

## Implementation of Philosophy

I am a member of the American Swimming Coaches Association and have completed levels 1 and 2 tests. I have taken the following courses through the ASCA: Foundations of Coaching, Stroke School, Physiology School and How to Write Workouts. I have attended ASCA clinics that featured, Richard Quick, Melt Nelms and Bob Bowman to name a few. Through the information given at the clinics and formal education I have developed the following coaching strategy for the Gaylord Gators Swim Club.

The Gaylord Gators is an "age group" swim club. The majority of our swimmers are between the ages of 5 to 14. (We do have some swimmers that are older; this philosophy pertains to them as well.) Our program begins and ends with "technique". What does this mean, you may ask.

The youngest to the oldest swimmer is continually working to better their technique; everyone learns the basic elements of swimming in order to swim. As the swimmer progresses through them we add more slight adjustments to the basic elements, thus more technique and stroke efficiency.

These techniques begin on the pool deck, known as dryland training. Each day before we swim, the team will spend time on the deck doing basic calisthenics and fundamental basics to help develop muscle memory, strengthen muscle and gain flexibility. This also begins to warm up the body, causing greater blood flow and loosen up the muscle, so there will be less of a problem with a pulled muscle.

We will use drills that are specific to each stroke and you may hear us use words like: streamline, body rotation and undulation. (Each swimmer will learn to be streamline from toe to fingertips and that backstroke and free style involves body rotation. Undulation is used in the breaststroke and butterfly.) The drills will help develop correct fundamentals and basic motor skills, balance and coordination. It is critical to emphasize correct fundamentals and have the willingness to sacrifice speed for efficiency, which will in time develop into good strokes and speed. (We will strive to encourage stroke development, which brings personal bests, and in turn this will eventually lead to personal best in time drops.) It is essential to teach development of all four strokes.

The majority of yardage in the early years needs to be low intensity and technique oriented. The yardage will consist of drills that lead into the stroke, and more drills. As the coach sees the need, sprints will be added into the workout. As the swimmer progresses they will have longer yardage, technique and efficiency will always be part of the workout. (The younger the swimmer the lower the yardage in a practice session and the older the swimmer the more

yardage.) May it be said that if they have not gained enough technique, they will not be given the yardage. The coaches will always make the decision as to the amount of yardage given.

We may play games with swimmers that they may see only as fun, but it will give them the experience of propelling their bodies through the water more successfully and gracefully than they have done in the past and that is fun! We as coaches may pick a specific day to allow this type of fun work out, as we deem necessary.

During practice the parents will not be on deck unless asked by the head coach to help in some specific way. Lane assignments will be given; they are not given only because of skill, but to build up the team as a whole. Swimmers that have a specific ability may be used to demonstrate in the pool. The coaches will follow the code of conduct that the Gaylord Gators Board members have approved for any discipline issues. We will expect good sportsmanship at all times, at practice and at meets.

At the meets the coaches will be a positive influence, they will give encouragement to the swimmer after the race, the swimmer will be responsible to come to the coach for feedback after the race. The swimmer is expected to support the team, by giving positive comments to team members.

Being a member of the Gaylord Gators is not just about learning swim technique, or swimming faster, it is about learning to win and lose with good character. It is about growing into a better person because you have been on the team. It is about learning to care about others as well as yourself. It is about learning to listen, take direction, follow direction and grow mentally, physically and physiologically.

Leanne Westermann, GGSC Head Coach

## Philosophy

The philosophy of coaching that I want to express to the swimmers on the Gaylord Gators is that the ability to swim comes from dedication. We were created to walk on land and we must learn how to breath while swimming and how to stay afloat. I believe that sports were invented to promote enjoyment, when they are no longer enjoyable; it is no longer worth being involved. I value the togetherness that sports bring as well as the competitiveness that derives from competition. I believe that athletes do not stop and think about how fortunate they are to compete and enjoy a sport.

I have formed this philosophy from a combination of things. My parents never forced me to be involved in sports. They always told me that I should do what I wanted and they would support me. I have done the same with my children and have supported them in what they choose to do and have taken it one step farther. They are not allowed to quit anything that they start, because finishing is just as important.

Time management is important to be a successful coach. I want to see the swimmers give their all and be tough, but there is a fine line that can be drawn between intense swimming and sportsmanship. A coach can instill enjoyment for the swim and how they can benefit from the meets.

Something that every person involved in sports has experienced at some time is winning and losing. I believe that the coach and parents should give positive feedback at these times. The athlete will not always win or lose; they need guidance to handle these situations with character. I will teach and act out sportsmanship at all meets and practices.