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To: Sue Anderson
Sent: Monday, July 23, 2007 5:41 PM
Subject: Coaching 7-8 year old boys

I hope that you can take the time to read this simple realization I have come up with. This summer I find myself assisting with a summer swim team and have the awesome privilege of working with 20 (that is not a typo), 7 and 8 year old boys. I never had this opportunity before.

Immediately, I was reminded of a wonderful lunch I had with Sue Anderson about five years ago when she shared with me that USA Swimming is trying to inspire boys to the sport. At that time, I had a few ideas, as I was working with a group of inner-city children and the boys seemed easier to recruit from the community than the girls. In that particular community of children, if given the time, boys will work their hearts out for any coach who is willing to put the time in for them. Sue planted a seed in my head then, and I find myself pondering the possibilities for Men's Swimming from time to time.

In late June, when I found myself with this amount of male swimmers and each of them, new swimmers (none of them winter swimmers...yet), I see great potential for the Monmouth County Boy's High School Swimming Class of 2017. Of course, that means a decade of work for these young boys and a lot of inspiration to keep them swimming. Nonetheless, there are a number of important ideas I have discovered in this wonderful luxury of having these young guys together for an hour a day.

The most important discovery was that **working with only boys is a different mindset** from the coach's perspective. The coach has a chance to really **treat the group like a group of boys**, and in return, the boys have a great time because of it. I find myself able to **talk about boy stuff**, football, fast moving jets, etc. and I don't have to worry about what the girls might think.

For some reason when I work with co-ed groups I am gentler to please the entire group and this may not be what the boys want or need. The **boys need to be treated like boys**. I can only wish that the fun these children are having in their swimming this summer will continue for their lifetime.

I decided to write this to Sue since she was the inspiration for my pondering. It may be something that inspires some reflection for each of you as we continue to develop this wonderful sport of ours. **Please respond as you may feel your pondering kick in** and share this simple realization with those colleagues that may need an inspiration for their teams. Don't forget to keep the work going to maintain Men's College Swimming alive for these little guys.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Cay