

Tom Weckler
MSC Assistant Head Coach
10/08/07

Why Goal Setting is Important in Age Group Swimming

First off let me start by saying it's great to be back and I'm looking forward to another fantastic season. Goal Setting was always something very important to me in Age Group Swimming. If it weren't for the lofty goals I set for myself as a swimmer, I honestly don't think I would have feel in love with the sport like I have. It made the disappointments and failures that much more inspiring to work harder to accomplish the next challenge. It made the successful events in my career that much more rewarding. Goal Setting should be an aspect of our everyday life whether it's health and fitness, academic or personal.

Over the past week I've individually talked with the swimmers of the Blackhorse Group about their goals for the season, long term and their goals outside of swimming. I wasn't surprised at the number of "I don't know's" I received because a lot of times the swimmer is not at practice by choice that day or maybe had a tough math test earlier at school and just wants to get their laps done and get home. I had a lot of those days as a swimmer. For me in Age Group Swimming, my goal was merely to compete with the amount of talent in NW Indiana. There were 4 – 5 excellent teams in the area and to swim in the fast heat of events was an honor. LSO back then was an Illinois Swimming team so I would swim Indiana all year long and then go to state and swim against a completely different level of swimmers. Because of that I had a very different set of goals for example not getting lapped by Jeff Lee in a 200 FR. I failed many times at that one but I kept swimming and had some lucrative success in the later stages of my swimming career that made me feel confident enough to attempt a coaching career, one that I personally am very pleased with so far.

Now as a coach I'm trying to inspire our swimmers not only to "get a state cut" but to show great sportsmanship and team camaraderie. I think we have done a great job doing that at State last year but I would like us to take that approach at every meet this year starting with the Intersquad this Saturday. It's also important to have personal goals at practice such as improving my backstroke technique or swimming wall to wall at every practice. There are very simple goals we can have on a daily basis that can not only make swimming more enjoyable for the swimmers but for the staff and parents as well. In closing, I encourage all parents to talk to their swimmers about their goals for this season, their long term goals (not only swimming) and their personal/practice goals as it will help us all accomplish to goals we have for MSC this season and the years to come.