellen Gandy (Beckenham)

- 8 Gold, 1 Silver, 3 Bronze = 12 medals

Emma Smithurst (Derwentio Excel)

- 1 Gold, 8 Silver = 9 medals

Lauren Collins (City of Birmingham)

- 1 Gold, 4 Silver, 1 Bronze = 6

Rachael George (Hatfield)

- 4 Gold, 1 Silver = 5

Aimee Wilmott (Middlesbrough)

- 3 Gold, 2 Silver = 5

Alexandra Hooper (City of Birmingham)

- 3 Gold, 1 Silver = 4

Sasha Matthews (Nova Centurion)

- 1 Gold, 3 Silver = 4

Charlotte Barnes (University of Bath)

- 2 Gold, 1 Silver = 3

Emma Bird (Nova Centurion)

- 2 Gold, 1 Silver = 3

Alexandra Warren (University of Bath)

- 3 Silver = 3

Fern Davies (City of Birmingham)

- 1 Silver, 2 Bronze = 3

Chloe Ross (Beckenham)

- 1 Silver, 1 Bronze = 2

Rebecca Turner (City of Sheffield)

- 1 Silver, 1 Bronze = 2

Chloe Hart (Beckenham)

- 1 Silver = 1

BRITISH SWIMMING CALENDAR 2007

February

3-4 Feb	Lifeskills Workshop (Development)
23-24	Sports Science Testing
23 Feb-20th Mar	World Championship Preparation Camp Group 1&2, Gold Coast

March

1st-20th Mar	World Championships Preparation Camp Group 3
14-24 Mar	World Open Water Championships Final Preparation, Melbourne
18-25 Mar	World Open Water Championships
20-24 Mar	World LC Final Preparation, Melbourne
25-1 Apr	World LC Championships Melbourne
26-1 Apr	British LC Championships, Manchester

April

1-6 Apr	Female Freestyle Camp (Dev)
10-12 Apr	Development Camp 1, Swansea
13-15 Apr	Development Camp 2, Swansea
27-28 Apr	Sport Science Testing

May

10-24 May	Men's Camp Arizona and Irvine Meet
25-28 May	Camp and Competition (Dev), Lisbon

June

TBA	Women's Camp
8-10 Jun	Seven Hill Meet, Rome
9 Jun	Open Water 10k World Cup, Seville
16 Jun	Open Water Jnr International, London
16 Jun	LEN Open Water Swimming, London
TBA	Men's Camp, Cyprus, Callala or Rome
TBA	Sports Science Testing (Dev)
22-23 Jun	Sports Science Testing

July

6th Jul	European Junior Open Water, Milan
18-22 Jul	European Junior Championships, Antwerp
23-26 Jul	ASA National Age Group Championships, Sheffield
23-27 Jul	European Youth Olympic Festival, Belgrade
27 Jul - 1 Aug	ASA Senior and Youth Championships, Sheffield

August

2-5 Aug	Paris International Meet
8-18 Aug	World University Games, Bangkok
21-24	Japan International Meet, Chiba, Japan

September

16-22 Sep	Event Camps (Development)
30 Sep	Open Water 10K World Cup, Hong Kong

October/November

TBA	Endless Summer Camps
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December

13-16 Dec	European Short Course Championships, Hungary
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