

WSCA

World Swimming Coaches Association

Serving and supporting coaches worldwide

Quarterly Newsletter - March 2025

"We aim above the mark to hit the mark." - *Ralf Waldo Emerson*



INTRODUCTION

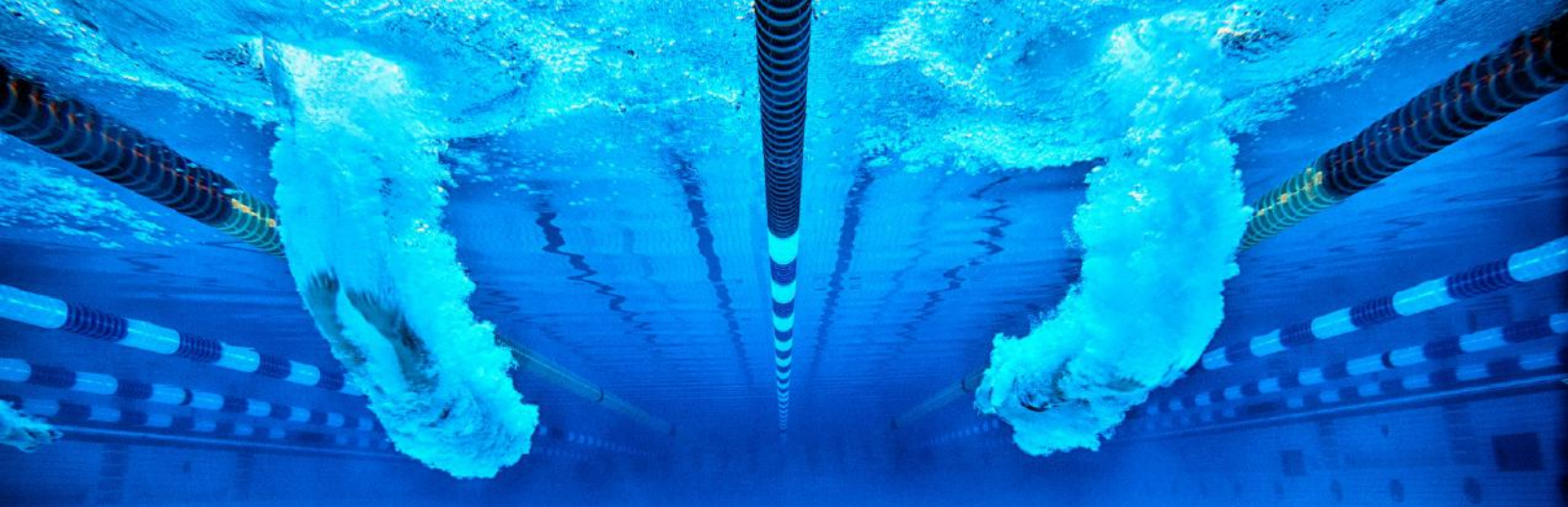
The general objective of the **WSCA** Newsletter is to give you tools to help you grow as a coach and to offer insights into culture, professionalism, training, technique, and inspiration from around the world. You will also be introduced to coaches, clubs, and regions internationally. This edition will offer the first in a series of writings from world-renowned coach Bill Sweetenham. In "The Art of Swimming War", Bill sheds light on the components, methodologies, and standards needed to bring a program, and a nation, to the pinnacle of the sport. You will hear what Olympic Silver Medalist and World Record holder Milo Cavic focuses on developing world-class butterfly. We also offer a coach spotlight from a native Algerian coach, now coaching in Canada, who has ascended to the pinnacle of the sport, as well as an update on the successes of Kazakhstan Swimming under National Team coach Ilya Gussakov. You will read an excerpt from the WSCA Pro Course manual on culture building, the glue to all great organizations. Finally, we will highlight our two new partners and iconic global contributors to the sport of swimming: one through media and news in **Swimming World Magazine** and the other as the global leader in training equipment in **FINIS**. We will close with some inspirational material to help you foster leadership in your club, and with a WSCA Coach's Survey ranking coaching challenges.

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- [ISCA Sports Science](#)
- [Lane One, Making Waves \(podcast\) by Summer Fink](#)
- [WOWSA Education](#)
- [WSCA Articles](#)
- [Relate Water](#)
- [Swimming World Magazine](#)
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Messages to Our Members

Dr. Jon Rudd, WSCA Chair

It is an honor and a privilege to represent coaches on a global basis in what we believe to be the greatest sport in the world. We believe that WSCA is unique in that we are independent, global, objective, and connected to the world through continental representatives and regional advisors. Additionally, we can speak to, and support, the pursuit of Olympic aspirations as well as grassroots development. In any capacity, we are here for you and we greatly appreciate the work you are doing on behalf of dedicated athletes worldwide.

Meriem Kebbab, WSCA President, CEO

WSCA is excited to support you in many ways. Our leadership team will continue to provide education, guidance, and expertise in a wide range of areas, including quarterly Q&A's with our Board, and webinars with world-renowned coaches. We know that the driving force of this sport lies within you, the coach, and we hope to be partners with you on your professional journey. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can help in any way.

George Block, WSCA Vice Chair

WSCA is unique to other organizations in that its leadership team has a history of advocacy that is second to none in terms of voice and expertise. Additionally, with vantage points within World Aquatics, European Aquatics, and national team positions worldwide, WSCA can observe, and speak to, issues that affect the highest levels of the sport, as well as local and regional concerns.

Don Heidary, Coach Education

Coach education begins internally, in the heart of a coach, with a deep desire to foster personal growth and athletic potential. While nuances, philosophies, drills, training methodologies are endless, a few core principles can drive extraordinary success at the athlete and club level. We implore coaches to go within, with a life purpose, and fully embrace the privilege to develop athletes and to impact the lives of those you work with. Success will follow intent, and education will enhance it. We hope this newsletter serves that end.

World Swimming Coaches Association

Feature Article



THE ART OF SWIMMING WAR

Written by **Bill Sweetenham**

The following comes from the sixty annual "missions" and "ways" of Bill Sweetenham, including lessons learned from failed campaigns. So-called "annual plans" by so-called leaders in the profit-driven professionals within the commercial world and less competitive organisations.

The Way, the Mission, and the Annual Plan have been designed progressively over sixty years, primarily from athletic feedback and detailed investigative factual research including innovative scientific facts. However, for this brief exercise I have kept the details to the essential facts.

THE WAY

The word "**discipline**" includes many connotations of a different nature and meaning to many different stakeholders when it is applied to performance-related subjects.

From my observations and personal performance experience, I have found that personal and team confidence is a powerful product, and the calculated outcome of both personal and team self-managed discipline.

Individual discipline drives and directs team performance outcomes in both individual and team competitiveness.

Every team's optimal winning performance has embraced individual excellence.

The clear and purposeful expectation is that individual and optimal excellence will produce, drive, and deliver winning team outcomes.



THE LAWS OF PROBABILITY AND POSSIBILITY...

Whilst it is an outside POSSIBILITY that a team with limited discipline can perform successfully, it remains a fact that a disciplined team will PROBABLY perform more consistently at a higher level.

WHO is responsible in developing the probability of a disciplined team...versus the possibility of developing an undisciplined team?

- **The separation of possibility and probability** is personal discipline, and the application of discipline drives individual outcomes which yields the team performance.

OBSERVATION OF DISCIPLINE...

Confidence is the consequence of discipline or undisciplined inspirations. Within a performance focused outcome, be it team or individual the difference, is implementation of accuracy with the avoidance at ALL costs that near enough is NOT good enough.

Any and all tasks must be well-rehearsed and thought out with a thorough pre-audit strategy so that the detail of all task execution is probable in preference to possible when final outcomes are expected.

WINNING OUTCOMES ARE A DIRECT RESULT OF CONFIDENT PREPARATION!!!

A winning "team" performance is a result-driven, and delivered by, a staff who has a personal performance track record of accomplishment in a related individual activity. With disciplined character (team), and attitude (personal), lead by a benevolent dictator with a common goal and target, this can be achieved.

A BENEVOLENT DICTATOR will deliver a disciplined outcome due to all stakeholders.....

THE MISSION

A **team attitude** to ensure improved margins, a reduction of overheads, and an increase in market share.

The key elements of improved performance as applied appropriately and very accurately into a market, are **method and system**. In order to realistically evaluate execution of improvement, these three protocols regarding accuracy of implementation are essential:

BUSINESS APPLICATION AS COMPARED TO THE ARTS AND SPORT

1. Improved margins

- accuracy of implementation...only giving advice ONCE and never having to repeat yourself
- equipment (reliability and availability)
- immediate feedback
- quality of feedback
- frequency of quality of feedback (no waste of words and mean what you say)
- absence of procrastination
- inclusion without intrusion
- effectiveness of staff
- skill in advance of talent and talent perfection in advance of fitness
- variety with accuracy of delivery
- clarity of decision making
- no short cuts in preparation
- no surprises
- accountability of training perfection

The result: all of the above delivered with EASE, DISCIPLINE and ACCURACY.

2. Reducing overheads...optimal use of staff

- facility organisational and operational
- multi operational staff usage
- Optimal operational cost (reduced to suit)
- specific and maximum staff education and efficiency
- knowledge of the heart and mind of all staff and athletes

3. Increased depth of market share (broader market base)

- areas of improvement are within schools
- promotion of performance success and result outcomes
- staff efficiency promotion
- building staff competence and system compliance ...continuous staff systems and at a superior level with on-field staff performing at an increased level of proficiency and efficiency to match and better the office staff.

All of the above performance protocols of

- **Improved margins**
- **Reduction of overheads**
- **Market increase**

delivered by a benevolent dictator, a personnel manager, and inclusive competent team-builder, who chooses to increase confidence through disciplined performance by all, to all, will produce optimal performance for the individual and team.

The lead communicator and operative is totally accountable and responsible for performance outcomes!! There can be no compromises in this no blame operation.

For the lead communicator and field operatives there is no better sound than the words of ... "mission accomplished". The nation's defence forces live and die by the significant and powerful sounds of living with the sound of this collective... "mission accomplished" valuation.

There are no second chances!! Mistakes in this area of performance in the medical profession are not acceptable for any and all reasons and excuses, nor for the conductor of the orchestra, or for performance deliverers in every area of operation in automotive industry.

All performance must be blame free and excuse; reason free!

Imagine in love and war industries saying we are in a "building or rebuilding phase".

Failure that has any element of the above, or contains any element of self-inflicted under-achievement, will be punishable by an opposition that is better prepared for not only the existing conditions but also any extreme or non-predictable conditions! **Consequences are not selective.**

REAP WHAT YOU HAVE SEWN

You personally have everything you require for optimal outcomes and if not, it is you the coach who will be accountable and responsible. Even against superior talent, the best prepared coach can outperform a slightly less efficient and less predictable system of operation.

The war of attrition can destroy a seemingly better prepared opponent.

The depth of tactical superior forces can and will outperform an opponent's weakness in any given area of a war party.

The vital advantage must be ... **a detailed**

mission and superior annual strategy of an all-inclusive..." way " of negating the strength of the opposition whilst promoting the strengths within the team in your command.

IT'S YOU! A team of best, right, good, and superior operatives will be put together by you.

ALWAYS AVOID ALL FORMS OF INTRUSION BY INCLUSION OF NON-ACCOUNTABLE OPERATIVES.

If you haven't earned a position in the fight, then you are not welcome to participate in the battle. No expertise by association operatives!

The war and battle are won by those directly in the fight. Every warrior must have and enjoy an active role in the war devoid of all advisors and participants.

"Active role" implies destroying an opponent during the battle! Should this not be a possibility, then you take up a valuable space in this war of attrition!

Only "front-line" operatives and field fighters in the ultimate and final battle!

Non-productive "noise" destroys and self-destructs the ability to win when you are up against an equally powerful and prepared opponent. Winning is considered the only acceptable outcome. A no-compromise approach!

Minor wars provide the opportunity for rehearsal, and redemption is the reservation for all major tasks and forays into opposition territory.... i.e., winning when it counts!

Winning the wars that count is always a superior strategy to competing in the battles that don't count.



The annual mission will focus on dominating and defeating the opposition in all and every environment.

Defeating the opposition has always been the strategy of the sixty annual missions, and "the way" of accomplishment for the teams that I have run, with the **benchmark of achievement of having the best prepared warriors for the targeted and identified battles**, be they Club, National or International.

THE ANNUAL PLAN

THE ANNUAL MISSION DESIGN IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ROLE OF THE BENEVOLENT DICTATOR and only them.

They may seek advice and advantage from science, technology, and those returning from earlier battles. Whilst many a battle has been won by the lead communicator and benevolent dictator employing the recruited wisdom from these strategists, they should not be inclusive as an integral part of any victory or defeat. At best, they will remain as participants in preference to warriors of war and battle. They do not have a role.

1. July is **recovery** for athletes and rejuvenation and regeneration of staff (after annual global competitions).
2. August is **Skill and Speed Boot Camp** where the total focus is on improvement in skills and detailed reviews of race analysis and how SPEED EFFICIENCY is designed and developed to fit the individual. Skill refinement always in advance of skill acquisition but included! Practice once per day; every day of the week with 90-minute maximum exposure.
3. September 1st commences with the reverse of the last six weeks of race preparations for performance of the annual major competition exposure, from the previous annual planning. Commence and prioritise speed efficiency in preference to speed endurance, however, include both. Employ a minimum of 120 strategically placed HVO's (high velocity overloads) weekly; never training speed to fatigue or coaching technique to failure. These 120 repeats are less than 30 metres and FASTER than 50 metre race pace! Focus on speed efficiency at start of practice, and speed endurance at conclusion of practice, with **every repeat efficient and controlled** especially with breathing patterns etc.
4. October 18th (after recapitulation of six weeks) commence strength and power for form stroke middle distance athletes i.e., pink fiber athletes, with white fiber athletes commencing September 1st, and red fiber athletes commencing December 1st.
5. Progression of strength and power into power and strength, into power and speed, and increased into SPEED and power!



6. Protocols for the intelligent, and rules for the less intellectual, in regard to all of the above!
7. Clear and defined roles for ALL support staff, eliminating all idle time, with specific detailed role clarity an absolute must, AND supported by a recorded log of task output. **INDIVIDUALISATION AND SPECIALISATION philosophy drives creativity and productivity for all.**
8. Every senior athlete with a 100 percent attendance record should be in possession of their own ANNUAL NATIONAL PLAN, signed off by themselves and the team's "master coach". The team's master coach should be separate to the lead coach.
9. The following training cycles should be put in place:
 - October/ November/ December
 - January/ February/ March
 - April/ May/ June
10. The land coach is on the coaching staff, and all other sport science staff will have a separate group of advisors who are funded appropriately and expected to be on deck for a minimum of twelve hours weekly. Time at task in preference to observers.
11. Senior squad/ team should have three coaches on deck for each and every practice, and every month have each staff coach to take a three-day weekend so as to document team and opposition data.
12. TEST WEEKS! and competitive exposures policy: Designate test weeks for team and individual testing and practice modifications and adjustments, including kick and resistance pull sets. Double the race distance training and competition time trials in kick; pull, and swim comparisons. Monday morning sub-maximal testing set of 6-8×300's descending test state of recovered readiness. Birthday measurements (everything possible) including rock climbing times, resistance jumps, and cross-country running.
13. This comprehensive approach should give the coaching and science staff a great starting point to develop and design the world's best test of an example of the way, the mission, and the annual plan.

Bill Sweetenham

"It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters, in the end."

- Ursula LeGuin



Tech Talk with Milo Cavic

MASTERING BUTTERFLY

1. Make sure that your hips (or suit) breach the surface after every recovery. To do so, all you need to do is practice pressing your chest down as you reach forward. Failure to get your hips up will mean that your hips will be low, creating a lot of frontal drag in moving forward. If you struggle to press your chest, try improving your mobility in the thoracic spine with the "cat-cow" exercise everyday before practice.
2. Maximize the amount of water you move backwards by establishing a high elbow catch as early as possible (also known as early vertical forearm). Place both palms on top of a lane line bob it downwards a few times. Try the same activity while pretending there is a straight metal rod from the tip of your middle finger to the elbow. Your elbows will pop up and you'll find yourself climbing over the lane line as you apply backward force with your palms. The lane buoys are like water and will move in whatever direction you apply force.
3. Do your best to maintain shoulder-width space between your hands from the top of the recovery through the end of your pull. Whenever your hands are in line with the shoulders, it is called the "power triangle" and will give you the best leverage possible during the pull. For fun, try climbing out of the pool with your hands together versus shoulder width apart. The proof is in the pudding!
4. Keep your chin as low to the surface as possible during the breath. If you do a great job of establishing early vertical forearm catches as mentioned above, you'll minimize any downward applications of force during the pull, which will help keep you lower to the surface during breathing. My favorite drill is a 3-stage breathing drill which is 3 strokes back to back, where in the first stroke only the goggles come out, then the next stroke let the goggles and nose come up, and followed by a stroke of the goggles, nose, and mouth coming up. Then repeat.
5. Do your best to minimize up/down head movement when you're not breathing. In doing so, your butterfly will flatten out and give you the best chance of directing all generated propulsion from the kick and pull to go forward!

WSCA Pro Course & Team Culture

COURSE EXCERPT –

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING

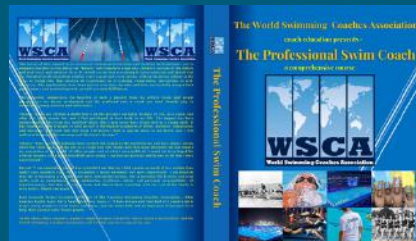
TEAM CULTURE

Cultural Awareness, Don Heidary

Consider culture-building as the ultimate art behind the science of swimming, with you as the artist. Every brush stroke and every color affects the outcome. And this “painting” is in constant creation. Can you create a masterpiece? **This is truly in your hands, and it will determine the experience, success, and future of your program. Again, if you want success,** a positive program, job security, start with culture, and get acquainted with your pallet.

Or to put it simply, good ingredients make good soup, and well, bad ingredients make bad soup, yes, with you as the chef either way. Bad attitudes, poor work ethic, selfish teammates, hostile parents can jeopardize a program. Just one bad ingredient can ruin a meal (or a team). This is irrefutable, regardless of athlete performance. We have seen this play out from local club

programs to Olympic teams. All have objectives and mission statements, yet unwittingly, things can go astray. **The heavy lifting in coaching, and any organization for that matter, is in culture creation,** and equally important, “ingredient” management.

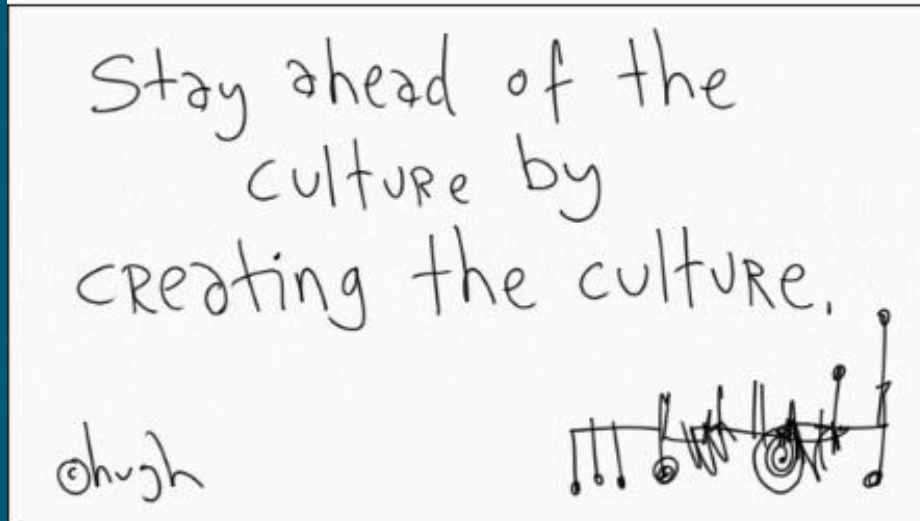


If you are skeptical about the power of culture, realize that **the vast majority of athletes and programs underachieve to their true potential, and they tend to be OK with it.** This can come out of a lack of vision and pursuit of potential. They just accept it as status quo. Think about the unrealized achievement, success, experience, and growth left on the table. Athletes fail to

develop, drift, or leave the sport, teams fold, coaches get frustrated or are let go, kids don't connect, or worse, don't care, etc. Most of this can be tied to the absence of a positive and productive team culture. Any organizational management consultant will contend that culture is the greatest determinant of success (discussed later).

And it is not just about swimming fast, or improving. **Children and young adults can, and should, be tethered to a positive and productive endeavor and group, and culture will be the primary driver.**

Think about culture as the quintessential, “rising tide” of integrity, effort, trust, empowerment, motivation, and selflessness that lifts all boats to athletic and personal growth and achievement.



Now let's look at **the benefits of a strong and inspiring culture:**

- united vision (generally)
- consistency and flow
- increased levels of performance (discussed later)
- increased levels of motivation
- swimmers who maximize their potential and their careers
- leaders and role models
- selfless teammates
- team harmony
- highly efficient workouts
- elite "athletes"
- athlete retention
- reduced burnout (below)
- increased revenue
- minimal oversight
- fewer parent issues
- highly enjoyable relationships
- people who put the team first
- people who are trusted implicitly
- healthier, happy kids
- better people
- fewer conflicts
- issue free travel
- athlete safety
and on, and on, and on

Cultural Assessment

To begin with, **it is crucial to understand not only what cultures are, but why and how they exist, for better or worse.** A culture may be bad, but why is it so? Rather than simply accept them, and the status quo, understand why they are what they are, and understand their effect on the team and youth (and even on society).

It is our role, opportunity, and challenge to redefine team cultures and behavior in terms of what is right for the organization/team and right for athletics, children, and young adults.

We must then sell the benefits of a new culture, implement them, demand them, and change the paradigm. Sounds heavy, but is there anything

more important to personal, athletic, or team growth and experience?

The following are critical questions that need to be given serious and objective thought, and ideally discussed with staff, parents, and athletes.

- How would you define your team culture?
- How has it evolved?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses?
- Who decided or decides your cultural objectives?
- How defined (to your team) is your cultural vision, if it is?
- How aggressive is the leadership's pursuit of that vision?
- Is your team culture influenced more by the institution/organization, coach, talent, social groups?
- Where does the leadership and inspiration come from – more the coach or more from the locker room?
- Are there ebbs and flows based on personalities or is there continuity?
- **How wide is the gap between your culture and a truly inspirational (in every way) team environment?**
- Does the environment add or detract from the competitiveness (success) of your team?
- Can you assess sub-cultures of:
 - effort
 - technique
 - competition
 - team orientation
 - travel
 - parents
- **What about your character culture?**
 - To what degree do you trust your group – left alone at a workout, an activity, or a hotel?

- To what degree do the older swimmers seek to mentor?
- To what degree do the younger swimmers seek to lead?

So to begin with, **you MUST understand your culture, and your subcultures.** You must be nearly obsessed with understanding, monitoring, and assessing this. It is the experiential version of checking the chemicals of water every day to ensure the pool's quality and the athlete's safety.

Some general characteristics of cultural evaluation are:

- watch with an OBJECTIVE eye
- have a standard by which you are measuring
- seek the truth
- talk to the staff
- ask a wide range of athletes, at all levels
- ask people outside of your program how it is perceived

Things to watch for internally are:

- athlete arrival - on time/early
- athlete attitude upon arrival (do they want to be there? are they excited?)
- body language
- eye contact
- desire to interact with staff





- athlete interaction (inclusive or segregated)
- technical focus and discipline (know and care what they are working on)
- effort in workout (**without** being asked)
- drive or motivation to be successful (in a team-centered way)
- dry land effort, focus, and maturity
- meet maturity (on time, team attire, warm-up/warm-down, attitude, resilience, help)
- team attire - is it worn often (when not required)
- deliberate focus in workout - from the warm-up on
- language (never bad and always constructive/positive)
- general respect of everyone
- locker room demeanor
- integrity in workout (counting repeats, laps, strokes, etc.)
- helping when needed
- helping without being asked
- feeling of trust with athletes
- athlete respect and support of staff
- social media use
- academic focus
- love of the sport
- goal orientation
- respect and appreciation of parents - theirs and others
- and of course, results and outcomes

For the WSCA Pro Course Bensadoun Scholarship, meriem.kebbab@wscacoach.org

Q&A Video
Discover the Professional Swim Coaches Course



KAZAKHSTAN SWIMMING ON THE RISE

Ilya Gussakov

Kazakhstan was thrust onto the elite stage in Rio with a Gold Medal performance in the 200 breaststroke by Dmitriy Balandin. The national program continues to thrive under the leadership of Ilya Gussakov, a young, passionate, and dedicated leader of the nation's swimming movement. In addition to being the Head Coach of the National Team, Ilya recently completed his PhD. He also serves as Secretary of the Dissertation Council at the Sports University. Recent successes include:

- 2023 – FISU World University Games – Bronze medal (Mussin Adilbek)
- 2023 – 19th Asian Games – Two bronze medals (Mussin Adilbek)
- 2023 – World Aquatics Junior Championships – Several 4th-place finishes (the best performance in our history)
- 2024 – 11th Asian Age Group Championships – 20 gold, 11 silver, 5 bronze medals; 2nd place overall after Japan
- 2024 – Paris Olympic Games – Two qualified participants

Furthermore, one of the nation's top breaststrokers has received a scholarship to study and train at North Carolina State University, while Xeniya Ignatova will join Louisville this year.

In addition, 2024 marked the opening of their National Olympic Training Center, featuring a 50m pool with a floating wall available for full-time use. They have also developed a new training camp system, inviting the top 1-3 finishers from regional competitions, along with their coaches, for national-level training camps.



COACHING JOURNEY FROM ALGERIA TO CANADA

Demone Tissira

"My coaching journey started with a passion for developing athletes not just in the pool but as individuals. Over the years, I have focused on refining my approach, learning from mentors, and adapting to the ever-evolving world of competitive swimming. Key to my growth has been a commitment to listening to my athletes, education, continuous learning, and fostering a positive team culture that emphasizes hard work, discipline, and resilience.

I currently coach at Simon Fraser University, the only Canadian University that is part of the NCAA DII. Our program is dedicated to producing high-level swimmers while maintaining a supportive, athlete-centered environment. Our program has developed a strong reputation for excellence, focusing on athletics and academics.

My coaching philosophy centers on technical mastery, mental strength, and individualized athlete development. What sets my program apart is a commitment to fine-tuning the small details—stroke efficiency, race strategy, and mindset training—while maintaining a team atmosphere that promotes accountability and camaraderie. Success is measured by podium finishes and the growth and confidence my athletes carry beyond the pool.

One standout athlete who has left a lasting impact on our club and the international stage is Tori Meklensek. Her journey from a promising freshman to an NCAA and Canadian National success has been inspiring, demonstrating the

power of dedication, perseverance, and trust. Her success has not only elevated our program's reputation but has also inspired the entire team to dream bigger.

Beyond the medals and records, my goal has always been to help athletes realize their full potential as athletes and as people. The relationships built, the lessons learned, and the resilience developed through sports are what truly define a successful program."

In 2022, Tissira was named to the Canadian coaching staff for the World Championships and the staging camp for the Commonwealth Games. He has regularly produced elite swimmers at the Canadian Junior and Senior championships. He was selected as a mentor for the 2017-18 Canadian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association Mentorship Program. He was head coach of the Canadian national distance team virtual camp in January 2021 and has been an assistant coach on numerous Canadian teams and part of Swim Canada's Select Coaches Group. A native of Algeria, he received his Bachelor of Physical Education from the National Institute of Education in Sport and Science, Algeria, in 2000. He has been accredited and certified as a high-performance and technical coach through UBC, Canadian Sport Institute (Quebec), and the Paris Sports Institute, France.



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FINIS

The Global Leader In Training Equipment

FINIS is proud to collaborate with the World Swim Coaches Association in advancing the technique-driven approach to swimming with our mission: To simplify swimming, with an emphasis to focus on improving technique as a foundation to keep swimmers healthy and fast, we work hand in hand with coaches to improve swimming at every level.

Our high-quality products are available in over 90 countries, making them accessible to swimmers around the world.

Our brand thrives because of our strong relationships with coaches like you. Your insights and feedback help us continue to improve and innovate, ensuring we meet the needs of swimmers at every level. We take pride in the network we've built, and we're always here to connect—reach out anytime at info@finisswim.com.



CELEBRATING OUR ATHLETES' TRIUMPHS AT PARIS 2024

Pushing Boundaries. Achieving Greatness. FINIS Athletes on the Global Stage.



Since our inception in 1993, FINIS has been making waves—starting with the introduction of the Monofin to revolutionize underwater dolphin technique. This legacy of innovation continues today, as FINIS athletes made history at the Paris Olympics, winning 11 medals while racing in our latest tech suit, the HydroX.

We're excited to collaborate with [WSCA](#) coaches to continue providing products that elevate your program and benefit every swimmer.

[Explore FINIS](#)

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Inspirational Article & Quotes

THIS IS HOW TO UNLOCK MEANING IN LIFE

From The Soul of Leadership, a Flipboard Magazine by Brendan Ho, bakadesuyo.com

There's no shortage of tips about what brings happiness, but what gives your life *meaning*? "Meaning in life" is one of those things everybody insists is vitally important — yet *nobody tells you what it really is*, and directions to get there never seem to come up on Google Maps. I had to take geometry to graduate high school but knowing what a rhombus is has never helped me. Nobody thought it was important to teach me about meaning. Seriously, my air conditioner came with better instructions than anything that's important in life.

What's The Difference between Happy and Meaningful? The variable was meaning — or, more precisely, the lack of it. So there's more to life than "pleasure good, pain bad." (Sorry, Epicurus.) But that ain't the half of it... [Research shows](#) meaning and happiness can be at odds with one another. People with the most meaningful lives were "givers." But those with the happiest lives were "takers."

A life focused exclusively on happiness is like that container of ice cream that quickly brings a huge dose of pleasure — followed by a stomachache, regret and a root canal. A meaningful life does produce good feelings — but it takes a while to catch up. For a 10-day period, researchers told one group of students to do things that make their life meaningful. They helped people. They studied hard. They cheered up friends.

The researchers told another group of students to just do stuff that made'em happy. They slept in, played video games, and ate candy. So what happened at the end of the study? Initially, exactly what you'd expect. The "be happy" group got happier. And the "be meaningful" group got meaningful-er. But three months later, things changed. The happy feelings of the second group faded fast, meanwhile the students who had pursued meaning said they felt more "enriched," "inspired," and "part of something greater than myself." They also reported fewer negative moods. Over the long term, it seemed, pursuing meaning boosted psychological health. **So meaning beats happiness (TRAINING)**. But how do we get there?

1) Belonging

What groups do you belong to? Quickest way to add meaning to your life is to see them more often. But you can't just sit around "belonging" all day. What do you actually have to *do*?

2) Purpose

Purpose is less about what you do and more about how you see what you do. In her book, Emily tells a story I love. It was 1962 and President Kennedy was visiting NASA. He runs into a janitor. The President asks the guy what he's doing. The janitor replies, "Helping put a man on the moon." That's purpose. Second, *it involves a contribution to the world. It makes a difference in the lives of people who don't happen to be you.*

3) Transcendence

The awe-inspired people, researchers found, felt a diminished sense of their own importance compared to others, and that likely led them to be more generous... They abandoned the conceit, which many of us have, that they were the center of the world. Instead, they stepped outside of themselves to connect with and focus on others.

Life can be hard. But remember, while the difficult moments may decrease happiness, they're essential for building meaning. And that's what matters in the long run. We flourish around friends. Unbearable stress becomes yet another challenge when you have purpose. A superhero origin story gives you hope and redemption. And nature makes your big problems seem tiny.

QUOTES

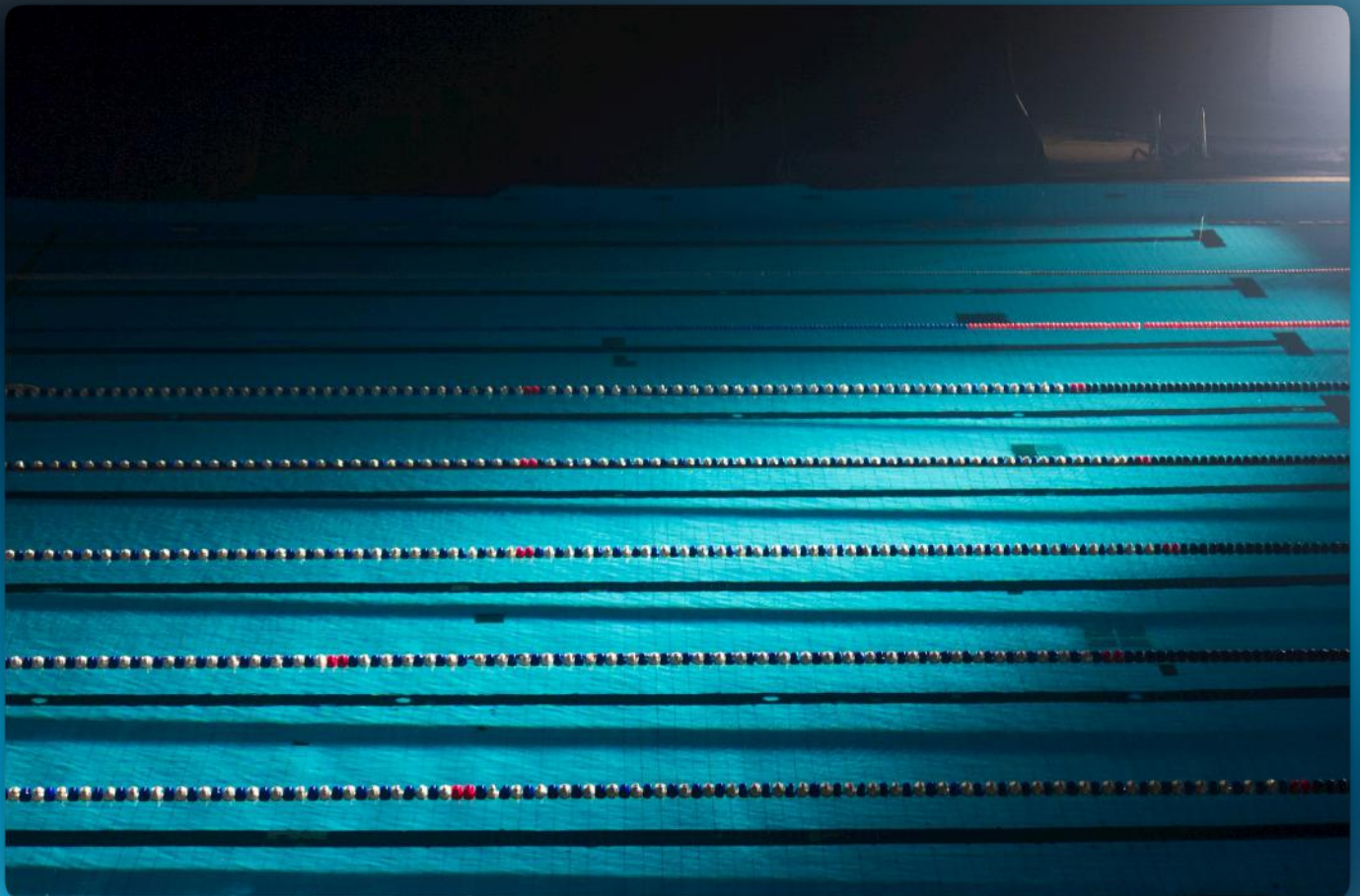
"A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child." -Forest E. Witcraft

"A leader takes people where they want to go. A *great leader* takes people where they may not want to go, but ought to be." -unknown

"The welfare of each is bound up in the welfare of all." - Helen Keller

"What we do in life echoes in eternity." - Maximus, Gladiator

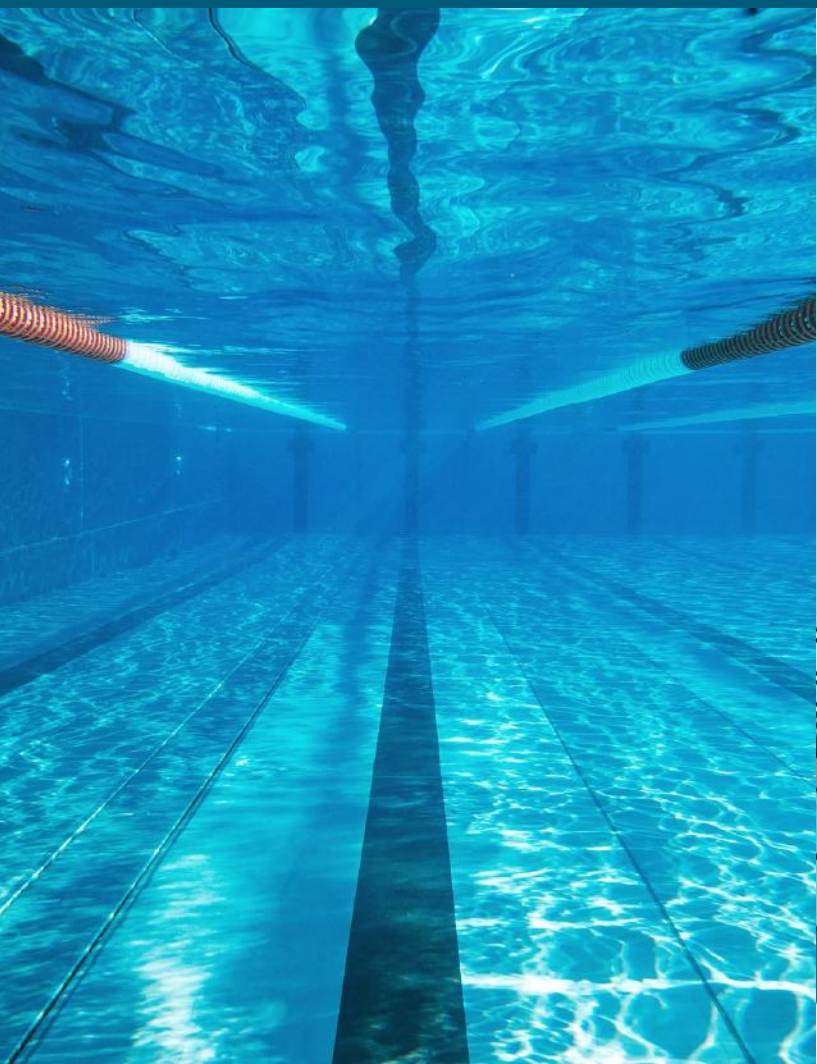
"The common man asks, what's in it for me? The enlightened man asks, how can I help?" - unknown



COACHES QUESTIONS

How **do** you **measure** your professional growth?

How **do** you **define success**?



"We've had to pool our resources."

WSCA SURVEY



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- Exciting Development from WSCA
- More insights from Bill Sweetenham
- Meet WSCA's New Board Member
- Two Organizations Empowering Coach Education in Iran & India
- Club Spotlight (TBD)
- Tech Talk: Developing Underwater Speed in Age-Group Swimmers
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