

# NASA Coach's Corner

October 2020

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**“Whatever you do in life,  
surround yourself with  
smart people who’ll argue  
with you”**

- John Wooden

## Off and Rolling

*From Coach Hembree*

Only a month into the season and we have seen a lot of changes going on around the pool. Everything from moving facilities, new coaches, to growth in our athletes. We are off and rolling and by all accounts things are off to a great start.

Our registration numbers for the fall are some of the best we have seen in the past few years and we are seeing great practice attendance. This is a recipe for team success. The coaching staff is excited for what is going on in the club right now and where we are going this season. I think we have assembled a great group of coaches that are going to help your swimmers excel this season.

At the senior level we spent a good portion of our summer and fall time getting back to basics. We spent a lot of time focusing on doing the strokes right, before trying to do them fast. Technique is paramount to our swimmers long term development. As we head into October we are seeing the benefits of this focus. I am seeing a lot of test set times that are already faster than anything they went all last winter. This renewed focus on doing the stroke right is setting up the group for some great performances this year.

## Locker Room Updates

Beginning on Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> we will begin allowing the Elementary groups to use the locker rooms **AFTER** practice. Swimmers will still need to arrive to the pool in their suits. They will be able to use the locker rooms after practice to change out of their wet suits. Showers will not be available during this time. All swimmers must wear a mask while in the locker room and if needed the coaching staff will limit the number of swimmers in the locker room at any given time.

Again the NASA coaches and Board of Directors would like to thank you for your patience and flexibility as we continue to work through the ever changing landscape of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We will continue to keep you up to date with any new information as we have it.

## Age Group Happenings

### From Coach Emma

There has been a ton of growth in this group over the last month, and we're so excited to see so many new faces! This month the elementary blue group has been focused on proper stroke technique, especially for freestyle and backstroke, and have improved a lot by working on kick, head positioning, and long arms. We have also worked on butterfly and backstroke kick, diving, finishes, and overall being more comfortable in the water by practicing different float techniques.

We have also had fun playing games and doing relays during practice, pushing ourselves to do longer distances (and being excited to do them!), and taking turns suggesting exercises during dryland on Saturday mornings. Please make sure when you come on Saturday that you are wearing tennis shoes and shorts and a t-shirt, and I'd love to see everyone consistently bringing a water bottle! I'm so proud of how much improvement I've seen this month and am excited to see what October brings!

### From Coach Andrew

Over the month of September, I have witnessed growth in many areas. We were able to grow in our adaptability skills by having to share pool space with the high school during a crappy situation! We grew our team bonds at mini golf, which was a total blast! And we have become more focused on constant improvement in and out of the water. We've really been hitting on stroke and drill refinement over the last 4 weeks, and it has made a tremendous difference in our overall swimming. Each week we have one or two primary objectives that we work at, and so far this group has done an amazing job at meeting those objectives. We are consistently making improvements and having fun while working hard. Looking ahead, we're going to be working on fast starts and finishes, kick endurance, all while getting ready for our first meet here in a few weeks! I'm really looking forward to these weeks ahead of training and where we go as a group.

### From Coach Dan

In the Middle School Gold group this month, we have been learning about training for efficiency during practice. We have started to work on a season plan that will help us to monitor our heart rate during training to stay more efficient over longer distances. Utilizing social distancing as a tool for communication growth, rather than a hindrance, has really brought us together for some great results. The group seems to be having a lot of fun. This month we have an 87% average attendance which means collectively the kids are missing less than 1 practice a week. We also managed to play hooky one practice to play a fun round of putt putt. Shout out to Liam Hallberg, who had the most hole-in-ones!!! Unfortunately, Tritonwear doesn't work for Mini Golf. We have been using the devices every day and the kids are really getting into being able to react to the live data on the TV screens at the end of the pool. I am really looking forward to this season with this crew, they are awesome!  
-Coach Dan



## Important Dates

3<sup>rd</sup> - Indiana Swimming House of Delegates Meeting

19<sup>th</sup> - High School Parent Meeting - 6:45p NHS Fieldhouse

23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> - MCS Fall Break

27<sup>th</sup> - Girls High School Team First Official Day

**"In order for your taper to work, you have to do things correctly from the BEGINNING of the year. If you have done what you need to in the fall and winter, your spring taper almost can't go wrong"**

- Coach Eddie Reese

## Swimmer of the Month

### Elementary Blue

I chose Calista for elementary blue group this month because of her consistency. She loves to come to practice, asks great questions, and is encouraging and helpful to her teammates. She always brings a water bottle and actively seeks to challenge herself. She has improved a lot this month and I can't wait to see what she does next!

- Coach Emma



### Elementary Gold

September's Elementary Gold Group Swimmer of the Month is Teagan. This past month Teagan has displayed the values of a NASA swimmer showing her **Toughness**, by working hard in practice with no complaints when a hard set is announced. **Selflessness**, by setting aside her personal feelings during practice. Teagan has shown **Continuous Improvement** by dropping her 50 free training intervals from a 1 min 20 sec to a 1 min in the last month. By doing these things she has shown **Leadership** for her fellow athletes that has not gone unnoticed. This has given Teagan the **Merit** to be the September Swimmer of the Month.

- Coach Powell



### Middle School Blue

Ava has been working extremely hard this month! She has made so many improvements in her swimming and mentality. She shows up to every practice ready to work hard. She's shown to me and her teammates what toughness really is. I think Ava also does a really great job of putting merit into each workout. We talked about what merit means a few weeks ago as a group, and I think that really stuck with her. I look forward to Ava's future success in the pool!

- Coach Andrew



### Middle School Gold

This past month, Madox has embodied the concept of hard work. He has been sore after tough practices, hungry at home, and tired almost every night. He has only missed one practice all month, and he communicated to me ahead of time and even asked for a workout to do while he was gone. In fact, he has communicated all of these things to me, his coach, extremely well. It has given me a better understanding of his stroke and what muscles he is using every day during his exercise routine. He has learned new stretches to help recover those muscles and become stronger and management skills to handle the workload of his school life along with swimming. I am proud of Madox for his strong discipline toward his sport during the Month of September.

- Coach Dan



## Senior/Elite/National

The senior staff chose Trey Johnson as our September Swimmer of the Month. Trey has come back from our time off in the spring as a totally different athlete. He has been much more coachable on a daily basis and is putting himself in a position for success. I have also seen Trey taking on some leadership opportunities when the situation presents itself. I am excited to see what Trey can accomplish with this new approach.



## September Perfect Attendance

Luke Dibley - National Group

Sydney Nethercutt - National Group

Jeremiah Bekhterev - Middle School Blue

Karlee Greensides - Elementary Blue

Sophia Short - Elementary Blue

**"Each person must live their life as a model for others"**  
- Rosa Parks

## Safe Sport Corner

### Scenario

You go into the locker room after practice and, while changing, are distracted by a group of swimmers behind you laughing and clapping loudly. You ignore it for a bit, but then they call your name to come and join them. You realize they are posing for pictures in front of the mirror, taking a picture and posting them as part of their streaks on Snapchat. You are told, "no worries - the pictures disappear!"

### Discussion Questions

- What do you do?
- Why do you think that taking pictures in the locker room is against the rules?
- Do you have to tell your coach?
- Does it make a difference if the pictures disappear (such as on Snapchat) or if they're posted to something more permanent (such as Instagram)?



## Technology Corner

### TritonWear

The NASA coaching staff continues to find ways to incorporate TritonWear into our workouts. Over the past month we have been focusing on the swimmers efficiency or what TritonWear calls stroke index (speed x Distance per stroke). As this has been a primary focus of our training it became increasingly important to get that data in front of swimmers in real time. To make this a reality we have been putting the Swimmers TritonWear data up on TV's during practice so that the swimmers can see their data in real time and make real time adjustments. The coaching staff has already seen huge improvements from our swimmers taking this approach. The coaching staff would like to thank all who donated equipment to make these setups possible for our athletes.



TritonWear on deck setup

## Parent Corner

### *5 Things for Parents to Avoid When Cultivating Grit*

Raising athletes to be resilient and persistent in the face of struggles or challenges is an important role for every parent, but it can be hard to know where to draw the line when helping athletes develop 'grit.' An athlete with grit, as explained by Angela Duckworth, the scientist who coined the term, is able to "sustain interest in and effort toward very long-term goals."

Here are a five common mistakes that parents make when trying to instill that spirit in athletes.

#### **Avoid Cultivating a Winner-Only Mindset**

It's easy to praise hard work and 'grit' when it's leading to successful games or competitions. Unfortunately, this means that determination and grit often end up feeling synonymous with 'winning' and 'being a winner' for young athletes.

It's your responsibility as a parent to help them understand that it's possible – and perhaps more important – to have grit when things aren't going their way.

A board-certified family physician and respected youth development and resilience expert, Deborah Gilboa, MD, explains on her website, "The most important lessons are learned in adversity, so we have to remind ourselves not to shield young people, but to enable and encourage their problem-solving and self-confidence."

At the end of the day, emphasizing an athlete's determination during hard times is more important to their long-term development than praising it when the athlete is finding success.

#### **Avoid Offering Extrinsic Motivation**

Offering a reward like a pizza party for winning seems like an easy motivational tactic, but it can backfire. Even athletes who are initially intrinsically motivated can become focused on the material rewards rather than performance and grit for the sheer love of the sport.

Gilboa agrees and shares, "The social science research on behavior change shows that rewards systems (usually called Token Economies in the literature) are effective for only short periods. Over time, the motivation decreases even if the rewards don't change."

"The biggest problem is this is not great preparation for the world ahead of our children," Gilboa states on her website. "When we want our kids to learn good habits, we need to expect it of them and link the mastery of a task to a new privilege. Kids are desperate to be acknowledged as older or more mature and this is a great motivator."

## Avoid Pushing Grit Through Injury and Illness

Dedication is a great quality, but a parent can accidentally pressure an athlete to push through illness or even injury in the name of 'giving it your all.' Pay close attention to athletes for signs of injuries or illness, especially in athletes you know already display a lot of persistence without prompting. There's a line between persisting through a rough patch and pushing so hard that an athlete ends up injured and sitting out for the season...or even longer.

Gilboa reassures parents that even without risking further injury to play, the athlete "can learn resilience – by overcoming the adversity of injury. To do that, he needs you to see that he is facing something that is difficult for him. You don't have to understand why it's difficult or agree that it is. You do have to help him see the steps to recovery and praise him when he chooses to follow those steps."

## Avoid Promoting a Fixed Mindset

Telling your athlete that they are 'naturally talented' or 'the team all-star without even practicing' is merely enabling a fixed mindset.

"Children who wither when confronted with challenges view their abilities as fixed – once they fall short, it's very hard for them to rebound. On the other hand, kids who develop a "growth" mindset believe they can improve (in ability and intelligence) over time and with practice. They view new challenges as fun and exciting," explains Gilboa.

## Avoid Using Nouns Instead of Verbs

A recent study showed that children persist better with difficult tasks when they don't have to figure out what it means to 'be' something. More specifically, "using verbs to talk to children about behavior – such as 'you can help' – can lead to more determination following setbacks than using nouns to talk about identities, for instance, 'you can be a helper,'" explains the study's author.

For your athlete, that may mean asking them to "congratulate each teammate post-game," versus telling them to "be a good teammate." This also relates to talking about how a game went: The players aren't 'losers,' they 'lost a game.'

Remember that helping your athlete see how hard work and determination payoff is critical to their current and future goals.