

LETTER FROM THE LEAGUE COACH – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

**LONG DISTANCE CHAMPIONSHIP: Record number of qualified participants:
15 TEAMS**

SWIMMERS: From the youngest to the oldest age group – those of you who trained for the Long Distance Championship understand the meaning of DISTANCE SWIMMING SUCCESS:

FUN & FOCUS & DISCIPLINE.

Long distance swimming might not be your favorite swimming discipline and might not fit your physiological make-up. However, training endurance is the foundation of your competition in long distances and represents the base on which to build your condition for further racing and especially, the indispensable technique for this sport. Remember, throughout history the greatest swimmers started as long distance swimmers, like Johnny Weissmüller, Mark Spitz, Michael Phelps and many more. Those of you who qualified should be proud. There were some awesome results in the LD Championship November 29/29, 2009 in Lignano. CONGRATULATIONS!

Gratitude to your coaches and all support teams involved to have made this Championship a fun, friendly and well organized “Gala”.

Berlin, Brussels, Eifel, Hohenfels and Rota, your swimmers also deserve to be part of this real swim. The League invites you to be part of it next season.

When carefully examining the swims in ALL EVENTS and ALL HEATS up to the last (“top”), overall improvement must be considered and undertaken above and, especially, under water stroke mechanics, turns and correct mechanics in breathing. The latter showed a visible sign of loss in budgetary strength and was a typical obstacle in achieving the necessary condition. (I covered this vital area of swimming technique much in detail in my previous clinics and in the Coaches Corner during the past years and in my last month’ letter to the Coaches.) It will again be a major subject of the Coaches Clinic in the next season.

PEAK OF COMPETITION PERIOD

In our seasonal training plan we are now fusing GENERAL & SPECIFIC ENDURANCE PERIOD with the COMPETITION PERIOD, i.e. swim training should now further enhance anaerobic conditioning to promote speed related racing skills, stroke mechanics, turns and starts. The ultimate goal is to reach peak performance for Divisionals and Champs in February.

It is important to maintain technique by regularly including STROKE DRILLS into training. The swimmers ought to be reminded of “ACTIVE STREAMLINING” above and under water (after turns and starts).

Drill-swim combinations should be included in all practices at Basic Endurance level (active Rest Intervals are ideal for that) as the swimmers are requested to concentrate when working on all five mechanics of each stroke, using the “motor learning” process.

Special attention must be given to regular continuation of swim training during the Christmas vacation. This applies for swimmers all over the world since they are in a very important phase of the winter short course competition period. Make sure with each team member that those who do not attend a training camp during the holidays, receive regular daily training. With Champs taking place in mid-February one cannot afford to miss a practice. An interruption of several days will hurt condition built during the last months and technical skills, and in consequence bring poor results, especially, in the meets to come which really matter.

From December on, swim training should be more **intensified** as follows. It is now time to shift emphasis from ENDURANCE TRAINING to SPRINT TRAINING. Special focus should be on LACTATE TOLERANCE (SPR-1) (race speed, i.e. pacing), LACTATE PRODUCTION (SPR-2) and POWER TRAINING (SPR-3). Enough endurance training must still be included in the program to maintain the improvement made during the months of September through now. This type of work requires a considerable amount of time, pool time and meticulous organization and management from the coaches. It might be useful to see the swimmers outside pool time for detailed explanation in preparation of the training sessions. Swimmers must know what they are doing and for which objective.

Weekly mileage should be reduced by perhaps 25-30 % to allow for longer active rest intervals between intensive sets. Lactate Production (SPR-2) and Lactate Tolerance (SPR-1) should now be the main sets.

Following is a suggestion which should be adjusted to individual pool conditions, i.e. time and space, level of swimmers, etc.

- 1) Warm up A: 400 m (swim 200 m IM, kick 100 m IM, pull 100 m IM)
- 2) Warm up B: choice of main or one or two main strokes
Kick 50 to 100 m, technical drills 300 m (if time allows), swim full stroke between drills 25-50 m,
Swim 3 to 4 x 50 m building to perfect stroke – the 50’s should be descended to a reasonable fast speed so that body temperature rises.
- 3) LACTATE PRODUCTION (SPR-2) – main strokes – swim 4-5 x 50 at maximum effort, 3 min. active rest (easy 25 m swim, 50 m kick, 25-75 m swim or drill) between 50’s. Watch for starts and turns (racing style and power).
- 4) 10 to 20 min. recovery at END-1 level (65-70 %): first swim 100 m of the above stroke to recover the same performing muscles’ metabolic mechanism, then continue with easy drills, swim, kick and some pull combination of the next stroke (f.e. 2nd main stroke to prepare for 2nd main set of high intensity swims:
- 5) LACTATE TOLERANCE (SPR-1) 2 to 3 x 75 in 2nd main or main stroke at

maximum effort, i.e. at 100 m race pace, or ideally faster than 100 m best time pace, with 5 min. or longer active rest between 75's for near complete recovery from the state of acidosis.

- 6) BASIC ENDURANCE (END-1) to OVERLOAD ENDURANCE (END-3) (speed play) swim Freestyle (an excellent set to prepare for 200 and 400 Freestyle events).
f.e.: 3 x 100 m at END-1 or approximately 65 % effort on f.e. 2.00,
(i.e. swimming time 1.30, rest interval 30 sec.)
1 x 100 m at END-3 approximately 80-85 % effort on 1.45, i.e.
(swimming time 1.20-1.25, rest interval 25 sec.)
Continue with 2 x 100 m at END-1, but on only on 1.55
2 x 100 m at END-3 on 1.40
1 x 100 m at END-1 on 1.50
3 x 100 m at END-3 on 1.35

Note the progression in rest intervals and faster swimming speeds.

Another alternative END-1 or END-2 sets at 65 or 80 % working on Individual Medley would be a Transition IM set, f.e. 3 or 4 x 100 m Fly/Back, i.e. 50 m of each. Then 3 or 4 x 100 m Back/Breast

3 or 4 x 100 m Breast/Free
with 15 to 20 sec. rest between the 100's.

- 7) POWER SPRINTS (SPR-3) (not lactate producing): approximately 12 m, but no longer than 15 m, on 45 sec. can be done in every training in form of start or turn sprints, ideally on days when there is only endurance/aerobic level swim training foreseen.

The above main sets of Lactate Production and Lactate Tolerance should be changed in each training session. Another form for Lactate Tolerance would be to swim 1 to 2 sets of 8 to 10 x 50 m at race pace of 100 m race with rest interval of 30 to 45 sec. rest between each 50, but 10 to 15 min. active rest between sets. The latter should be done in easy swims, kick and drill exercises.

Based on these examples one can design a great variety of interesting sets, but attention must be paid to intensity and especially to the correct rest intervals.

Attention!

Intensive sets with an excessive number of repetitions, too long duration and too short rest intervals should be avoided at all costs.

(The specific terminology/designation was in detail explained/discussed in the Coaches Clinic when the energy system was covered. If any of the readers need explanation or clarification, please contact me – tel. 00-36-598/020 (Hungary). From December 18, 2009 through January 10, 2010: tel. 00-43-6562-4615 (Austria)).

I also recommend that coaches pay attention to other areas of their swimmers' lifestyle that affect their swimming/competition performance, like for example their health. To prevent H1N1 unpredictable virus causing flu, I strongly recommend vaccination (see my earlier note in the Coaches Corner). Avoid cold and typical winter related illnesses by

proper dressing, mainly when leaving the pool. Insist and promote enough rest/sleep and good and healthy food, i.e. fresh, home cooked meals, a good breakfast which includes a warm drink to begin the day. Caution the swimmers when they are engaged in other sports that there could be accidents – ski and snow boarding are particularly risky. A broken bone could put participation in the Championship in jeopardy.

As we look forward to spend the holidays with some EFSL swimmers at the Alpineswim camp in Mittersill, I like to wish everybody a

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

Peter Trummer