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In The Dawg House



Compete Against Yourself

BY MIKE GUSTAFSON—USA SWIMMING CORRESPONDENT (FROM MIKE'S MAILBAG)

Mike,

I really need help. I have been swimming since I was four and competitively since I was about eight. When I was 10 and 11, I was extremely fast, ranked top 20 nationally in some events.

Everything changed when I became a teenager. I no longer dropped times, and I saw my competitors drop time and fly past me. Those kids I used to race are now competing at national levels while I've been stuck here only dropping a few seconds at a time. The only difference I noticed about those kids was that they were a lot taller and stronger than me because I was a late bloomer. I'm 17 now, and still they are much faster than me. It seems as hard as I try, I can never catch up to them. I've worked extremely hard this year, and I have seen no improvement and I want to give up. Why aren't I as fast as these kids? I work way too hard to be average. Is there anything I can do?

- Hard Worker

Hey Hard Worker,

You just explained why I dislike national rankings at such a young age. It makes little sense other than to discourage swimmers when they can no longer keep up with their "ranking." I understand rankings are used as motivational tools, but I know so many more swimmers who became frustrated after failing to keep up with their early-age rankings. I wish rankings began at age 15.

In your case, you have trained, done everything your coach asked you to do, and you're seeing competitors swim past you. The same thing happened to me. When I was 10, I was terrible and just beginning in the sport. At 14, I won high-point at

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Compete Against Yourself (cont.)

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state and was one of the best swimmers in the region. At 18, I was good, but not as good as I was once “ranked.”

The thing is, in swimming, there are some things you can control, and some things you can't.

You cannot control: Your height. Sometimes, we end up growing to be 6'8" and can dive into the water and already be two-thirds down the pool; other times we are 4'11" and it takes more strokes and more effort to swim greater distances.

You can control: Your attitude. While it can be frustrating seeing kids you used to beat now beat you, who is to say you won't beat them again? Who is to say that this ebb-and-flow winning and losing won't again come back, and you'll once again stand atop the podiums like you did when you were 10?

Physical characteristics have a lot to do with success in swimming, but not everything. I've seen more successful swimmers who have average physical characteristics and awesome attitudes succeed than I have people with awesome physical characteristics and average (or bad) attitudes.

You seem like you have a good attitude, and you're frustrated with your lack of time drops. At a certain point, though, we're all going to stop dropping time – even people like Matt Grevers and Ryan Lochte. It will happen to all of us. Some of us experience this stoppage at 21. Others 18. Others 14. Others 35. Others 85.

Imagine there were no times. Imagine that you were no longer constantly comparing yourself to others. Imagine that you did not swim when you were 10. Imagine that every season you embark on, it is something new, and there were no rankings, no competitors, no scoreboards, no podiums, no time cuts, no time standards.

Imagine that it's just you, an open lane, and an event.

Imagine that the only thing that defined success in this sport was how well you can perform according to your own definitions: In other words, imagine if success was if you could swim your own perfect race. Not his perfect race. Not their perfect race. But your perfect race.

Ultimately, that is what this sport is all about. Many people will say it's about competitors and winning and

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Compete Against Yourself (cont.)

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medals and beating the guy next to you, but I think it's much, much more. It's about acknowledging that there are limits to what we can do, and then putting on your goggles, stepping onto the blocks, and trying to push our own personal limits, our own boundaries, our own definitions of what we thought was once previously impossible for ourselves. It's about imagining that personal boundary, and then imagining pushing it a little bit farther -- just a little bit.

Stop comparing yourself to others. You'll never win.

Instead, compare yourself to what you did yesterday, to what you did last week, and to what you did in the beginning of the season. Imagine that every race is against you. Because ultimately, that's what this journey is about. And if you love that journey -- if you love stepping onto the blocks and seeing if you can beat your old previous self -- then that will bring you ultimate satisfaction, no matter what the guy next to you does, no matter what Michael Phelps does, or whomever comes next. Because there will always be another swimmer breaking another record. There will always be someone faster, now or 20 years from now. And if you constantly compare yourself to others, you'll never win.

Compete against yourself. That's what this sport is ultimately truly about. And when you one day hit your limit and decide whether or not to keep going, don't ask yourself if you can beat the guy next to you. Each season and each swim, reset yourself. Reset your definitions of success and your personal limits. Ask yourself, "Right now in time, what would be my perfect race? How could I get there? What sorts of things would I need to do this upcoming season to achieve my own personal 'perfect' race?"

Once you formulate definitions on your own terms, you see the sport differently. Gone are your competitors. Gone is the scoreboard and podiums and trophies. Gone are injuries and setbacks and coaches who didn't quite motivate you and gone are all the distractions. Once you formulate your own measures of success, the only thing left is you, your goggles, your cap, and an empty lane -- one that seems to beckon you, one that seems to ask that age-old question, "What have you got today?"

It's time for SECTIONALS (I still wonder why my coaches yell at me to get in the zone)



Top Food Mistakes Made By Swimmers

I have been a nutrition consultant to hundreds of athletes over the past many years. From high school to professional athletes, I see the same mistakes time and time again. This year, let's learn from these mistakes and correct them to help make you the best swimmer you can be.

Mistake No. 1: Thinking you can eat whatever you want because you are very active.

It is true that active young swimmers burn a lot of calories in training and have a higher need for calories because they are growing. However, that doesn't mean you can thrive by eating double quarter pounders with cheese, fries and large soft drinks. That meal contains 1250 calories, easily a third to half of an active swimmer's calorie needs for the entire day. Every fast food restaurant offers healthier choices these days, even on the value menu, so when faced with choices, make good ones. A better choice would be a regular cheeseburger, small fries and a fruit 'n yogurt parfait for about half the calories with the added benefit more healthful nutrients and less fat and sodium. And, it still tastes pretty good if you like fast foods.



Mistake No. 2: Thinking more is better when it comes to protein.

Protein is very important for athletes, but more isn't better. Research shows that you need 0.55-0.90 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day. Most swimmers should aim for somewhere in the middle of the range. The higher end of the range is needed when you are cutting calories to reduce body fat. For recovery, you need about 20 grams of high quality protein within the first hour after exercise. The double quarter pounder meal has almost 50 grams of protein, way more than needed for recovery. The single cheeseburger meal has about 20 grams of protein...just right. Extra protein isn't stored in the muscles. It is broken down for energy which can be stored as fat. The excess nitrogen (the part that makes protein unique from carbohydrate or fat) gets eliminated in the urine.

Mistake No. 3: Overemphasizing the value of supplements and undervaluing the power of healthy foods.



I must admit that the marketing for healthy foods is not nearly as exciting as for supplements. Supplement ads promise quick weight loss, bigger muscles, and increased energy; one study of about 600 supplements identified over 800 performance enhancing claims, most of which were bogus without scientific backing. Supplements are no short-cut to improving body composition, building muscle or increasing performance. Supplements have the added risk of containing banned or illegal substances that could harm your health and your sports career. That is why USA Swimming takes a food-first approach when advising athletes.

(Editor's Note: Along with the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), USA Swimming considers dietary supplements, such as some protein shakes and powders, as "take at your own risk," placing full responsibility for any effects and repercussions on the athlete. For more information, see our [Dietary Supplements page](#)).

A wise researcher I know tells athletes that good nutrition won't make an average athlete a great athlete, but poor nutrition can make a great athlete an average one. So, if you are a great athlete or aspire to be one, fine tune an eating plan that works for you, not against you.

Chris Rosenbloom, PhD, RDN, CSSD, is a nutrition professor emerita at Georgia State University and provides nutrition counseling to athletes of all ages. She welcomes questions from athletes at chrisrosenbloom@gmail.com.

So You Want To Make The Olympic Team?

By Lindsay Mintenko//National Team Managing Director

I get this question all the time: “What do I need to do to make the Olympic team?”

Besides working your tail off, being incredibly dedicated and talented, there are a few other things that will get you to Rio in 2016.



Check out the [2016 Olympic Trial qualifying times](#). For motivation, you should print them and post them on your bathroom mirror. Seeing your goals every morning will be a great inspiration.

As for actually making the team, here is your list of must-haves:*

1. Make Olympic Trials. See above.

2. Qualify for the A Final at Trials. There will be semifinals for events 200 meters and under, and only the top 8 will make the A final.

3. Make the FINA “A” time standard. The “A” time standards are the way FINA controls the entries into the Games. In order for the USA to have two entries in each event, both athletes must have the “A” time standard. “A” time standards can be found on fina.org in late February.

4. Win your event at Trials. Most people think you have to be top two at trials to make the Olympic Team. In reality, the top two in each event only go to the Games based on the number of double qualifications each athlete has. The first priority in selection is the winner in each individual race and the top four in the 100 and 200 free. We are only allowed 26 athletes per gender on the team.

5. Pray for other athletes to qualify in double events. When athletes qualify for multiple events, more people can be added to the team. The first priority in selection is the winner in each individual race, and the top four in the 100 and 200 free. If there is a unique swimmer in each of these events, we will have 19 swimmers on the team which leaves only seven places to fill.

6. Get second at Trials or 5-6th in the 100/ 200 free. The next priority is the highest world-ranked athlete who finishes second at Trials. If all second place finishers are taken, the next highest world-ranked athletes who are 5th in the 100 and 200 free are selected, and finally the 6th place finishers in the 100 and 200 free.

7. Pack your bags for Rio! As you can see, this is a much more complicated process than many think, and one that we don’t want to mess up. Making the Olympic Team is a huge honor. Go for it!

**Full selection procedures will be posted at usaswimming.org in early summer 2015*

On Deck Reminders

As our season begins to come to an end, here are some reminders for all families....

- ♦ The end of the season for any swimmer NOT qualified for a state championship meet is February 26th
- ♦ Testing for swimmers wishing to move up to AND remain in the Gold group will be on THREE days this season (because of the extended season)....Thursday, February 12th, Tuesday, February 17th, and the last day will be Friday, February 20th.
- ♦ Our annual banquet will be on Saturday, April 18....please make sure to sign up online so that we can make sure we have all the swimmers awards that they have earned.
- ♦ Next season will begin on Monday, April 6th.....make sure to register your swimmer for next season as soon as you receive the email that the registration is open.
- ♦ Lastly, if anyone uses the Google calendar that the club operates, can you please email Coach John that you utilize that one versus the website based calendar so that he can get an idea of how many use it.

THANKS!! And Good Luck the rest of the way swimmers!!

Quote of the Month

*"Luck - the harder you work, the luckier you get;
it's what happens to those who give 100 percent."*

- Unknown

TOP DOGS for the Meets



This section is in recognition of those swimmers who have had exceptional time achievements at meets.....

CPSC Winter Timed Final Invitational - **Eddie Mikuta** - 14.4 second average time drop. 53.96% team best times

HHSC Snowflake Invitational - **Gabby Stabler** - 17.83 second average time drop. 53.07% team best times

AWESOME JOB DAWGS!!!!!!



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Committment, Pride, Sportsmanship, Character

www.crownpointswimclub.org

Mission Statement

The Crown Point Swim Club is an aquatics program established to provide opportunities for our community through the sport of swimming. We are a USA Swimming and Indiana Swimming member committed to building excellence in athletes through the sport of swimming at the highest levels of competition. We are dedicated to the members of our not-for-profit organization to help provide our services at very little cost to all.

Vision Statement

Building the future of the community through safety in the water, healthy lifestyles, and physical development while achieving excellence in swimming, academics, and life.

Philosophy

Commitment, Pride, Sportsmanship, Character

We stress being committed to excellence both athletically and academically. We take pride in our organization, our athletes, and their families. We teach sportsmanship both in and out of the pool at all times. We build character through life lessons that will take our swimmers past their athletic ca-

2015 Club Sponsors

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