

EU Swim Newsletter



Please visit our website at www.euswim.org. Send your articles to newsletter@euswim.org.

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I am very pleased to introduce the first edition of the EU Swim Newsletter.

This is a newsletter that is designed to promote the sport of swimming and the clubs that are a part of the global swimming community.

It will include articles on every aspect of swimming and club life, submitted by the clubs themselves: results, competitions, life of the club, shared practices or thoughts on the sport.

Our first issue includes contributions from swimming clubs in Poland, Slovakia, and the United States.

It is my hope that the EU Swim Newsletter will be enjoyable and useful for all audiences: coaches, parents, and swimmers. Please do not hesitate to send articles that you would like published to newsletter@euswim.org.

Julia Galan
Coordinator, EU Swimming Invitational

STU Bratislava Team: Against the Odds

Lucia Veizerová
Head Coach,
STU Bratislava, Slovakia

For 30 years, the swimmers of STU Bratislava trained hard at the University of Bratislava swimming pool. The pool was their base, and they truly considered it to be a second home. One day, however, they were suddenly informed that financial problems would lead to the ultimate closure of the pool in April. With no hope of finding a place in the other swimming pools of Bratislava, the swimmers were left with two afternoons to gather their belongings and leave their beloved pool. No last water-polo game or sauna party to bid their home base – and their team – a proper farewell.

STU Bratislava may have been down, but it had not been beaten. The untiring efforts of the team committee allowed the competition group of the team to find themselves in the water once again. The situation was far from ideal. Only 1 hour and 30 minutes were allotted to the swimmers, 5 times a week. Yet the difficult circumstances gave the swimmers increased

motivation to succeed, and they put in maximum effort during the time that they had. Dryland training took place in the hallway of their former pool. At 6 AM, no one was around and they were able to use that time wisely. Improvisation was the name of the game, and benches or the staircase were used in place of machines.



The challenges that STU Bratislava faced were tough, but going through it together served to further unite the team. The life of the group is rich even outside of the pool. During weekends, they ride bikes or roast hot dogs, or play a game of soccer. And each year, they impatiently count the days to the next EU Swimming Invitational. For them, this is an occasion to travel and to have fun together in addition to swimming their best.

The end of the 2007/2008 season is approaching, and

the swimmers are in peak shape, hoping to perform well at the national and international competitions coming up. The team travels frequently during this time, and excursions to Austria and the Czech Republic are planned. Nearly all of the swimmers qualified for the Slovakian national championships, which will take place at

the end of June. One of the swimmers, Rastislav Paulen (nicknamed Hugo because he wants to be the Boss) qualified for the World Junior Championships in Mexico and for the European Junior Championships in Serbia. It is a major achievement for him and for the entire club. STU Bratislava wishes him well and hopes that he will perform his best. «

Gdansk, Poland: XVII Multi-Discipline Swimming Competition Results

Jaroslav Chroscielewski
Director, UKS Dwojka Morena Gdansk, Poland

On the 7th of June, the UKS Dwojka Morena Gdansk swimming club hosted its 17th annual Multi-Discipline swimming event.

Open to swimmers between 11 to 14 years, the competition attracted 180 competitors from 11 different swimming clubs.

During this unique event, each swimmer swims 50 meter events in all the 4 strokes.

Results are calculated according to the sum of the swimmer's times, and the 7 best competitors are awarded special trophies.

The UKS Dwojka Morena Gdansk swimmers won a total of 28 medals: 9 gold, 10 silver, and 10 bronze. «



Results available here:

http://www.jaroch.sk.com.pl/plywanie/Archiwum/2008/2008_06_07_morena/wyniki.htm

Photos available here:

<http://www.jaroch.sk.com.pl/plywanie/zdi/2008/20080607morena/index.html>

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A SIMPLE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Michael Brooks
Head Coach, York YMCA, Pennsylvania (USA)

1. Have a dream.

The first step is the easy one. Anyone can dream. Who hasn't watched a playoff or championship game on TV, or read an article about a great champion in Swimming World, without having thought, "I want to be there someday"? I want to sink that last second game-winning shot, or hit the walk-off home run, or win the seven gold medals at the Olympics like Mark Spitz? Anyone with any desire to achieve has dreams all the time. So find an achievement that grabs you and sets your gut on fire. It need not be something as lofty (and seemingly unreal or unachievable) as an Olympic gold medal; making the Far Western team, or qualifying for your first JO's, or getting a AAA time, or whatever is out there calling for you, will do just fine. Find something you haven't done and really want to do.

2. Set a goal.

The second step is more difficult and not nearly as common: making the dream real. How do I get from where I am now to where my dream will take me? It is a long way from the playground to the World Series, or from the neighborhood pool to the Olympics. I cannot count the number of times a swimmer has told me his goal, say a 1:54 in the 200 IM, then had no idea what that goal actually meant in real terms: what I do need to split to swim that 1:54? What do I need to do in practice and how fast

do I need to train to reach my goal?

A goal without concreteness – what does this goal mean every day in practice – is vague and meaningless. Setting a goal means figuring out the route one will take to the destination; it means taking that dream out of the clouds and pulling it down to earth.

3. Get to work.

The third step is the most difficult and the most rare. Many more folks talk a good game than play one. If the second step is making a goal real, the third is making it happen. This is rare because it requires a true commitment to yourself and to your swimming to achieve it, and because the word 'commitment' has gotten a bad reputation, conflicting with several popular attitudes: commitment conflicts with the 'if it's not fun, don't do it' attitude that I hear from teenagers (mostly slow ones) all the time; it conflicts with the idea that one can do it all, that one never has to make choices that limit one's behavior or activities; it conflicts with the correlative idea that kids must participate in a myriad of activities and really commit to none; it conflicts, because its goal is excellence, with the attitude that redefines excellence and striving for excellence as 'elitism', and few folks have the strength of character to stand up under the 'elitist' charge in our very democratic America; it conflicts with our society's reverence for convenience, since commitment, and the excellence that it leads to, are not convenient. Commitment isn't popular, but goals – especially lofty ones – cannot be reached without it.

I often see a huge gap between a swimmer's goals and what that swimmer is willing to do to reach that goal. A senior swimmer making a B-level commitment and only finding it possible to train three days a week will tell me he wants to make Nationals or be a high school All-American. Or a swimmer with a goal of breaking 5:00 for the 500 free will never train hard enough to see a one-minute pace per 100 in prac-

tice. Those goals aren't honest and they aren't going to happen.

There is often a disconnect between how important a goal is when a swimmer talks about it, and how important swimming and her goal is when it is time to act: when it's time to get up at 5 a.m. for morning practice, or time to get to practice rather than to the fifteen other activities she could be doing every afternoon, or time to push harder when a set has gotten exhausting, or time to work on one's skills and improve technically instead of float through unthinkingly. It is much easier and more convenient to say, "I'll bag it today and work extra hard tomorrow." But tomorrow never comes. And another goal bites the dust.

Again, it's interesting how for many swimmers, when they are at a meet, swimming fast is their number one priority; but in the month between meets, swimming fast is their forty-seventh priority. These swimmers are never happy at meets, and they never can figure out what the problem is. In order for a goal to be honest, you must make a commitment to doing what it takes to reach it; your goal and your commitment must be on a level. «

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