

Chatty Cats

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Coaches' Corner

There is no doubt a buzz of excitement in the swimming world as the most decorated Olympian of all time, Michael Phelps, is returning to the pool. After taking media by storm post 2012 Olympics, Phelps announced his retirement to pursue other interests. So why, merely a year later, would this accomplished athlete come out of retirement and toe the starting blocks?

Michael had a goal, and after years of pursuit, achieved this goal. Upon defining "success," every champion has the need for an ever-changing definition of perfection. As "success is believing you have never reached the peak," so you ask yourself, "okay I've got the dreaming and the hoping down, how do I go about the pursuit?"

Let's start with setting a goal. Have you defined EXACTLY what your goals are? Are you looking to final at A Champs, or swim for a Division 1 College? Are you wanting to lead your lane in practice or maintain 5 dolphin kicks off of each wall at a meet? Are you wanting to win a gold medal at the Olympics or secure a specific time standard? These are all questions that you should be asking yourself. "What am I looking to accomplish?"

A good start would be to pull out a piece of paper and write down one specific thing you can work on right NOW. This can be as simple as maintaining streamlines off each wall at practice, or completing an entire session without stopping. Is there something that the coaches have been repeatedly bringing up in practice that you could apply to your stroke? These are daily goals that you are fully capable of taking charge of RIGHT THIS MOMENT.

Second step is to envision yourself one year from now. Is there a meet you would like to go to or lane you want to move up to? Visualizing yourself a year from now, are you winning your heats at swim meets? Write these dreams down.

Third step is counting five and ten years from now and repeating this process. There's no right or wrong way to daydream of future achievements.



Coaches Corner Cont.

After having this all written down, take a few more pieces of paper and write them down as “I will achieve _____ by _____.” By correlating a date with your dreams, you are setting up a plan towards achievement. This gives you a timeline. In order to transform your dreams from an idea into reality, you must first start with believing in the possibility. Take these pieces of paper and put them places where you will see them every single day. You can put them by your bed, on your mirror, or on your fridge. These are places you will frequent, and will give you the reminder of what you are working for, especially when the going gets tough.

Which brings us to the last, and final step toward achieving these great feats: the hard work portion. If becoming an Olympian came as easy as hoping and dreaming (and wanting something very, very badly), we would have a very long list of people on our USA Olympic team. This is where you transition from the work you are putting in from your heart, to work you are willing to put in with your muscle.

You must take advantage of every opportunity to take a step toward these goals. When practice gets tough, and you have the CHOICE to skip a flip turn, miss an underwater pull, or float into the wall on a sprint, you must fight the urge to take the easy route. For, in order to continue this improvement, you must find flaws in performance to guide you to further success. As they say, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.”

By choosing to stay strong when the workouts get tough you are creating good habits that will come naturally to you when you get up and race. The last thing you want to be concentrating on when you are in a close race with your biggest competition is “Now how did that backstroke to breaststroke turn go again?” These habits start to create with every backstroke to breaststroke turn in warm-up, drill set, main set, and warm down. Do you get to get out in the middle of your hardest race at a meet to go to the bathroom or fix your goggles? Practice training hard so that you can race hard.

Focused swimming is fast swimming. Every success starts with a dream. Dreams are achieved through successful goal setting, a passion for the activity, and a willingness to work ridiculously hard to achieve this dream. Swim on, Channel Cats!!

Junior Swimmer Spotlight

We all have our reasons for doing the things we do...Austin, a swimmer at CBRC, has this to say about why he is a Channel Cat

I am a Channel Cat swimmer mainly because my mom loves the sport of swimming and really likes the Channel Cat swim team. My sisters swam for the Channel Cats just for a season or two. They think it's great that I'm still swimming because they said it will pay off later on in high school. But really, it is the only fun sport I can do. I have “Sever's” in both of my heels and it causes a lot of pain. It started when I was in 1st grade. Even walking hurts at times but I've gotten used to it. My doctor said it will go away when I'm 12 because by then the growth plates in my heels will have closed. Well, I'm 12 and it still hurts. I guess my feet are still growing.

Getting to practice this year has been great. Christian and Coleman and Herky and I are from Prosser so get to ride with them a lot. It's been really fun. But next summer will be hard again. Getting up really early and riding in the car for 45 minutes is stressful, tiring, and cold. I fall asleep and don't want to get out of the car. (My mom gets a little cranky when I won't wake up). But, when the practice is over it feels great.

I try to be nice to everybody and I've made some great friends on the team. This makes swimming even more fun.

President's Pen

First and foremost, I want to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and many blessings during this happy season. As I write this, it's 6am and the wind is howling with a chill factor of 0° outside. Makes me thankful not to have been in a manger the day my children were born!

Looking back, our September picnic was a great way to conduct business. There was good food, a nice day, and we approved an operating budget for the 2013-14 swim season. We need a big turnout for the vote to count and we had no trouble getting a quorum. Thank you. Keep in mind if you have questions about the budget or any other area, you can come to the monthly board meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. The next one will be on January 14th at 7pm.

Don't forget that on January 25th-26th we host the Winter Open in Ellensburg! The job sign-up sheet for this meet is nearly full. In fact, it filled up so fast that I didn't get the slot I intended to sign up for! Believe me I like having that problem. By the way, the Winter Open is a split meet, meaning it's split into two sessions. The morning session will be for 10 and Under swimmers and the afternoon will be for 11 and over swimmers. Keep that in mind as you schedule your volunteering time. See the [Winter Open Meet Info](#) for more information

Speaking of volunteering, our next talk in the Parent Education Program (PEP) will cover the ins and outs and joys and sorrows of volunteering. John Tixier (past president) and I will be doing these PEP talks together in sometime during the first couple of weeks in January. We'll send concrete dates and times as we get nearer the date. We plan to do one talk at each club to minimize your inconvenience. Hopefully you can bring your swimmer to practice and listen to us ramble while they swim!

Lastly, I want to mention that we are looking for someone to provide leadership for the Channel Cat fundraising committee. Amy Musick has been doing our spring fundraiser for years now and we'd like to find some help for her. She is willing to co-lead, teach, and help, but would like a partner in her efforts. If you are interested in organizing fund raising activities, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Amy Musick at (musicks1@msn.com) or contact me at (cry@skykos.com). Feel free to talk to any board member for that matter!

So...have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and concentrate on your families during this time of year. It is a joy for me to have this opportunity to communicate with you...feel free to return the communication any time about anything!



Parent Survey Results

Toward the end of last summer, the Channel Cats conducted an online survey using a tool called survey-monkey.com. Our intent was to make it easy for you to provide your thoughts to the coaches and the Board. We did not conduct any professional trend analysis or statistical modeling, we just wanted to hear from you about how the club is doing.

The bottom line is that the Tri City Channel Cats is an exceptional club and the survey responses show that you as members have recognized this. We have long-term, stable, and outstanding coaches. We have swimmers who are enjoying their sport and competing at all levels. We truly are blessed by the success of a well-run organization.

Of course, there is always room for improvement, and the survey indicated what some of those areas are. The board and the coaches have seen the responses, discussed them, and taken action. Below we've captured in a nutshell what the survey responses show and what is being done.

Coaches

We saw 90% positive response about coaches as evaluated by those who interact with them

Common themes were:

Dry-land training – this has been incorporated

Fall/Winter Training schedule can be found at:

<http://www.tricitychannelcats.org/ietccc/doc/2013-2014%20Fall-Winter%20Training%20Schedule.docx>

Goal setting – Coaches work with Gold, Silver, and Bronze to set and review goals

Rotation between facilities -- Head and Assistant coaches switch facilities 5 times during short course to diversify coaching and get to know swimmers at the other pools

Parent Expectations Being Met

About right: 77%

Too low: 5%

Too high: 9%

Don't know: 9%

Kids' Enjoyment

86% positive response

A common theme was to incorporate team bonding and social activity

We have a new social activity lead who is eager

She already had the Turkey Trot Run on Thanksgiving

She is preparing the Angel Tree's for Christmas Charity

She has several ideas that will be coming throughout the season



Parent Survey Results Cont.

Board of Directors

83% positive response

Common theme was more communication

We re-established the Newsletter with messages from the President and the Treasurer

The Board is very approachable. See [Contact Info](#) on the web site to get in touch.

Attend a monthly board meeting! See "Team Events & Meetings" on the home page.

Important Reminder

We do have a conflict resolution process for all concerns:

Talk to the head coach at your pool

Talk to the overall head coach (Todd)

Talk to a Board Member

In any case, all are approachable, friendly, will show you respect, and have the team's best interest at heart. If we as parents approach a problem with the same attitude, then we can resolve issues and grow as a team.

Treasurer's Tidbits #1

Hello, my name is Bob Gelston and I am your Chanel Cats Treasurer. With it being the first newsletter containing a Treasurer's Tidbits I thought it best to reintroduce myself. I have been a Channel Cat parent for three years and have two swimmers at CBRC, Andy (Blue) and Megan (Silver).

First and foremost please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any billing questions, gbgelston@charter.net or 543-4128. I also wanted to remind you of the smart phone app from Team Unify- On Deck Parent. It is a free app available at iTunes as well as for Android phones. The app is tied to our web site and has many swimming related functions. A newer upgrade to this app allows you to check your account balance from your phone. **Go Channel Cats!**

Note From The Editor

For those who are new, my name is Cheyenne Griffith and I have been the Chatty Cat Newsletter editor for the past three years. This is my senior year in high school. With the changing of the board in the fall, our president Chance Younkin has requested me to change up the newsletter to have a more business format. You are still more than welcome to send photos. Unfortunately I didn't receive any in the last few months so that's why this issue is not as photo intensive as you all would like to see. I encourage you to e-mail me at chatty.cats@charter.net if you have any photos, article topics, letters to the editor, that you would like to see, or any other questions, concerns or comments about this publication.

Thank you, Cheyenne Griffith

Senior Swimmer Spotlight

*We all struggle with various things in our life, and so it's good to see that others struggle, too...
Lisa Bratton swims at TCCC and has this to say about her struggles*

What motivates you? Why do you go to practice every day? For me, it's to challenge myself to do better than yesterday and the day before that. Every day, I want to push myself to improve and grow as a swimmer. There are days when I walk out of the pool feeling proud of the work I have put in, knowing I gave it my all. Other days I walk out nitpicking my workout to find places I could have worked harder, could have pushed myself that much farther, and made the times in the way Coach wanted. Those days, the ones I nitpick at, are what bring me back to the pool the next day. I want another chance at practice to better make the times. I want to make the next day better, to make up for the bad day. I'm not going to lie to you. Bad days are going to happen. That's just part of swimming. The bad days help us learn where we need to improve and teach us how to put bad swims behind us and move on the next day.

My freshman year at state I did not make championship finals in either of my individual events like myself and those around me expected. I was having a good high school season up until then. I had won both my events at districts and was feeling good going into state. My issue was my mental attitude. I had put the work in, but I was expecting it to be like another high school dual meet. In many ways, state was more like a channel cat meet than I expected, and that threw me off. The level of competition was comparable to a club meet because most of the top swimmers swim club. Where they differ is in high school, there is more of a team aspect. You wear your school colors and represent them. How you swim not only affects you, but it also affects your team. The goal of a high school dual meet is to prove that your school is the best. This is done by scoring the most points. Same thing at state, you are swimming to score points for your school to get them to rank as high as possible. At the same time, however, there is an individual responsibility because in your individual event(s) you want to rank as high as possible to show that all the hard work has paid off.

I approached prelims at state my freshman year like a club meet, with the individual feel, but at a high school level. I just went into prelims to swim, not really worrying about placement or anything. As a result of that attitude, I did not swim as well as I wanted. At the time, I was very disappointed with how I swam in prelims but knew I had a shot to win the consolation heat the next day. So I pushed that aside and set my mind into a winning gear and it worked. My next three years, I knew that I needed to go into my prelims, ready to race and win my heat so I had a shot at making championship finals. It worked. I won the 200IM the next three years, placed 5th in my 500 Free my sophomore year and won the 100 Back my last two years. It's all a learning experience. As you go to bigger meets, whether that is Jr-champs, Champs, Zones or a National level meet; it's all about controlling your mental game. You put the hard work at practice every day. When it comes time to race, you have to turn those pesky little nerves into positive energy and go out there to win your heat. It takes experience, confidence, attitude and hard work to all come together for the time to drop and to reach the top of the podium. Swim Fast and Have Fun! – Lisa Bratton

