

## Pre and Post Race Conversations with The Athlete

by John Leonard

If you've been to swim meets, you will have noticed that both before a race and immediately after a race, the coach speaks with your child. This is an important part of the race experience.

Before the race, the purpose is to remind the child of the singular thing that the coach wants the child to concentrate on in that race.

Or, in the words of famous Coach Confucius, "*He who chases two rabbits, catches neither.*" The purpose of the coach's communication with your child is to make sure they are focused only on the item that the coach has chosen for that race. (This is based on what we've been doing in practice.) The reason we practice, of course, is to prepare to race.

Post Race, the coach wants to meet IMMEDIATELY with the athlete once they get out of the water to discuss with the athlete if they achieved that singular goal. Did they do what they set out to do? If so, "great, good job!" If not, why not? Or if the athlete can't remember what they were supposed to do, that's not a good and back to the drawing board in learning how to concentrate!

Both communications are critically important in the development of the athlete.

If a parent wants to know what the child is supposed to be concentrating on in any particular race, ASK THE COACH! We'll be happy to tell you. You might check afterwards and see if your child also remembered, post race, what we said about it. Then you can reinforce the need to focus and learn.