



The Sporting Parent’s Journey



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SSA National Head Coach & Performance Director
NYSI Youth Coaching Conference, February 2018



Overall goal

- Assist sporting parents to:
- Enrich the parents’ journey
 - Raise the awareness of the swimmer’s experience
 - Inform about LTAD: facts & purpose



Head Coach Widmer



Education & professional experience:
Swiss heritage
Studies: Bachelor in PE & Masters of Science
5 years Lecturer at Swiss Federal Institute of Technology
20 years of Experience in High Performance in Australia



Head Coach Widmer



Athletic achievements of my swimmers:
5 Olympic Gold Medals
20 individual World Records
16 World Championships Gold Medals



Head Coach Widmer



My personal coaching Achievement:
Medal of the Order of Australia – service to swimming
4 times Swimming Australia Coach of the Year
2004, 2008 and 2012 Australian Olympic Team Coach
5 times Australian World Championships Team Coach

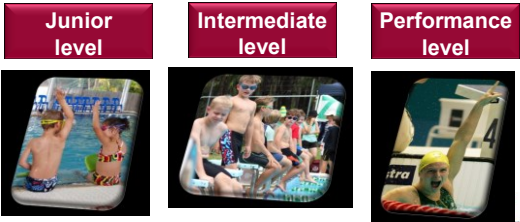


The journey of an athlete's parent

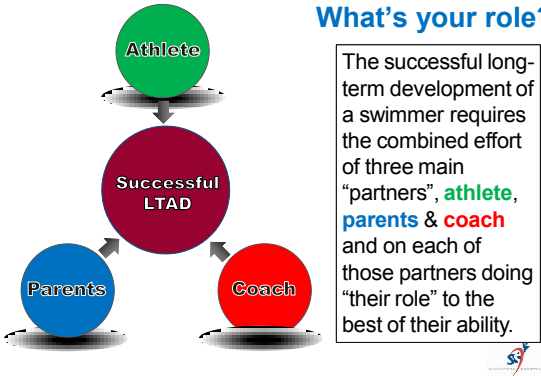


Parenting methods vs. development stages

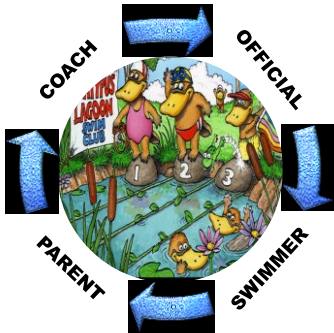
What's the parents' role?



What's your role?



Four roles in swimming



The four unofficial roles in swimming

Swimmer

Four roles, choose one. Don't officiate. Don't watch. Don't coach. **Swim!**

Coach

Four roles, choose one. Don't officiate. Don't watch. You are too old to swim, **coach!**

Official

Four roles, choose one. Don't coach. Don't watch. You love the sport, but you don't want to get wet anymore, **officiate!**

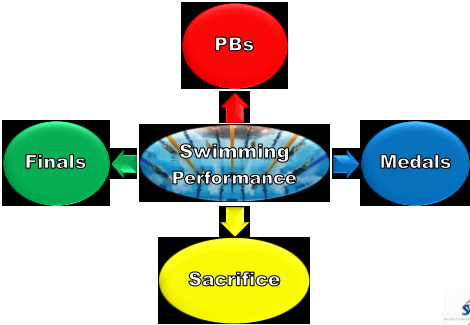
Parent

Four roles, choose one. If you want to coach, apply for the job. If you want to officiate, they always need help. Join your own masters group if you want to swim. **Otherwise parent!**

Short-term rewards



Short-term rewards



The real lessons of sport...



"The world of sport is not separate from the rest of the world. Sport breaks down barriers, promotes self-esteem, and can teach life skills and healthy behaviour."

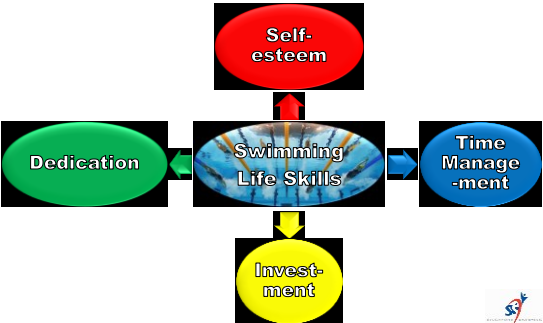
Jacques Rogge,
former IOC president



Or long-term life skills



Or long-term life skills

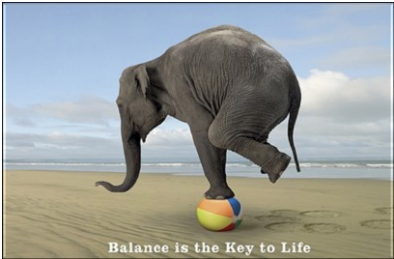


The real lessons of sport...

- CAMARADERIE
- WORKING TOGETHER
- CONTROLLING EMOTIONS
- TIME MANAGEMENT
- RESPECTING AUTHORITY
- SELF-ESTEEM
- PRACTICE PATIENCE
- DEDICATION
- SELFLESSNESS
- RESILIENCE



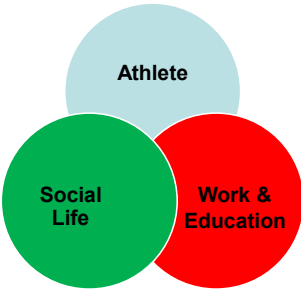
Successful Journey – an act of balance



Balancing life



Balancing life



Support – encouragement – interference

Make sure your kid is safe!
➡ Emotionally & physically safe!

- Release them to the sport!
- Release them to the team!
- Release them to the coach!



“Parents, this is your child’s thing!”

- All their successes are theirs
 - All their failures are theirs
 - All their problems are theirs
- Appropriate guidance



Teach your child

- How to deal with their own emotions
- How to solve their own problems
- How to talk to authority figures



Teach your child

- How to deal with their own emotions
- How to solve their own problems
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➡ Teach them to do it by themselves!
➡ Prepare them for their own life!

The parent trap

- Parental involvement
 - **MUMS** – "Helping"
 - **CHILD** – wants you to solve their problems and you actually do it!!!
- Over-identification
 - **DADS** – We – us – our team...
- Selfish dreaming

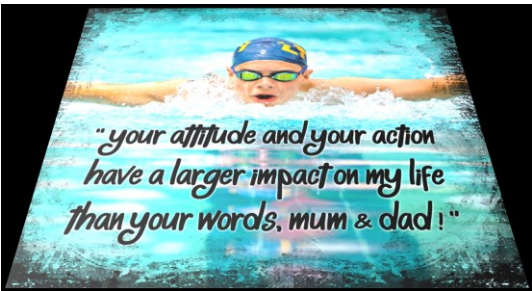


The parent trap

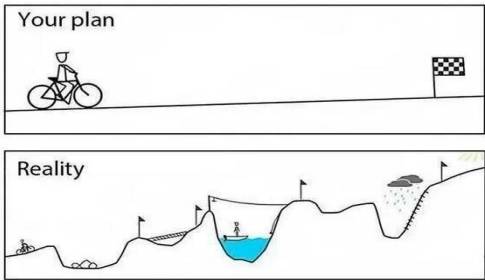
- Competing with other parents
- Constructive or destructive interaction
 - **CHILD** – avoids you...
- Confusing investment with sacrifice
- Children learn from watching their parents



The parent trap



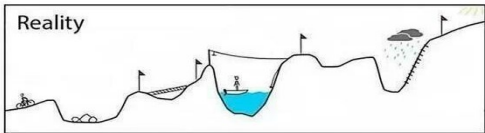
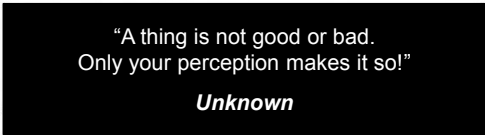
Preparation for life



➡ Prepare them for life!!!



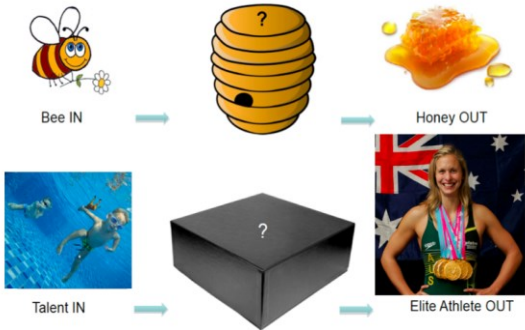
Preparation for life



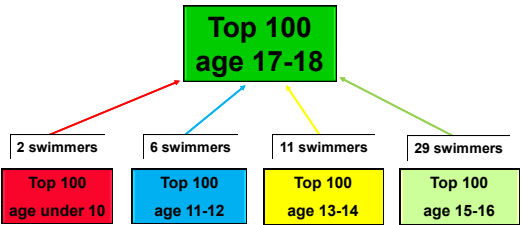
➡ Prepare them for life!!!



The athletic journey



The 10 & under wonder
100m freestyle, age 17-18 (boys)



Source: USA Swimming TOP 100 statistics



Early bloomers vs. late developers – 1

Your child is on an own unique developmental timetable:

- 1) Understand reasons for early athletic performances:
 - Be realistic about possible reasons for early athletic performances
➡ early success vs. slow start!
 - Early success does not guarantee future success!
- 2) Take a balanced approach.
 - Do not to get too down if your child is not immediately a superstar or too high if he is.
 - The important thing: she **continues** to play, to develop and learn new skills.



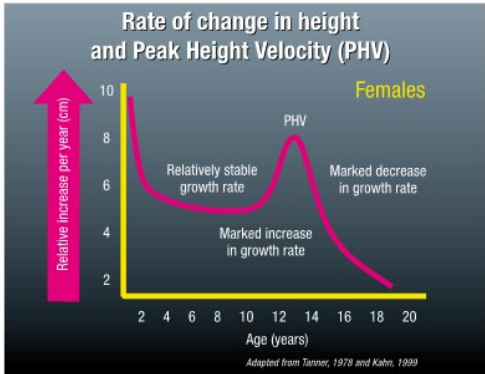
Early bloomers vs. late developers – 2

- 3) Help your child to see herself/himself as a whole person, not just as an athlete!
- 4) Develop an all-round athlete before sport specific abilities (up to 12 -14 years)!
- 5) Emphasise process & journey, not outcome:
 - Avoid praising the **outcome** & instead praise **effort**
- 6) Age for peak times for growth in height for Boys & girls:

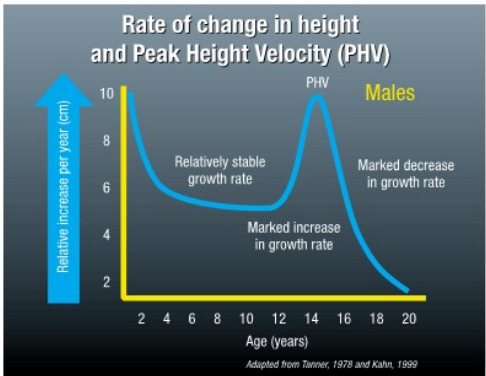
	Early	Average	Late
Boys	12	14	16
Girls	10	12	14



Peak height velocity - females



Peak height velocity - males



Athlete development model

Athlete Rate of Improvement and Variables				
	15 + Under	15 - 17	18 - 21	22 + over
Growth and Development	65%	50%	25%	<2%
Training and Skill Acquisition	35%	50%	75%	>97%
Rate of Improvement	5 - 10 %	2 - 5 %	1 - 2 %	<1%

Ian Olbrecht



Emergence of Physical Literacy through LTAD models



Canadian Sport Centre LTAD Plan (2006)
Sport Canada developed by Istvan Balyi



The importance of sport sampling before specialising

- High proportion of elite Australian athletes took part in a **diverse variety of sports before specialising** around 13–15 years old
- A **diversified investment in sports before specialisation** minimises injury and reducing later dropout and burnout from sport
- Australian athletes at senior international events participated in **an average of four different sports before specialising** in their main sport

Abstract - parental guidance

- Love your child unconditional
- Develop the person you'd like them to become through life, education and sport
- Develop the character
- Instil values
- Model virtues



Abstract - parental guidance

- Listen carefully
- Encourage independency
- Support your child, no matter what results
- Reward process, not performance!!!
- No two children are exactly alike
- 4 most powerful words...



In Conclusion

Your child's success or lack of success in sports **DOES NOT** indicate what kind of parent you are.

However having an athlete that is coachable, respectful, a great teammate, mentally tough, resilient and tries their best **IS a direct reflection of your parenting.**



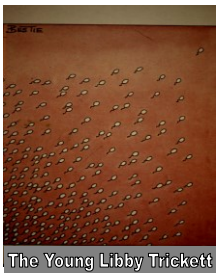
KEEP
CALM
AND
KIASU
ON

The love for your child

A shared problem is that your love for your child may lead you to behave in ways that ultimately hurt the child's development, or hurt their relationship with you. The paradox of being a parent is that the good reasons we have for pushing our children to succeed can, at the same time, lead to behaviours that teach our children to be selfish and grasping instead. A parent's greatest strength - their unwavering emotional support of their child and their willingness to make sacrifices for their child's athletic advancement - is thus also their greatest weakness.



Libby Trickett (née Lenton)



The Young Libby Trickett



Libby's swimming development milestones

- Townsville:**
- 1 ½ years old: LTS
 - 4 years old: joined a Club: 1 session per week
 - 8 years: 3 sessions pw => 1st QLD Final
 - 10 years: 4 sessions pw (only am)
- Brisbane:**
- 10 to 14 years: 5-6 sessions per week
 - 14 years: No QLD Champs Final
 - ➔ Decision 1: more training & weight loss of 7kg
 - 15 & 16 years: Coaches Carew/Radley: 6-7x pw
 - 16 years: start with S&C Coach Briggs (Sept '01)
 - ➔ Decision 2: Move to Coach Widmer (Oct 2002)
 - 17 years & older: 8x => 9x => 10x pw



Libby's swimming talent or movement abilities?



- Up to 10 years:
- Gymnastics
 - Athletics
 - Kayaking
 - Diving
 - Tennis

- 10 to 14 years:
- Athletics
 - Rowing
 - Tennis
 - Touch Footy
 - Netball
 - Softball

