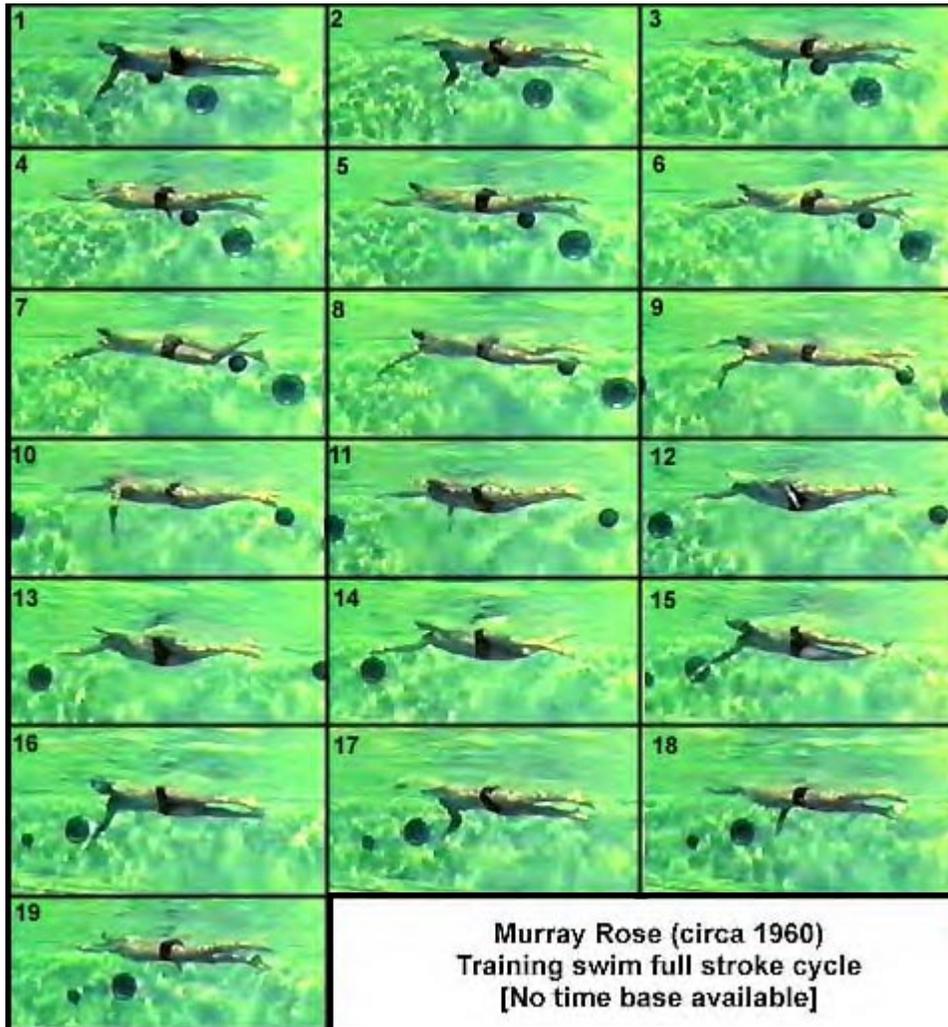


ideas for masters coaches



compiled by Bill Volckening
USMS Coaches Committee, 1998-2001
United States Masters Swimming

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Before...and After

Club Development, Communication and Strategy

By Bill Volckening

Effective club development requires creativity, energy and planning. The objective of this article is to provide some ideas about club development and promotional projects involving media communication. Whether trying to increase registration, raise money or implement new ideas, your success depends on the quality of your planning, timing and follow-up. There is a long list of creative projects you can use to promote your team. When initiating any promotional club development project, it is critical to have a clear idea about the specific project objectives, available resources, calendar and budget. Always keep in mind that a successful design for club development includes well-defined follow-up planning.



I have two pictures to illustrate the effect of a well-organized club development plan. These pictures show the Whitewaters Swimming Team of Princeton, New Jersey, where I worked from January, 1997 through July 1998. The first picture is slightly out-of-focus and dimly lit, with a small, scrappy group of swimmers sitting on metal bleachers against a wall. The swimmers are wearing a variety of different swimsuits, and two of the older swimmers stand in the back, off-center, holding a small banner blocked by heads. The second picture is sharp and well-lit, with a much larger group of swimmers, uniformly outfitted and seated in a spacious grandstand bleacher area with a huge banner across the front row. At first, these pictures appear to be showing two completely different teams. In fact, it is the same team a few months later. In a brief period of time, we effected a dramatic increase in registration and quality of our program. Our plan worked.

Club development provides a variety of opportunities for creative, rewarding administrative work. The list of media-generated communication projects includes: newsletters, handbooks, fliers, press releases, web sites and team outfitting. It is important to remember that everything your club produces is a reflection of the quality of the program. At first, it may not be obvious how certain projects, such as team outfitting, influence club development. Re-

member that professionalism appears in many different forms. Outfitting is just like any other promotional tool. It functions as a clear visual sign to all outside observers. If the team looks good, you look good. Each communication project is an opportunity to advertise, so it's important to maintain consistent quality across the board. Take advantage of each opportunity to demonstrate your professionalism by putting significant effort into each of these projects. If you aren't sure about what you're producing, collect samples from other local swimming organizations and compare them to what you're doing.

Start by setting some specific club development goals and locating creative resources. If the goal is to increase registration, have a clear idea about how many new registrations your program needs. Be realistic about limitations, such as pool size, pool time, rental costs and staff. Next, locate creative, resourceful individuals who are willing to volunteer. On your club application form ask people for their occupations. Always look for people who could contribute in specific areas of expertise, such as fund raising, accounting and desktop publishing. It is particularly helpful to find people who have computer skills and communication backgrounds. Depending on the project, find-

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Before...and After

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ing more than one person to share the responsibilities is a good idea. Make sure to network, because people are resources. No matter how much money your club has in its budget, the greatest resource is always going to be the people who care about the organization. Never underestimate the importance of meeting others and establishing friendly relations. Having an awareness and respect for other people's work is simple preparation for recognizing how you can help others, and more importantly, how others can help you.

Continue planning by defining your program's strengths and how best to promote them. Be specific about what your program offers, and prepare a clear, concise mission statement to delineate your organization's priorities. Once this statements is ready it is time to prepare some promotional materials. A good team brochure is one of the most effective tools for club promotion. When preparing a brochure, be sure to include the following information: the organization, the groups within the organization, facilities, staff and contact information. Some teams list prices, but if not listed, another opportunity is created for follow-up contact. The Barracudas brochure is a carefully prepared double-fold, letter-size document. It can fit in a standard envelope when folded. The team name, a picture and a slogan appears on the front, and the return address and blank space for mailing label and postage are on the opposite side. This brochure includes an application form to be returned, and the layout helps people avoid information loss when returning the application.

Two other outstanding promotional tools are fliers and press releases. Some of the most effective club promotion is done with inexpensive one-page fliers. A good flier has visual appeal and always gets your attention immediately. Sometimes it will have an eye-catching picture, and sometimes it will use big, bold words. One highly effective type of flier is the kind with tear-off tabs at the bottom. These tabs allow people to come away with the phone number or contact information. The press release is another highly effective promotional tool. Well-prepared press releases sent to the right places can get you coverage in publications ranging from local newspapers to nationally distributed magazines. A press release should always be concise. It should contain key specifics, including date, time, location and contact person. If there is a release date put it at the top, or use the words *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*.

Once the promotional materials are ready, take a good look at demographics. Locate your target audience and prepare a plan of action to reach them. If your goal is

to attract a group of developmental 8 & unders, for example, try gearing your promotion toward summer recreational swimming leagues. Advertise in the program at the summer league championships. Attend the Championships, wear something with your team name on it, and with the meet organizers' permission, distribute brochures and fliers and be available to answer questions for prospective new families.

Sometimes financial constraints prevent the pursuit of club development projects, but more often the obstacle is a lack of creative resources. If your team doesn't have the budget to purchase a computer, find someone who will let you work on their home computer. If you already have a team computer, one of the best investments is a good desktop publishing program such as Adobe PageMaker. Although it is a substantial investment, this type of program is invaluable. PageMaker allows users to set columns, insert pictures, move and change the size of whole text blocks, create multi-page documents and export fully formatted documents such as meet entry forms for online availability. If your team doesn't have the money to purchase the software, sometimes copy centers have available computers with these types of programs. When doing a web page, the software is often available for free online. I used a free copy of AOL Press to create the award-winning Whitewaters web site. Other useful tools include: CD-ROM clip art, scanners, digital cameras, fax machines and laminating machines. It's not always necessary to own this equipment. If you're resourceful, you can find a way to use most of these tools without purchasing them.

Aside from the stated philosophy and list of promotional tools for club development, it pays to plan good follow-up. Ensure the success of your club development projects by developing a detailed knowledge of the process people go through to get involved. The most successful coaches know what happens during the initial contact and how to handle it. Plan what you will say when people call or visit. Evaluate your promotional tools by always asking people how they found out about your organization. Ask members for feedback by distributing and collecting evaluation surveys. Gathering this type of follow-up response is a great way to measure progress and plan for future club development projects.

Maintain the long-term availability of creative resources by constantly recognizing volunteers and developing new volunteers. Use the team newsletter to thank your volunteers, and seek other forms of recognition, such as newspaper articles and volunteer awards. In club development, as in all facets of managing a team, good planning, communication and strategy are the keys to success. The true leaders in club development are those who master the details.

Recognition for Masters Swimmers

By Scott Rabalais

Masters swimmers don't swim for money. It is doubtful that even the top Masters swimmers in the country will earn even a fraction of the millions of dollars made by premier athletes in professional sports. However, Masters swimmers can be paid with a form of non-currency that can be fulfilling for both the individual and the team. They can be paid with RECOGNITION.

Like in any company, the recognition "payments" are distributed by the managers, and in a Masters team's case, that would usually be the coach. Employees are usually paid based on their value to the company, and the same should hold true in regards to a swim team. So the first question a coach must answer is "What are the goals, values and preferred actions of my team members?" All, or at least most, recognition should be designed to support your team's goals.

For example, all the teams I coached, had three team goals:



1) Primary Goal - Total participation and peak performance at championship meets;

2) Secondary Goal - Total participation and development of racing skills at non-championship meets and events;

3) Tertiary Goal - Effective training through consistency and diligence.

Our recognition system, built over the years, was one that supported these goals and their inherent values. This system could be categorized into several time categories, including daily, monthly, annually and "other" awards.

Daily

Don't get the idea that truckloads of trophies are carted into workout each day. However, a simple pat on the back or an encouraging word or two can go a long way towards motivating a swimmer. One must be careful not to overpraise, which lessens the value of the recognition, but one should use it when warranted. Each coach must find his or her level of comfort and effectiveness when doling out the compliments.

For example, a swimmer may have had trouble pacing descending sets in the past, and, for the first time, swam a set in perfect descending fashion. This may be a good time to step up to the swimmer and mention their accomplishment. Or, the entire group may have arrived to practice on time and stayed the duration of practice, another rare feat that may be cause for an announcement. Recognition may be directed to both individuals and to the team.

Monthly

Many programs present monthly awards for outstanding performance or training. Usually, these awards do have monetary value and are often announced through newsletters and/or at practice before the group.

Our team presented two awards on a monthly basis. The first award was called "Swimmer of the Month," which was based on the following criteria (in random order):

- 1) improvement
- 2) quality of practices
- 3) quantity of practices
- 4) participation in meets and events
- 5) contribution to the team

The coach selected the award winner, and the winner was announced both at practice and through the monthly newsletter. Keeping in mind that the award was based on a subjective decision, we would be as fair as possible in determining the winner. Occasionally, there would be some disagreements, but in this award's 10+ years, I had only one or two mumblings from swimmers who thought they should have won. All in all, the positives have far outweighed the negatives. The winner received a gift certificate for a one-hour massage from a licensed massage therapist, who was a team sponsor.

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Recognition

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The second award was "Swimmer of the Meet," which was based on the performances of swimmers in meets and/or events during a monthly period. The criteria was as follows:

- 1) effectiveness of preparation
- 2) quality of effort in race swims
- 3) improvement of times
- 4) level of support for team members
- 5) elevation of swimmer's ability or "boost" from

the meet

The winner received a gift certificate to a local sporting goods store that supplied swimming goods. If there was no meet during a month, an intra-team event or even a time trial may have been used to determine a winner.

Other forms of recognition would appear in the monthly newsletter. Swimmers who achieved a top 10 ranking in attendance for the team were listed in the "Top Ten." Interestingly if a swimmer made four workouts a week, he or she would make the Top Ten in just about any month. This is an example of recognition based on the team's goals, which in this case would be rewarding consistency in training. Also, any swimmers who participated in a meet or special event were listed in the newsletter.

Annual

A team banquet or party is not only a chance to honor annual award winners but to give an overview of accomplishments for the team over the previous year and look ahead to the future. Our team's annual banquet was held in September, which we considered the first month of the short course meters season and just after the conclusion of the long course season. The banquet was held at a local country club, where dinner was served and swimmers dressed up a bit.

Among the major awards presented are male and female Outstanding Swimmer and Most Improved, along with a Service Award. Perhaps the most valued award was the "Dig Deep Award," which was given to the male and female swimmers who, as voted on by the team, most embody the values and spirit of Masters swimming.

At the annual function, an award was given to every swimmer. This "participation" award, if finances permitted, was of high quality. One year, each swimmer was given a large red beach-size towel with their embroidered personal name and team name. Our fund-raising efforts allowed us the opportunity to give out such an award. Each swimmer was also given a "Meet Handbook" written by the coach.

Other

At meets, swimmers can receive even more recognition. While many meets give out the traditional medals and ribbons, our meets usually offered a "participation" award, which usually cost about five dollars apiece. Among the most popular have been personalized notepads, pens with names engraved, drinking glasses with a sketched meet logo, and meet T-shirts.

However, the all-time most popular award involved some photography and quick action. When swimmers entered the pool on Saturday, their picture was taken on the starting block next to registration. After the meet, the film was developed at a one-hour studio. Attractive cardboard frames had been ordered in advance of the meet, complete with the name of the meet, location and date. On Saturday evening, the photos were inserted into the frame and were ready for distribution on Sunday. Swimmers who arrived at the meet for the first time on Sunday were mailed their framed photo. The entire production resulted in a booming cost of only \$2.75 per swimmer, but the personal touch went a long way.

Beyond the team, many LMSCs give awards on an annual basis. If your LMSC does not have a recognition program, perhaps you can get involved and start one. If they do have one, make sure your deserving swimmers, coaches and volunteers are nominated.

On a national level, there are several awards in areas of swimming performance, coaching and service to Masters swimming. New awards, such as the Outstanding Fitness Program Award, are added to the national recognition honors occasionally.

Let your swimmers know that their practices and performances matter to you and your team. Use recognition to say "Thanks for the effort!" and your swimmers will stick around longer and show greater commitment to your program. And, that's a reward for any coach!



"Have I Got a Business Opportunity For You!"

By Emmett Hines

What would you say if I could show you a way to make \$40,000 per year or more in your spare time? What would that do to your lifestyle? If I could show you a business that requires no inventory, no selling, no employees, no paperwork. A perfectly legal business where you set your own hours and meet lots of people with similar interests...

...Startin' to sound like an *Amway* pitch now ain't it...



What I am talking about is 1-on-1 swim lessons. Ahhh...now don't go rolling your eyes...you might just identify with my experience.

Throughout my coaching career I've always been asked to do 1-on-1 instruction. Now, I never really considered myself to be in the "swim lesson business" (my wife handles all our swim school activities) but, for the most part, I con-

sent to take lessons because I just didn't know how to say "No". I would charge whatever the going local rate was - \$25, 30, 35 an hour - and invariably do them at the end of a long day after my last workout - for the swimmer's convenience. I went on for years like this with always a lesson or two each week. A little extra money but nothing to get excited about.

Then I became a parent. My son, Kalen, changed my whole perspective. That extra hour of my evening time became a lot more valuable to me - enough that I decided to get out of the swim lesson thing and spend that time at home. But, it was against my nature to just turn people down flat so I decided to raise my prices high enough that people would "Just Say NO!"

So, at the next inquiry, I quoted \$50, which, I was sure, was enough to price me well out of the market. But the guy says "Fine. When and where?"

Now, that's not what I had in mind. But, we made the appointment and did the lesson. It was kind of nice to pocket the extra money. But I was still really looking to get out of the swim lesson business. So the next time I got an inquiry I quoted \$50 again but indicated I only had spots available immediately following my morning workout. Surely this would drive them away. But the guy says "Fine. What day and where?"

Damn, still in the swim lesson business.

In fact, even though I was "over priced" and only offering lessons at times that were convenient for me, it was only a couple months before I was getting more business than ever before. To make a long story short - I have raised my prices several times in the past 3 years. In each case I have been absolutely sure that I was pricing myself out of the market.

And in each case, I've been very wrong. At every turn I've been amazed at how much adult swimmers, particularly triathletes and fitness swimmers, are willing to part with in order to get expert instructional services. But the longer I've been doing this the more it makes sense.

Take the triathlete who just spent \$800 bucks for a new wheel for his bike. He can't honestly say he's any faster for his expenditure (but at least he knows he LOOKS cooler). To that triathlete, spending a few hundred dollars

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Business Opportunity

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on a series of lessons to become a faster, more efficient swimmer - well, that's a no-brainer.

And a lot of the people who come to me are professional people themselves - people who understand the value of time and specialized knowledge. They're big investment in



swimming is not their money, it's their time. If they can spend a few hundred dollars for specialized knowledge that increases the productivity of the time they already invest in swimming - well, that's a no-brainer.

Vanity and self-consciousness drives billions of dollars worth of purchase decisions in today's world. The fitness swimmer who's had little or no instruction is usually quite envious of the "professional" swimmer's seemingly effortless laps. For the person who hits the pool, in search of heart

healthy exercise, a few hundred dollars spent to look and feel better while logging millions of laps in the future - well, that's a no-brainer.

I have been accused of being a bit mercenary, perhaps even predatory in my pricing scheme, but I'm gonna lay it out for you here. And I'm not suggesting you charge what I charge. I just want you to get a feel for what's working day in and day out right now in today's world. If you come to me for a lesson at one of my extremely convenient (for me) locations, scheduled in one of the extremely convenient (for me) appointment slots - well then, you get my basic rate of \$100 for 45 minutes. Want video? You pay extra. Want a lesson at some other time? You pay extra. If I travel to you, you pay a lot extra. If you show up late, it comes out of your time. If you don't practice - and make progress - between lessons, I won't take another lesson with you. My no-show policy is very aggressive - less than 2 days notice, half price - less than 2 hours notice, full price. And I collect. I don't give discounts and I don't have a "frequent swimmer" program.

On the other hand, I do offer a simple guarantee - if, for any reason you are not totally satisfied with any lesson, you owe me nothing, no questions asked.

My typical customer does anywhere between 4 and 10 weekly sessions, depending on where they are starting and where they want to end up. Then most go on a monthly brush-up schedule. I also have a few weekly "regulars" who have been with me for years.

I do a maximum of 10 lessons a week, no more than 3 in one day - otherwise my brain gets fried. I have a waiting list and my calendar is usually booked solid two weeks out and some clients have sessions booked into next year.

I recap my experience with swim lessons because I'm convinced that most knowledgeable, empathetic and communicative coaches could do the same or better. I more or less lucked into what I'm doing. If I knew then what I know now, I'd have been charging a lot more, a lot sooner.

There are several dynamics that "top shelf" pricing puts to work:

- 1) People who pay top dollar for anything are guaranteed to give great word of mouth. Anyone who pays over \$50,000 for a car has nothing but GOOD stuff to say about that car. Swim lessons are no different.
- 2) When I am being paid a lot for a lesson I am naturally more excited about being out there and probably give

my client (notice that its CLIENT now that I'm charging more money) I give my client more focused attention. People crave that and will gladly pay more for it.

- 3) When someone pays top dollar they are more likely to get there on time, pay attention during the lesson, do what I ask them to do and, perhaps most importantly...
- 4) When someone ponies up big bucks for a lesson you can be pretty darn sure they'll practice between lessons. They make more progress, are happier, say more good things to more people and stay with you longer.

Heck, after a couple of beers I've even been known to describe high prices as a "Customer Service".

Here's my Top Ten list of critical success factors in making 1-on-1 lessons pay off:

10) Your clients are paying for your time and your expertise - they should get 100% focused attention - regardless of how crowded the pool area may be I don't talk to other people or even acknowledge their existence while I'm doing a lesson. My client will never see me look at my watch during the session. My goal is to make them feel as though the rest of the world goes "on hold" during our time together.

9) Be hard to get. Regardless of what my calendar looks like I won't book a new lesson less than two weeks out. I tell the prospective client when I'm available - typically offering only two options where I can "fit them in". In the building stages this helps create the image of a busy person "in high demand."

8) Always give more than expected - my appointments are scheduled for 45 minute sessions but between water work and "relationship building" time on the deck before and afterwards, each lesson lasts a full hour.

7) Always encourage them to call you with questions they may have between lessons. Few will actually take you up on the offer - but the offer itself enhances the perceived value in the client's eyes. They know you are there for them if needed.

6) Do strongly encourage your clients to keep a training and progress diary in which they are to make notes about the lesson and then write about their practice experiences, noting any questions and leaving space for the answers. Spend the first 5 minutes of each lesson going over these notes with your client. It helps to refresh your memory of your client's current state and impresses the hell out of them that you're so thorough in your attention.

5) Set your price high enough so that you are really excited about doing the lessons. When you quote your price to a new prospect you should be "out of your comfort zone" - i.e. you should have a reasonable expectation that *some* prospective clients *will* "Just say No" because of your price. But my experience is that *very few* people say "No"...hmmm...maybe its time to raise *my* prices again.

4) When someone does say "No" don't take it personal - its just a sign you are in the right ballpark with your price - You aren't losing business, you are leaving room for a higher paying client. I always have a list of 3 other very good instructors I can refer my "economy class swimmers" to. Hey - if you were a cardiac surgeon would you rather be known as the #1 guy in the field or the guy the city sends the indigent cases to?

3) Do have professional business cards made with the title "Teaching Professional" - this puts you a notch higher in the client's estimation than "Swimming Coach". Never hand out just one card - always hand out two or more. *All* my clients invariably hand them out and come asking for more.

2) Do make yourself available to speak to triathlon and running clubs. I estimate that each 30 minute presentation I make to one of these groups pays off with an average of \$2000 in immediate or near term lesson sign-ups and perhaps two or three times that in long term repeats.

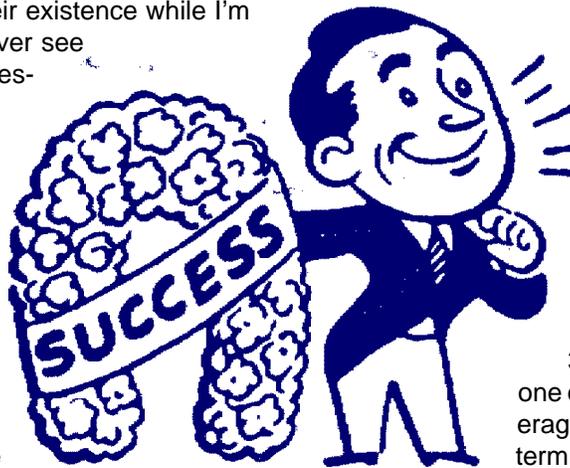
And it boosts my swim team numbers as well.

1) Understand that your clients will be repeat and loyal customers - and sing your praises - because of the *relationship* you build with them. Yes, the information they get and the progress they make are important, but it's the personal relationship that keeps them coming back.

Now, go out and average 10 adult lessons a week at \$100 a pop for 40 weeks and that's a part-time income of \$40,000. I did it in 1997 - then again in 1998. As Will Sonnet used to say "No brag, just fact." If I can do it, so can you.

Get out of your comfort zone and create a prosperous year!

Emmett Hines is the Director and Head Coach of H Ouston Swims. He is an ASCA Level 5 Masters Coach and a Senior Instructor for Total Immersion Adult Swim Camps. He is the author of hundreds of articles on swimming and has a newly released book, [Fitness Swimming](#). In 1993, Emmett was recognized as USMS Coach of the Year.



“...stolen from the bulletin board...”

by Bill Volckening

A few years ago, a colleague told me “You’ll always know you’ve got good stuff when people try to steal it.” The coach was referring to team outfitting — specifically warm-ups, T-shirts and caps. “Tell the swimmers to watch their belongings,” he said. “Our new warm-ups are awesome, and they’ll walk if we’re not paying attention.” I felt uneasy accusing others of stealing, but I remembered it. A few years later, when I was working at another pool, I was reminded of the conversation. It wasn’t because our warm-up suits were vanishing. Our team newsletters were disappearing from the pool bulletin board.

At first, I didn’t think too much about it. Paperwork often gets lost in the kids’ swim bags, only to be found months later, all soggy and wadded-up. Even if the newsletters were getting home, people probably needed extra copies for their scrap books. One family requested extras because they were fighting over it. Determined to resolve the problem, I photocopied some extra newsletters for the team mail box. People seemed to appreciate it, but interestingly enough, the ones I posted on the bulletin board continued to disappear.

Several months later, I received a surprise e-mail message from a person unknown to me. The subject read ‘newsletter’, and it said, “I was visiting the pool this weekend, and I saw your team bulletin board. That newsletter is the best one I’ve ever seen! I was so impressed I took a copy with me....(hope that’s OK)...How do you do it?” As surprised as I was to receive this message, it explained why the newsletters kept vanishing. People liked them. If this story has stirred

your interest in producing a high-quality newsletter, continue reading. Follow these steps, and you’ll discover your newsletters are stolen from the bulletin board.

Start by selecting the appropriate tools. Computer equipment, such as desktop publishing software, digital cameras, scanners and CD-ROM clip art packages are some of the most valuable tools for a newsletter editor. Before making any new purchases, evaluate your budget. Next, make some determinations about how the newsletter should look. If you’re having difficulty making decisions about style, study samples of other newsletters, newspapers and magazines.

The choice of standards, such as fonts, graphics and layout should ultimately contribute to a cohesive style. Continue planning by making some decisions about production, such as: the approximate number of pages, the type of materials, frequency of publication and method of delivery. Once the plan is established, start delegating responsibilities. The most successful editors orchestrate the contributions of many individuals, but the greatest pitfall is doing everything yourself.

When first choosing a desktop publishing program it is important to understand the similarities and differences between the various types of software packages. The most appropriate program may not necessarily be the most costly or elaborate one, but it should have enough features to suit your needs. One of the least expensive options is the newsletter template available in several of the word processing programs such as

24 Barracudas "Swim into Summer"

BEAVERTON- 24 Barracudas participated in the "Swim Into Summer" Long Course Meet at Tualatin Hills Aquatic Center on Saturday, June 12th. The meet was very well-attended this year, with a record 107 swimmers registered, from Oregon, Washington and Canada. The list of participating Barracudas included: Susan Albright, Judy Beaton, Susan Collins, John Collins, Dave Dotter, Ann Fulton, Kelly Hibler, Wally Holden, Murali Krishna, Judy Melcher, Rich Minter, Chuck Mirho, Dave Raddiff, Ed Ramsey, Chris Roth, Jackie Ryan, Mara Silvera, Darlene Staley, Elfie Stevenin, Chris Toole, Mark Vininsky, Bill Volckening, Greg Walker, Earl Walter and Jody Welborn. Steve Hedgepeth and Sandi Rousseau were also entered in the meet, but unfortunately couldn't make it.

The meet featured some fast swimming, with several Barracudas posting potential USMS Top Ten Times. Once again, Wally Holden was the star of the show. 80 year-old Holden broke two USMS records and one FINA Masters World Record in the butterfly events. In the 50 meter butterfly, Wally just missed the World Record of 42.22 when he posted a winning time of 42.5. His time erased the USMS record of 48.70 set in 1998 by Paul Krup of O'H*H*O* Masters. Wally came back in the 100 meter butterfly to lower the existing world record by nearly five seconds. His winning time of 1:47.88 crushed the previous record of 1:52.37 held by Anton Cerer. A third USMS Record was set by 61 year-old Bert Petersen of Parkrose in the 50 meter butterfly.

Dave Raddiff broke four Northwest Zone records, including three in one race, while swimming the 800 meter freestyle. Dave split 2:49.18 at the 200, 6:05.79 at the 400, and finished in 12:46.48. The previous records were 2:52.43, 6:24.66 and 13:54.97. Dave followed with another Zone record in the 100 meter freestyle. After long absences from pool competition, several Barracudas tested the waters for the first time in years. The results were outstanding for Susan Albright (4 years absent), Kelly Hibler (10 years), Mark Vininsky (13 years), Mara Silvera (20 years) and Jody Welborn (30 years!).

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped run the meet, especially to Meet Director Ed Ramsey, Electronic Timing Operators Jon Schieltz and Barbara Wallis, Announcer Jim Teisher, Starter Gary Wallis, Head Referee Dana Erickson, Hospitality Coordinator Jed Conin, Head Timer De Peters, Safety Marshals Lois Allan and Johanna Cummings, Check-In Coordinator Kristi Riddle, Anthem Coordinator Jeanne Teisher and Officials Al Smith, Stuart Douglas, Cathy Douglas, Brian Tienken and Tom Schrimsher.

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“...stolen...”

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Microsoft Works. However, if you have the resources, Adobe PageMaker and Quark XPress are two of the most highly recommended desktop publishing software packages. Both of these programs have the capacity to determine page size, set columns, place graphics, wrap text around graphics and rotate text and graphics. PageMaker creates HTML files and allows users to easily export fully formatted electronic documents for e-mail delivery and web download. Learning how to use PageMaker and Quark isn't too difficult. It just takes

lishing documents with images. When using original, flat artwork, a scanner is one of the best tools for converting the artwork into a digital image file. If the newsletter requires a lot of photographs, a digital camera is an excellent investment. There are several models with different features and prices. One of the easiest to use is the type that stores images to standard 3.5" floppy diskettes. After taking the picture, the diskette simply pops out of the camera and into the computer. Another great source for images is CD-ROM clip art. Clip art is a valuable resource for newsletters requiring different types of illustrations.

The process of creative decision making can be very rewarding, particularly if the newsletter editor has a clear vision that is supported by the organization's Board

Fonts



some time. In the long run, creativity is a much more valuable commodity than the technical expertise.

Style is one of the most important considerations in newsletter production. Before working on the specific contents, it's a good idea to sit down at the computer for a day, establish a template and play with some standard features, such as layout, graphics and fonts. A 'template' is the basic framework that establishes a pattern for the newsletter. It provides a planned structure for the newsletter's layout and style. Because the style of a newsletter should reflect the character of the organization, time spent evaluating these standards is time well spent. The term 'layout' refers to the design and arrangement of text and graphics on each page. Layout is important not only for its contribution to the style, but because it determines how easily people can read the newsletter. "Fonts" are different types of lettering. A selection of fonts can usually be found in computer software and on the internet. Graphics also come from a variety of sources, including photographs, drawings and computer clip-art.

There are many ways to enhance desktop pub-

of Directors. After the decision is made to start a newsletter or upgrade an existing newsletter, the first step was to select a clean, readable font for the body text. I have typically used a justified, true-type font in 10-point size, because it is compact enough to allow for a good use of space, but large enough to read. The next step is to select a variety of display fonts and graphics for the headlines and regular features. In my newsletters, the eclectic assortment of display fonts reflected the diversity of the organization, and the antique style graphics appealed to Masters swimmers, while contributing to a traditional looking style. The template also included a front page header, return address, web address, page footers, caption text, page-break guides and a masthead with club officer contacts.

When preparing a newsletter template, it is a good idea to establish a plan for production. There are several important determinations in planning production, such as the number of pages, method of distribution, frequency of publication and cost. Newsletters are typically printed (or photocopied) and mailed. When plan-

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ning a newsletter that will be printed and photocopied, it is particularly important to evaluate the budget. Start by researching the cost per printed page. Use this number to determine the total cost of each newsletter by factoring the number of recipients with the number of pages and annual editions.

The following example outlines a simple method of determining the cost. The proposed newsletter is a four-page document. To give it a more professional look, the editor decides to print it on 11 x 17 size paper and fold it in half. If it costs seven cents to photocopy each side of a double-sided 11 x 17 page, it would cost 14 cents to copy a single newsletter. With 100 recipients, the total cost of printing each edition would be \$14.00. The newsletter would be a monthly publication, with an annual cost of \$168 for printing. Using the U.S. Postal Service for delivery would cost 33 cents per copy, which adds an additional \$396 annually to the expense. Therefore, the approximate annual expense for printing and mailing a four page, monthly newsletter would be \$564. When budgeting for production costs, such as printer cartridges, paper and mailing labels, remember to include miscellaneous items such as office supplies and mailing labels.

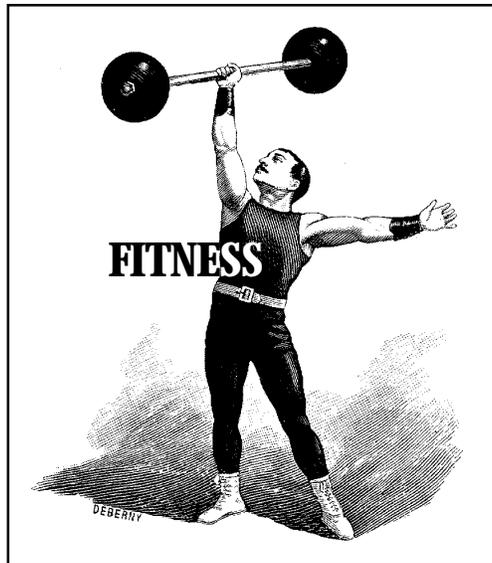
Because of the considerable cost of printing and mailing newsletters, editors have implemented a number of ideas for working within their budgets. The most significant cost savings come from eliminating postage. More than 70% of the expense is saved by delivering the newsletters by hand rather than through the mail. Other options include reducing the number of pages, publishing the newsletter less frequently and developing an e-mail delivery system. Recently, newsletter editors have started to produce electronic documents available via e-mail and

the web. Undoubtedly the most popular type of electronic document is the “PDF”, which stands for ‘portable document file’. A PDF is a fully formatted document that looks and prints exactly like the original. The beauty of the PDF file is the ease with which it is uploaded into web sites. In sharp contrast to printed documents, PDF’s offer dynamic, full-color presentation, conservation of natural resources, savings in production time, all at a reduced cost. Theoretically, production costs could be completely eliminated with the advent of the “PDF”.

The key to success in coordinating a newsletter project is to clearly delineate the responsibilities and delegate to as many different people as possible. Since the most successful editors orchestrate the efforts of countless contributors, it is important to be well-organized, deadline-oriented and easy to reach. The prospective newsletter editor should establish a variety of methods for people to make contact, because the most professional editors have e-mail, voice mail and fax machines. More importantly, successful editors immediately return phone calls and e-mail messages.

Some of the most important contributors are columnists, photographers, proofreaders and production workers. Even in the smallest organizations, these responsibilities can be covered by the members and Board of Directors. Although it’s not necessary, it is advantageous to locate people who have visual communications and computer backgrounds. Set yourself up for success by not allowing yourself to do all the work — and when you tack a copy of your first edition of the newsletter to the bulletin board, don’t ever expect to see it again.

Bill Volckening is the USMS Editor for SWIM Magazine. He is the 1999 recipient of the USMS Newsletter of the Year Award, and has spoken about team communications at the 2000 Pacific Coaches Clinic and the 2000 ASCA World Coaches Conference.



If you are creating regularly appearing columns, try creating a graphic to accompany the column. Not only will it look great, but it will assist the readers with visual recognition cues.

Developing Online Communications

Adobe Systems Incorporated swims circles around the competition

by Bill Volckening



When it comes to portable, online documents, Adobe Systems Incorporated is swimming circles around the competition. Adobe Acrobat "PDF" files are popping-up all over the web, especially in swimming information circles. "PDF", which stands for Portable Document File, is quickly becoming well known in swimming web sites such as 'USMS.org' and 'USA Swimming'. These sites feature a growing number of downloadable files, available in PDF format.

Although Adobe Acrobat has been around for a couple of years, its impact with the online swimming world is relatively new. Acrobat allows users to distill professional looking, online documents from files created in desktop publishing applications. The final product is a fully formatted document that looks and prints exactly like the original. The beauty of the PDF file is the ease with which it is uploaded into web sites. Acrobat is perhaps the fastest way to publish documents online. In sharp contrast to printed documents, Acrobat provides a method of delivering high quality documents through e-mail, which allows for dramatic reductions in cost and conservation of natural resources.

One of the easiest, most effective ways to create Acrobat files is with Adobe's Desktop Publishing companion, Adobe PageMaker. Because the two programs are fully compatible, it takes mere seconds to convert a PageMaker document into a PDF file. Simply click on the 'file' command, go to 'export', select 'Adobe PDF' and click the next 'export' button. It took less than thirty seconds to distill a 14-page newsletter into PDF.

The United States Masters Swimming web site features a growing number of downloadable Acrobat files. PDF files are available primarily for registration forms. Programs such as On-Deck Coaching, NIKE Champions Clinics, Mentor Clinics and Coach of the Year offer information in the portable document files. The MACA News is the first PDF newsletter to appear in the USMS Web Site.

"PDF files are very popular on the web," according to USMS Webmaster Jim Matysek. "Once you have the tools, they are very easy to create, and are extremely por-

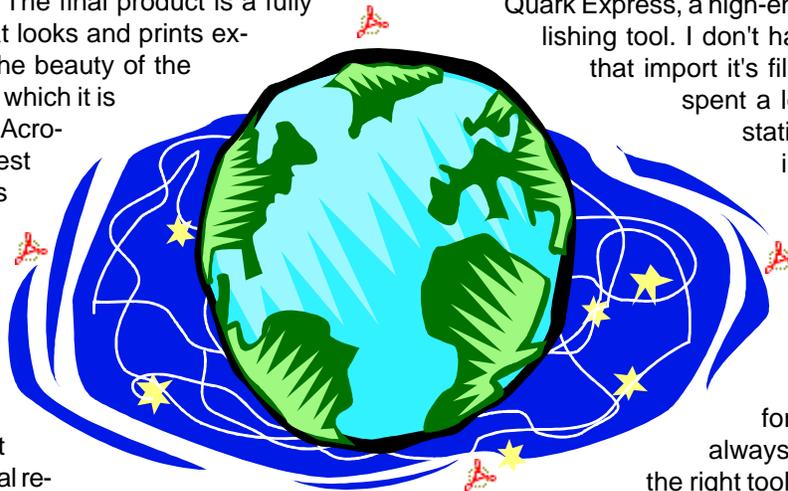
table. A file in PDF format should look the same on a PC, a Mac, or a Unix box. There are no such guarantees with HTML files, which require great care to ensure that your pages are presented in a desirable way on a number of different types of machines and browsers."

The first PDF file to appear in the USMS Web Site was the 1997 USMS Long Course Nationals Entry Form. Since 1997, the use of PDF has steadily grown. The technical considerations are far less involved than they first appear to be. Matysek comments,

"As long as you have the Acrobat creation tools and whatever tool your original file was created with, it's a piece of cake. The first 3 nationals for which I posted the entry form in PDF format were much more difficult. The entry form original from SWIM magazine is made using Quark Express, a high-end (and expensive) publishing tool. I don't have Quark or any tools that import it's file format. As a result, I spent a lot of time renting work station time at Kinkos, trying to figure out unfamiliar tools and match fonts. It was a real pain. With this year's nationals, I found a local company that has all the right tools and can do the conversion for us in no time at all. It always comes down to having the right tools for the job."

Several LMSC and club newsletters are now produced in the portable document file format, including the last three recipients of the USMS Newsletter of the Year Award. One of these newsletters is the "Wet Set," the 2000 USMS Newsletter of the Year, which is edited by Sandi McNeel. Her predecessor, Dan Frost was one of the first to use Acrobat to create the Wet Set -- and he did so while he was stationed in Saudi Arabia as a Naval Flight Officer. Frost commented on the ease of using the Acrobat PDF format.

"I like Adobe Acrobat because it is easy to handle as a reader. It seems like a fairly universal document format now. My last Navy squadron was one that was based on Whidbey Island (West coast), but deployed on a squadron homeported in Norfolk VA (East coast). It became a paperwork hassle whenever we deployed, because our West



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Online Communications

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browsers and different word processors, but everybody can use Acrobat."

Although Acrobat provides a universal document format, there are still some technical considerations -- especially if you are not using PageMaker to create the original document. Jim Matysek explains,

"I've had some difficulty with editing PDF files once they are created. If someone uses an original tool that I don't have or sends something already in PDF format and then wants it to be edited a little, I may or may not be able to do it, depending on the file and the amount of editing needed. It is much easier to work in the original format until the final copy is needed, and then convert to PDF. These files work very well for things like forms that need to be printed and filled in by hand. They provide for a consistent printed file layout for anyone. They are also appropriate for existing documents that have a lot of layout features that you want to maintain (brochures, etc.). If your document is mostly text and would benefit from easy on line navigation from one section to another, converting it to HTML may be better."

PDFs certainly look like the wave of the future for producing newsletters such as the MACA News. MACA could save more than \$2000 annually if all the members could receive the MACA News via e-mail. And, they would receive it faster than by U.S. mail. One local team recently surveyed their club members and found about 70% of their members prefer to receive newsletter via e-mail. Since each monthly newsletter costs close to \$50.00 to print and mail to its 100 members, the team could save nearly \$600 annually if all the members received the newsletter by e-mail. Aside from the savings, the presentation of a photocopied newsletter simply doesn't compare to a PDF newsletter. Frost adds,

"You can get pretty fancy in producing eye-pleasing documents with Acrobat when compared with WordPerfect or MS Word. PDF's are easier to handle because you can put an entire newsletter in one file, or partition it as you desire. The product comes out in nicely formatted pages that the user can print out page-by-page or in its entirety. This feature is a big advantage over html

files. If I only want to print out one article of a newsletter on an html web page, I have to print out the entire web page, which due to Murphy's law requires many extra pages to flow through my printer, and the section that interests me gets sliced by a page break.

Even if I did want to print out the entire newsletter, the browser would insert the page breaks wherever it wanted, not where it was intended by the author."

Even though the advantages are clear, many individuals are still more comfortable receiving their information the old fashioned way, with printed mailings in the U.S. Mail. According to Matysek,

"Many novice computer users are scared away by PDF files. There are lots of people who simply won't install new software, even if it is free and has an easy install procedure, like Acrobat Reader. Without assistance from a friend, these people will never view PDF files, so we need to be careful to not rely too heavily on PDF files at this time."

Matysek also commented on some other technical glitches experienced with Acrobat.

"We have also seen some problems with different versions of Acrobat. At the usms.org site, we once used Acrobat 3.0, and several people had reported problems reading the files, and it turns out that they had an older version of Acrobat and were unwilling to upgrade. The upgrade is free, but if your disk drive is full, you may be extra cautious about installing anything." Adobe has released Acrobat 5.0, and USMS has now adopted this version. "The newer versions read files from other versions," says Matysek, "so it shouldn't be a problem."

If you would like to download a free version of Adobe Acrobat Reader, please visit the Adobe Acrobat Website:



<http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>

Bill Volckening is the USMS Editor for SWIM Magazine, and formerly newsletter editor for MACA and webmaster for MACA and the Oregon LMSC. He is the 1998 recipient of the STROKE Award for best youth swimming web site, and 1999 recipient of the USMS Newsletter of the Year Award. Bill has spoken about team communications at the 2000 Pacific Coaches Clinic and the 2000 ASCA World Coaches Conference.

MAKING THE BEST: MASTERS COACHES

By Dan Frost

Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from a three-part series. Part one covers the swimmers without coaches, and part three covers swimmers and coaches.

Do you coach a Masters swim team? Congratulations! Coaching a group of Masters Swimmers is a uniquely rewarding, albeit demanding, responsibility. Masters are very keen to learn how to improve and listen intently to advice and instruction. Coaching Masters also keeps you on your toes since Masters do not hesitate to question anything that does not make sense or seem applicable to them. Masters will work diligently without constant supervision to put your suggestions into action. Masters appreciate sincerity, timely guidance, dedication, and a good sense of humor from their coaches.

Just as there is no such thing as a typical Masters swimmer, there is no such thing as a typical Masters coach. It is very likely that the coach at the pool down the street or in the next town is employed very differently from you. The spectrum of Masters coaches includes (but certainly is not limited to):

- The head coach or assistant coach of the youth swim club also coaches the Masters team. The coach is employed either by the host pool or the swim club.
- A volunteer, such as an off-duty lifeguard or pool staff member, or another swimmer, coaches or supervises the Masters team for no added compensation.
- A former youth or high school swimmer, now an undergraduate or graduate college student, coaches the Masters team to earn a little extra money.
- The Masters club is an independent private enterprise owned and managed by the coaches with the club being the coaches' full-time profession and main source of income.
- A person with an already steady income, from another job or a pension, enjoys the fun aspects of coaching the Masters team.

Coaches also work in various environments. Self-employed coaches who run their own clubs can earn more money by attracting more swimmers, but often must pay to rent pool time. Other coaches who are salaried employees of private health clubs or public pools do not directly see their income

linked to the numbers of swimmers that are coached by them. Some rely on swim coaching for their primary source of income, while others receive little or no compensation. Even those who coach professionally may have a wide range of additional responsibilities, such as coaching other swim teams, administrative management of the swim club(s), management of the aquatic facility, and duties within the governing swimming associations.



Coaches also possess varying degrees of experience in the sport and skill at coaching. In many ways, developing coaching skill comes from experience, though education also has an important role in the development of coaches.

Realize that because there are many differences among Masters coaches, there is no one formula to help a particular coach become the best coach that he or she can be. However, there are many ways that coaches, no matter what their disposition, can help give their swimmers the best possible chance to achieve individual and team swimming goals. Here is a collection of ideas to try:

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SAFETY

A coach's highest priority should be to help ensure that swimmers can participate in a safe environment. Safety at the pool encompasses many things, but a coach has the most influence on conducting the Masters workout in a manner that reduces the risk of injury to participants from their fellow Masters or from other pool patrons. Coaches should also be watchful for hazards from pool equipment, both in the water and on the pool deck, and point out those dangers to pool management. A coach should also always be able to summon emergency medical assistance. It is not a bad idea to know basic first aid and CPR as well. USMS has a Safety Education Committee where coaches may learn further specifics about safely conducting Masters workouts.

BUILD KNOWLEDGE

Writing workouts, or even a long range training plan, for your Masters group is difficult. What techniques should be taught, and what drills or lessons will best reinforce those techniques? How long should the workout sets be? There are many sources of swimming information for coaches, including the USMS Coaches Committee, coaching associations, books, magazines, clinics, and the World Wide Web. A good source of free information is the Masters Swimming Canada website, which contains *Hints for Coaching Masters (Third edition)*.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

Coaches are faced with an incredible challenge of meeting the variety of needs of swimmers who are diverse in age and conditioning. To meet all of those needs, a coach has to know what those needs are. Sometimes, swimmers will approach the coach with a list of goals and desires. However, it is often left up to the coach to ascertain what their swimmers hope to get out of participating in Masters. A good idea for a coach is to be available for at least a few minutes after workout for the sole purpose of talking with, and getting to know, the swimmers and their desires.

DO NOT OVERDO

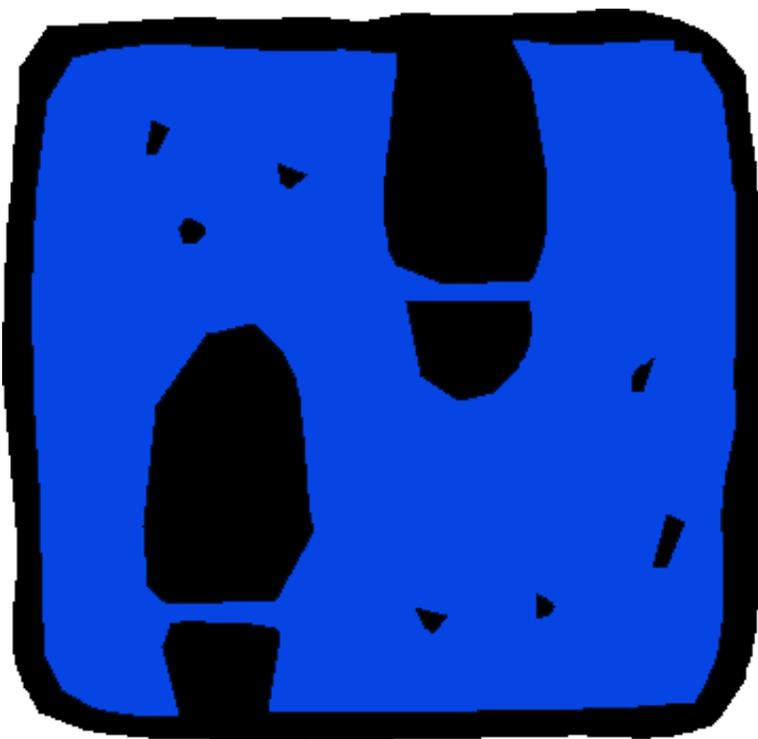
When you "know your customers", you also discover their limits. Masters swimmers definitely have limits. Talented high school and college age swimmers can swim seemingly endless workouts, sometimes twice a day, with incredible intensity. Very, very few Masters can do the same. In keeping with maintaining a safe workout environment, coaches should also put a high priority on injury prevention.

ORGANIZE THE TEAM

Swimmers often look to the coach for team organization. Since the coach organizes workout times and workout sets, he (or

she) "naturally" becomes the person that the swimmers turn to for scheduling the team social, arranging for the group travel to distant competitions, and so forth. Not all coaches have the extra time to do this. However, most Masters value any extra help that the coach can give.

Coaches do not necessarily have to do everything when trying to organize the team. There are certainly many ways in which your swimmers can assume some of the responsibility of team organization.



BE AN ENCOURAGER AND AN ENTERTAINER

Not everybody has the gift of charisma, and it is not imperative that coaches be highly charismatic and entertaining when they coach. However, if you do have that kind of outgoing, extroverted, and entertaining personality, use it! When the going gets tough in the water, and your Masters are struggling through a challenging workout, your encouragement and a good laugh can be the difference in whether your swimmers get over the hump.

DEVELOP YOUR WRITING SKILLS

Writing skills?!? Believe it or not, you can become a more successful coach when you can put your ideas down on paper. A good place to start is to produce or contribute to a team

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newsletter. Newsletters are a great way to communicate to all of your swimmers. You can write about anything...workouts, upcoming events, technique tips, recognizing your swimmers, and so on. Reading the works of other coaches will help give you good ideas for your own articles, and a starting point on how your ideas should be expressed.

Writing is also a big key in being widely recognized as a good coach. Also, the value of writing in promoting your team can not be understated. When your name appears on a team promotional flyer, a newsletter article, an article in a sports magazine, a technical journal, or even a book, it helps to identify you as a knowledgeable coach and your team as an excellent one to join. It also spreads good news about your program to more people than good old "word-of-mouth".

TRY SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT (OCCASIONALLY)

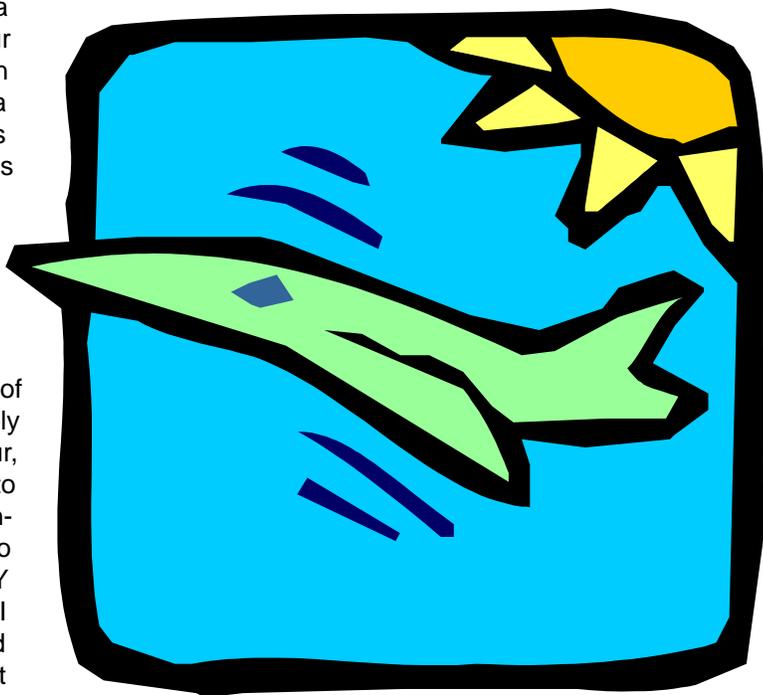
If "variety is the spice of life," then it is certainly the "spice of Masters workouts!" Granted, some swimmers are simply content with going up and down the pool 100 times an hour, day after day. However, others welcome variety from time to time. This variety is not just adding or subtracting a few hundred yards between workouts, or throwing in a new drill to perform. I am talking about doing something COMPLETELY different. A good example was the first Masters workout I ever attended. Instead of jumping right into the water and pounding out 2000-3000 yards as you would expect, we spent at least half of the hour on the pool deck, huddled around the dry erase board, listening to the coach give a presentation on the new "wave" breaststroke. (This was in 1990 when Mike Barrowman was beginning to have great success using it.) That presentation, compared to a "normal" workout, was a much more compelling reason for me to come back to Masters for a second time. Besides such presentations, coaches can set aside time for fun relays and games, practice starts from the starting blocks, watching videotapes of the Olympics, and other activities limited only by imagination.

TRAVEL TO MEETS

Coaches should consider traveling to Masters meets and competitions, especially those where their swimmers are participating. For your swimmers who compete in meets, the meet itself is an extension of the training program that you, as a coach, are helping to provide. As their coach, you are likely the best person to advise your swimmers on how to perform their best in the meet, based on your observations of them in your workouts.

You should also go to see a Masters meet if you have never

been to one before in your area, or if you do not have any swimmers on your team that compete regularly. Masters meets are rather unique. When you attend one, you will discover that they are not like age-group meets, college meets, or anything that you see on television. You can then better encourage swimmers to try a meet or two, if you believe that it will help reach their goals. Plus, you discover that, when you do get the chance to coach at a meet, you can not coach your Masters at a meet like you would coach your age-groupers and college swimmers.



The best way to encourage your swimmers to participate in a Masters meet is to host one. Witnessing a Masters meet will give you valuable information about how meets are run. Swimmers who have never participated in a meet are much less willing (perhaps afraid) to go to an unfamiliar pool for their first ever meet. Even if you do not have the facility or help needed to run a big meet, you can still have a small team scrimmage, a time trial, or a postal swim. Some Masters who do not have the capacity to travel to meets appreciate the opportunity to still compete at their home pool.

The subject of Masters meets and competitions was extensively discussed at the 1998 USMS Convention, with a special focus on ways of inspiring more members, regardless of ability, to participate. It was mentioned over and over that the coach had a huge influence as to whether a swimmer is competitive. Offering competitive opportunities in practice can encourage your swimmers to try other competitions. Going to those competitions with your swimmers is very supportive and tells them "We are in this together!"

MAKING THE BEST

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DEVELOP "COACH OF THE YEAR" QUALITIES

Masters coaches are able to set professional goals by learning about recognition programs such as the USMS Coach of the Year. Here is a list of criteria upon which USMS Coach of the Year nominees are judged. Again, there is no one formula for coaching success that applies to everyone, but you will be very successful in coaching if you are doing well in the following areas:

- ACCOMPLISHMENTS - Club size and growth; Results of your swimmers at events such as the USMS Nationals, zone meets, and open water swims; Records and USMS Top Ten placings by your swimmers
- PUBLICATIONS - Articles and material published
- CONTRIBUTIONS TO USMS - Swim meets hosted; Clinics and presentations hosted; Positions held within the Local Masters Swimming Committee
- LONG TERM CONTRIBUTIONS - Years as a coach; Special accomplishments

The USMS Coaches Committee selects the USMS Coach of the Year, as always, from a deserving list of candidates. Do you think that you are a potential Coach of the Year? You can access the USMS website for a nomination form, or ask the Coaches Committee about it.

(LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST) LEADERSHIP

The most successful coaches are leaders. If you are like most coaches, you probably did not grow up as a child and leave for college intending someday to be a coach. New coaches draw from their education (regardless of the type of degree) and experiences (including past swimming experiences) the concepts that apply to coaching. Leadership is the most important of these concepts. Leadership may come more naturally to some people than others, however leadership is a concept that is learned, not endowed or preordained.

Face it, the challenge in Masters coaching is exercising good leadership...convincing a group of fellow adults to spend an hour or so in strenuous physical exercise, and then convincing them to come back and do it again. All of the tips mentioned in this article are tools that a coach can use to exercise positive leadership.

FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT COACHING MASTERS

(Courtesy of the BC Masters Swimmers)

- Masters coaching is one of the most challenging but rewarding coaching jobs going
- Masters recognize no age limits

- Masters are eager to learn anything to do with their health and fitness
- Masters appreciate knowing why they are being asked to do something
- Masters respond to challenges
- Masters can make incredible performance gains through improved techniques
- Masters Swimming is all about Fun, Fitness, Friendship and Participation

SOME SUGGESTED RESOURCES

USMS WEBSITE (<http://www.usms.org>)

USMS COMMITTEES

The USMS Coaches, Fitness, and Safety Education Committees are available to serve USMS members, clubs, and LMSCs in promoting the goals of the Masters Swimming program. Committees are listed in the USMS Rule Book, and information is available on the USMS web site.

USMS NATIONAL OFFICE

For information about USMS, its programs, services, and products, contact USMS Executive Secretary Traci Grilli at USMS National Office, P.O. Box 185, Londonderry NH 03053-0185, telephone (800) 550-SWIM, or e-mail usms@usms.org.

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For more information, contact their editorial offices at Sports Publications Inc., P.O. Box 20337, Sedona AZ 86341, telephone (520) 284-4005, or e-mail SwimWorld@aol.com.

AMERICAN SWIMMING COACHES ASSOCIATION

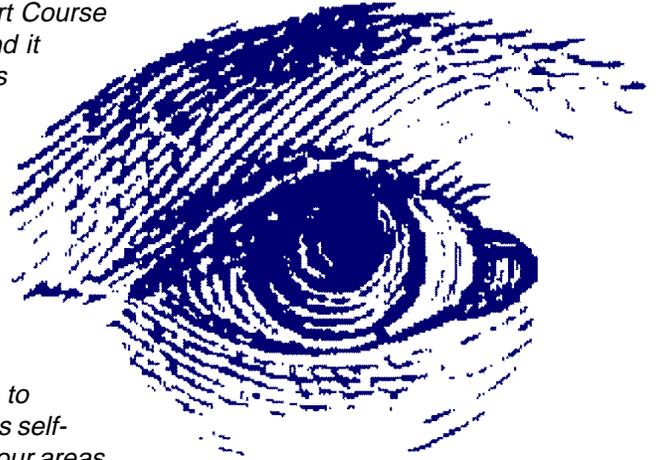
For information, contact ASCA through their website (lornet.com/asca), telephone (800) 356-2722, or write to ASCA, 2101 N. Andrews Ave., Suite 107, Fort Lauderdale FL 33311.

HINTS FOR COACHING MASTERS

Canadian Masters Swimming coaches have teamed-up to write "Hints for Coaching Masters" (3rd edition). It can be found on the Masters Swimming Canada web page (www.compusmart.ab.ca/mastersssc).

“Good, Better, Best” - A Self-Evaluation for Coaches

This self-evaluation was developed from a presentation given by Coach Scott Rabalais at the MACA Coaching School preceding the 1999 USMS Short Course Nationals. The presentation was called “Good, Better, Best” and it offered a thorough, direct way for coaches to evaluate themselves and their programs. The MACA News thought it would help other coaches to make Scott’s presentation into a self evaluation for coaches. We would like to thank him for granting us permission to do so. This is not a proven, scientific evaluation, but one Scott devised for the presentation based on his opinions. You may agree and disagree with the statements offered, but it will certainly allow you to think.



To complete the self-evaluation, please circle one choice for each question. Follow the instructions at the end of the questionnaire to determine your score. Be honest with yourself and remember, this self-evaluation is meant to help you locate your strengths as well as your areas for improvement. To enhance your learning experience, consider completing this evaluation with your supervisors or Club Board.

1) How would you describe your vision and goals (for your coaching and for team?)

- a) you have developed a positive feeling about your future
- b) you have a few short term projects
- c) you have a clear vision of where you are going with your masters coaching, where you’re going with your team, and where you’re going with yourself (you carry a vision, you “have a dream”)

2) How would you describe your planning?

- a) you have an idea about workouts
- b) you plan daily workouts and the season
- c) you plan your life, including your coaching duties, on daily, weekly and monthly levels

3) How would you describe your coaching style?

- a) you copy other coaches styles
- b) you use the ideas of a lot of successful coaches
- c) you know yourself as a coach, you know your personality, and understand your uniqueness as a person and as a coach

4) How would you describe your attire?

- a) you wear a swimsuit or a pair of shorts
- b) you are well-groomed with a neat appearance
- c) you dress professionally and ‘dress for success’

5) How would you describe your emotional involvement with the swimmers?

- a) you cheer for swimmers, pat them on the back and offer general encouragement
- b) you show a general care and concern, communicate, ask them a lot of questions and listen

c) you lose yourself in your swimmers, and in what you can do to help them achieve their best. You live to coach and coach to live.

6) How would you describe your timeliness?

- a) you show up for practice, just in time to start
- b) you show up a few minutes early for practice
- c) you arrive 15-30 minutes before workout

7) How would you describe your teaching technique?

- a) you have a pretty good understanding of the general principles of swimming technique and an ability to apply them to the group
- b) you have learned to teach using multisensory perception (see, feel, hear, etc.)
- c) you routinely apply a creative understanding of technique to specific individuals

8) How would you describe your education in becoming a better coach?

- a) you devour every publication and video available
- b) you attend clinics, visit other teams, talk to other coaches
- c) you swim, and your experience and knowledge comes most from being in the water

9) How would you describe your motivational tactics?

- a) you have club goals and a general direction for your team
- b) your swimmers have individual goals
- c) there is an integration of team and individual goals

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“Good, Better, Best” - A Self-Evaluation for Coaches

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10) How would you describe your communication with swimmers?

- a) you say “hello” and “goodbye”
- b) you routinely have deck chats
- c) you have one-on-one meetings with swimmers

11) How would you describe your ability to set intervals?

- a) you can set general intervals for the whole team
- b) you can set intervals by groups
- c) you know the repeat times of swimmers before they even do them

12) How would you describe your involvement with competition?

- a) you host a home meet, or travel away to a nearby meet
- b) your team participates as a team in a postal event
- c) you can get a big group of people to travel away to a Nationals or a far away regional meet

13) How would you describe the compensation you receive for your services?

- a) you volunteer, giving to your sport a few times a week
- b) you are paid as an hourly employee
- c) you are paid well as a full-time professional with benefits

14) How would you describe your club’s staff?

- a) there is a replacement coach who can come in when the Head Coach is absent
- b) there are assistants who can complement the Head Coach
- c) there is a group of independent and advanced thinkers working cooperatively together

15) How would you describe your communication system?

- a) you post announcements at the pool
- b) you have a newsletter
- c) you use e-mail and the web

16) How would you describe your club promotions?

- a) you create and distribute a team brochure
- b) you promote and advertise through newspapers and ads
- c) you use members to recruit by word of mouth

17) How would you describe your administrative involvement?

- a) you have local involvement
- b) you have involvement in LMSC and regional level
- c) you have involvement at the National level

18) How would you describe your awareness of outside influences on your swimmers?

- a) you are somewhat aware of the outside influences on swimmer (other sports, etc)
- b) you offer occasional opportunities to focus on things outside of the pool
- c) you conduct systematic studies on what things affect others’ performances

19) How would you describe your club’s social activities?

- a) you do spur of the moment social outings
- b) you host an annual team social event
- c) you plan regularly scheduled parties/socials and work to include everyone

20) Why do you coach?

- a) to make money
- b) because you enjoy it
- c) to help others

SCORING: Score this self evaluation using the following point system. Add-up your totals and see how you rate:

a = 1 point
b = 3 points
c = 5 points

20-59 points: Evaluate your goals and look closely at the areas where you can improve. If you are honestly dedicated to Masters coaching, you will ultimately benefit from this evaluation.

60-79 points: You have already developed some of the skills necessary for success in coaching, but there are some obvious areas for improvement. Fortify your strengths by strengthening your weaknesses.

80-95 points: You have developed your strengths and recognize your weaknesses. Your dedication to improvement has ultimately allowed you to reap great rewards.

95-100 points: WOW! Nominate yourself for USMS Coach of the Year. You’re right up there with the best!!



Masters Coaches Certification Application

Welcome to Masters Certification!

To Be Certified:

1. Be an ASCA member or enclose an ASCA membership application with fees.
2. Fill out this certification application form as completely as possible.
3. Provide copies of documentation to support points.
4. Certification courses are required for all levels. In some cases, however, one or more courses may be waived depending on the applicant's experience and education. Submit this application FIRST; the ASCA will inform you of course requirements for your individual case.
5. Send to: ASCA Certification Desk
2101 North Andrews Avenue, Suite 107
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311
6. After review and analysis we will inform you of certification courses you are required to take, or, if courses have been waived, you will receive your certification card and certificate in 3-4 weeks.
7. For further information please call 1-800-356-2722. We will not make course waiver judgments over the phone.

Certification Level Minimum Criteria:

- LEVEL 1 - 200 POINTS, plus a minimum of 6 months coaching of a Masters team, plus the Masters School and the Foundations School
- LEVEL 2 - 400 POINTS
- LEVEL 3 - 600 POINTS
- LEVEL 4 - 800 POINTS, points are required in all five categories
- LEVEL 5 - 1,000 POINTS, points are required in all five categories

For a complete explanation of the point system, please read pages 2 through 4

ASCA MASTERS COACHES CERTIFICATION APPLICATION EXPLANATIONS

I. GENERAL FACTS

A. Certification levels are based on the accumulation of Masters points.

B. Masters points are converted to ASCA Units in order to allow Masters coaches to be on the same unit system as all other ASCA certified members. This is done by dividing the total number of Masters points by 3. This process is summarized on page 3 of the Masters Certification Application.

C. To be certified you must have a minimum of 6 months of Masters experience plus completion of the Masters School and Foundations School.

D. 200 points are required for Level 1. A college graduate with 6 months of experience plus completion of the Masters School and Foundations School will meet this criteria.

E. Points can be obtained in 5 categories:

1. Education - 350 points maximum
2. Experience - 250 points maximum
3. Masters contributions - 350 points maximum
4. Club Size and Growth - 150 points maximum
5. Achievement - 250 points maximum

Each category has a maximum number of points which can be claimed. After reaching the maximum allowable points, that category is closed and no more points can be added. This prevents overloading of any one category and requires the coach to be well rounded in all areas to achieve higher certification levels.

F. A minimum of 50 points must be obtained in all categories for Level 4 and Level 5 certification.

G. All levels require the appropriate ASCA certification School, which may be taken in home study or at ASCA Clinics. (Occasional waivers are granted on a case by case basis based on experience and/or academic education. You will be notified of any possible waivers following receipt and study of your application.)

II. EDUCATION

A. A maximum of 50 points can be awarded for undergraduate degrees. Fewer than 50 points may be awarded for non coaching relevant degrees.

B. 50 points for Masters degrees, 100 points for Ph.D., M.D., or other advanced degree will be awarded.

C. Relevance of areas of study is subjective. State your case. Each will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

D. Clinics:

1. List all ASCA sanctioned clinics you have attended.
2. Points awarded depends on the clinic (Remember to take a test at the clinic.)
3. ASCA World Clinic and test is worth 40 points.

III. EXPERIENCE

A. Years coaching refers to active coaching of non Masters, full time or part time.

B. Masters Years Coaching refers to years in which you coached a Masters team exclusively. Do not include years which you listed for A. above. Please attach a brief resume of coaching experience.

C. MACA meetings: you receive points for each national meeting attended.

D. Hosting meets: you receive credit for each invitational meet your team hosts while you are a coach. (maximum 25 point limit.)

E. Attendance at World or National Championships: years you attended as a coach or swimmer/coach. (Years you swam but were not coaching do not count.)

F. MACA Officer: any office held for one year in MACA.

G. Hosting National Championships: self explanatory. (This also reserves a spot in heaven for you, because as I understand it, you will already have been through hell. - Lucky M.)

H. Other: For example, LMSC officer or USMS convention delegate are worth 10 points.

IV. MASTERS CONTRIBUTIONS

A. Newsletter Articles: For your team's newsletter, for LMSC, for MACA, for ASCA, etc., provide photocopy.

B. Public presentations given to the general public on Masters swimming, i.e. Senior Clubs, Triathlon Clinics, Rotary Club, etc.

C. ASCA speaker: presentation made at an ASCA sanctioned clinic.

D. Publications: an article published in a swimming magazine, i.e. SWIM, American Swimming, Swimming World, Swimming Technique; or non swimming magazines, i.e. Esquire, The Dairy Goat Journal, Cosmopolitan, Seventeen, Spin, Rolling Stone, Vogue, Ebony, Outdoor Life, or Road Rider.

V. CLUB SIZE AND GROWTH

A. Club Size is based on USMS registration and has a maximum of 75 points no matter how big your team is.

B. You must have coached the team for at least one year before claiming size points.

C. Growth is based on new registrations from size you began with. Note: this is increase in the total numbers, not turnover. For example: Coach Farnquart starts with 25 swimmers, loses 15 to the Loch Ness Monster, but gains 25 new registrations. Total growth for the program is 10, not 25.

VI. ACHIEVEMENT

A. Less emphasis is placed on swimmer's achievement compared to other ASCA coaching categories because Masters swimming has a different philosophical base.

B. Assistant coaches may take half point value in this category.

C. Team finish: count ONLY your highest ever point finish. You cannot count several finishes.

D. Maximum number of participants: count only one nationals, and the most number of swimmers you have taken to that nationals.

VII. MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

A. You must accumulate 150 Masters Points or 50 ASCA Units of continuing education in any 3 year period to maintain your certification.

B. To update your certification points send a statement of point accumulation in outline form with any substantiating documents to the ASCA office.



NOTES:

Personal Data:

Name _____

Application Date: _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Daytime Phone _____

Category 1

Education: (350 Points Maximum)

1. List all college degrees (BA, Masters, Ph.D, etc.)

Undergraduate Degree: _____ Field of Study: _____
 College: _____ Year Graduated: _____
 Advanced Degree: _____ Field of Study: _____
 College: _____ Year Graduated: _____

(For Office Use)
Points:

Total: _____

1. Coaching Clinics

Clinic / Location	Primary Speaker	Number of Days
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total: _____

1. Required Courses (Home Study or Clinic Schools)

Date Completed:

The Masters School.....Required for Level 1 (30 pts) _____
 The Foundations School.....Required for Level 1 (30 pts) _____
 The Stroke School.....Required for Level 2 (30 pts) _____
 The Physiology School.....Required for Level 3 (30 pts) _____
 The Administration School.....Required for Level 4 (30 pts) _____
 The Leadership School.....Required for Level 5 (30 pts) _____

Total: _____

TOTAL: _____

Category 2

Experience: (250 Points Maximum)

*Years Coaching NON MASTERS (see notes) (list years: _____ x 3 points
 *Masters Years Coaching EXCLUSIVELY (list years: _____ x 10 points
 MACA Meetings..... x 5 points per meeting attended
 Hosting Meets..... x 5 points per meet hosted
 Attendance at World or National Championships..... x 5 points per meet attended
 MACA Officer..... x 10 points per office held
 Hosting National Championships..... x 50 points per meet
 MACA Coach of the Year..... x 50 points
 Other experience: please submit in writing.....
 *Please attach a brief resume of coaching experience.

TOTAL: _____

Category 3

Masters Contributions: (350 Points Maximum)

Newsletter Articles..... x 10 points per article
 Public Presentations..... x 15 points per presentation
 Speaker at Sanctioned ASCA Clinic..... x 30 points per clinic
 Publications..... x 25 points per publication
 Research..... x 50 points per publication
 Commercial Book or Video..... x 100 points per book or video

TOTAL: _____

Category 4

Club Size and Growth: (150 Points Maximum)

Maximum Masters Club Size Coached for a Minimum of 1 Year:

(check maximum club size below)

25-49 = 25 points _____

50-99 = 50 points _____

100+ = 75 points _____

Maximum Growth While Coaching One Club (See important explanation on page 3-4)

(check maximum growth below)

25-49 = 25 points _____

50-99 = 50 points _____

100+ = 75 points _____

(For Office Use)
Points:

Total: _____

Total: _____
TOTAL: _____

Category 5

Achievement: (250 Points Maximum)

1. Highest Team finish (Notes: Men's Women's, or Combined; Overall finish not in B Division)

(check highest team finish below:)

_____ First Place = 150 points

_____ Top 3 = 100 points

_____ Top 10 = 75 points

_____ Top 25 = 50 points

2. Maximum number of participants taken to any one nationals.

(check maximum number below:)

_____ 12-31 = 30 points

_____ 32-59 = 60 points

_____ 60+ = 90 points

3. Number of top 10 nationally ranked swimmers.

_____ x 3 points per swimmer

4. Number of national champions.

_____ x 5 points per swimmer

Total: _____

Total: _____
Total: _____
TOTAL: _____

Summary of Point Accumulation

Education.....
Experience.....
Masters Contributions.....
Club Size and Growth.....
Achievement.....

TOTAL POINTS.....

ASCA Units is equal to Total Masters Points
Divided by 3:

Masters Points = $\frac{\quad}{3} = \frac{\quad}{3}$

Masters Certification Level Awarded: _____

Date: _____

Notes: _____

