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VOL 2022 | ISSUE 5

**Introducing a
symmetry score in
freestyle**

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The American Swimming Magazine invites articles in the following areas of interest to the membership of ASCA: Coaching & Performance, Teaching, and the Science of Swimming.



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INTRODUCING A SYMMETRY SCORE IN FREESTYLE SWIMMING USING A MEMS BASED SENSOR Part 2

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Of course, the ideal symmetry does not necessarily mean the ideal technique. At the same time, understanding how the asymmetry manifests itself is an important way to learn about your swimming technique, an important tool for developing mind-body connection. Moreover, the symmetry that a coach can see from the pool deck or from the video analysis is quite different from the symmetry that can be measured by the MySwimEdge Symmetry Index. MySwimEdge measures the efficiency of every stroke, calculates key metrics, and compares these metrics of left and right arm strokes.

In part one of our article we presented the basics of how our sensor can measure the swimming of an athlete and stopped at the left and right arm differentiation. Looking back at finding the zero crossings of the swimmer's body we can now use that to differentiate the left and right arm in terms of e.g. acceleration, speed, and distance.

One important parameter is the arm velocity pattern, which represents the velocity changes during each stroke. This basically allows one to look at all velocity changes of the left and right arm strokes and see if they are consistent.

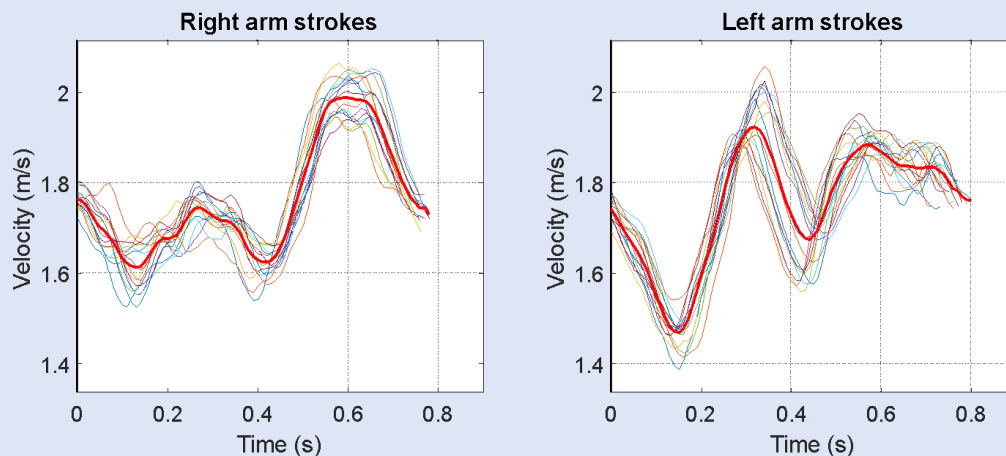


Figure 5: right and left arm velocities overlapped with the average for all strokes

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Figure 5 shows the velocities reached on the right vs. left arm with the respective average velocity plotted on top in red. It is obvious that the two arms generate different profiles which basically means that the stroke patterns for both arms are different. The same differentiation we can apply to the distance which is shown in Figure 6.

Distance per stroke is an important characteristic of efficiency. Many coaches use average DPS. MySwimEdge calculates DPS both in a numerical value for each stroke and as a graph of all the left arm strokes' DPS and all the right arm strokes' DPS.

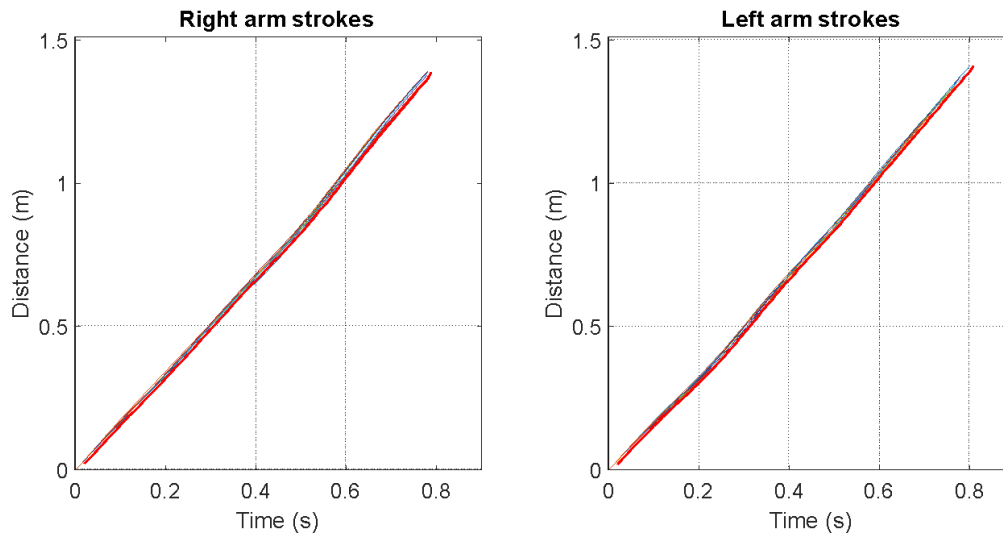


Figure 6: right and left arm distances overlapped with the average shown in red

Both of these graphs can also show how consistent a swimmer was. For a perfect consistency one can see more or less that all lines coincide and are overlapped with the red line which represents the average of all lines. The wider the spread between the individual lines the bigger is the difference in the efficiency of every stroke.

In our publication *Freestyle Swimming Analysis of Symmetry and Velocities using a MEMS based IMU: Introducing a Symmetry Score* [1] we first introduced a symmetry score. Later we slightly updated it to better reflect the symmetry of the swimmer. We have implemented this update in MySwimEdge after continued work with swimmers and coaches around the world. The importance for us was not only in presenting numbers to athletes and their coaches but also a graphical or simpler representation of the measured results.

We found that the inefficiencies expressed in simple metrics and graphs, were useful to the athletes and coaches.

The symmetry scores we are able to present are:

1. DPS difference
2. Peak velocity differences
3. Velocity Pattern differences
4. Timing differences

and are based on the difference between the two arms. Additionally it is possible to compare oneself with other swimmers.

MySwimEdge measures the time for each stroke, which is defined when the body (hips of the swimmer) are in plane with the water surface. We call this moment "zero crossing". The exact correlation between the start of the catch phase and the zero crossing is quite individual. The results of the timings are shown in a table differentiating left and right arm strokes. The asymmetry in distance can be caused by many factors for example: breathing patterns. That is why it is useful to test different breathing patterns and see their impact measured by MySwimEdge.

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In addition to time per stroke MySwimEdge measures velocity during a stroke. The parameters which it measures are minimum velocity, maximum velocity, and increase in velocity for left and right arm strokes, and speed deviation.

Some swimmers have very powerful strokes, they accelerate and decelerate a lot, and some swimmers try to swim with less deviation from the average velocity. This is very individual, of course. Figure 7 presents two different international level swimmers, who swam at approximately the same pace but with a very different technique.

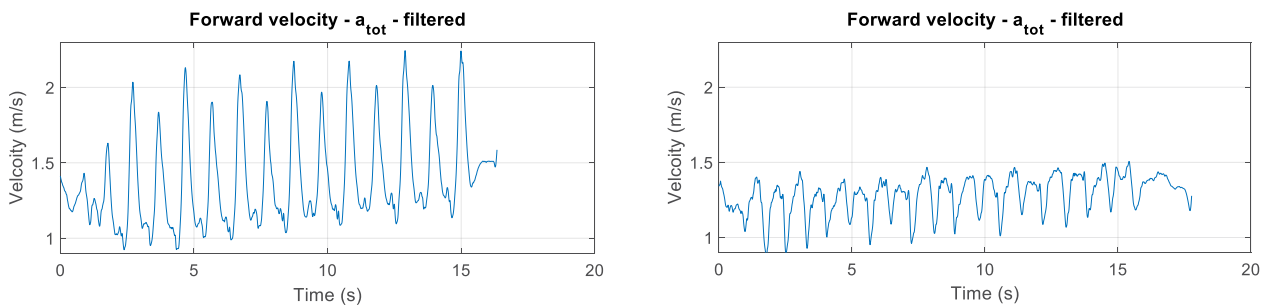


Figure 7: Lap velocity of two different swimmers with different lap velocity profiles (swimmer 1 left, swimmer 2 right) different lap velocity profiles (swimmer 1 left, swimmer 2 right)

As one can see the left graph shows very large velocity increases but that for very short times, compared to the right graph which shows reduced times for the minimum velocity. The deviation measured for swimmer 1 was 68% compared to 28% for swimmer 2. It is also important to see if the two arms are generating the same amount of velocity increase, which was not the case for swimmer 1. The average increases measured by MySwimEdge were 1.14 m/s and 0.85 m/s for the right and left arm respectively. Comparing this to swimmer 2 (who had 0.35 m/s compared to 0.41 m/s) shows more consistency for the later one.

Andy Stamm PhD, Igor Shlyonsky BIOS

Igor Shlyonsky

(M.Sc. in Computer Science, MBA) is a CEO of MySwimEdge, Inc. Before starting MySwimEdge, Inc. Igor worked as a top manager in large companies, he also worked in management consulting with McKinsey & Company, and in venture capital with 3i plc.

Igor Shlyonsky received his M.Sc. in Computer Science from the Moscow Institute of Cybernetics and his MBA from Cornell University (Ithaca, NY). Before starting MySwimEdge, Inc. Igor worked as top manager in electricity, energy efficiency, metals, export support, chemicals in Russia, Ukraine and Israel. He also worked as a management consultant with McKinsey and Company in Russia and USA, and in a venture capital firm 3i plc in the UK. He developed a passion for swimming analysis after he wanted to analyze his own technique and couldn't find an appropriate gadget.

Andy Stamm

WSankt-Augustin, Germany in 2008, and his Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering from Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia, in 2013, respectively.

He is currently a Professor with the Faculty of Technology and Bionics, University of Applied Sciences Rhine-Waal, Cleve, Germany, where he is also the Dean of Studies. He has coauthored one patent application, more than 15 publications, and graduated more than 45 students. His research interests include inertial measurement units (IMU's) and embedded systems design and development, data analysis and feature extraction, environmental sustainability in electronics manufacturing, renewable energy systems, and sports engineering. Prof. Stamm is also an Adjunct Professor at Griffith University in Brisbane Australia.

A swimmer is captured in a dynamic pose within a swimming pool, using a GMX7 training device. The swimmer's arms are extended forward, and their body is angled as if in a powerful stroke. The water is splashing around them, creating a sense of motion and effort. The GMX7 device is a cylindrical buoy attached to a rope, which is held by the swimmer. The pool's lane lines and a lane number '740' are visible in the background, providing context for the training environment.

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Starving for Success

By Jaison Iara



As a child of hard-working immigrant parents, I was raised to be an achiever. Shortly after my mom graduated among the top of her class at UCLA, she was offered a job by the CIA. My father earned four college degrees (including a Ph.D. in economics) before he went on to work at some of the top banking institutions in the United States. Watching them progress in their careers while I grew up instilled a strong work ethic in me; driving me to succeed in everything I do. I was trained to win.

Although I was fiercely competitive, I also embodied wavering confidence and an overly empathetic heart. My childhood was spent in a dysfunctional home environment. Growing up, I navigated my way around a marriage that was treading on thin ice. I thought this was normal. It wasn't until much later that I realized this wasn't the experience of most of my peers as I had imagined.

When I was 5 years old, I started swimming lessons. By age 9, I was competing on a USA Swimming affiliated team. I dove into the dream of my accomplishments washing away the struggles I faced at home. Unfortunately, swimming also became an unsafe place for me after I came across an abusive coach who I trained under for 6 years—an experience in which I go into more detail in a Swim Swam Magazine article titled, “Sometimes holding on does more damage than letting go”. In this piece, I want to focus more on something that developed from the multiple stress

factors that I dealt with during my childhood.

Like any other illness, eating disorders (ED) often start gradually and without proper treatment, they can spiral out of control. For me, it wasn't until I was 11 years old that each of the situational obstacles that I was dealing with aligned and sparked an illness that was later diagnosed as Bulimia (an eating disorder characterized by a combination of bingeing, purging, and/or over-exercising). I have been through a lot, but I consider myself among the lucky ones because someone recognized my eating disorder when I couldn't and eventually convinced me to get support. Although it was too late to save my swimming career, the help that I got saved something far more important. It saved my life.

My chlorinated sweat was driven by intense anxiety and the desperate need to feel a sense of control. I clipped onto my Speedo the false notion that success

would buy me and my family happiness and sanity. This toxic extrinsic motivation led my entire string of efforts to become unsustainable. Bridget Engel (Psy.D), wrote an article on Gulf Bend MHMR Center's website stating, "People with eating disorders are primarily concerned about what others think of them, rather than what they think of themselves. Other people with eating disorders, such as athletes, tend to judge themselves against internally set standards. Regardless of what set of standards they judge themselves against, perfectionists always strive to meet the highest standard of performance possible. They easily find themselves in a self-defeating cycle of fear and dissatisfaction when they fail to meet their expectations and goals. This happens even when the expectations are unrealistic and unhealthy. This sense of fear and dissatisfaction creates a renewed drive toward thinness, perfection, and control. This is the endless cycle of dysfunctional eating behavior that makes up eating disorders."

Most people who struggle with eating disorders are so dazed by their illness that they are unable to see that their eating disorder does the opposite of improving their performance. You can shove a fist full of statistics down their throat or glue them to a seat at the dinner table, but realizing that eating disorders are deadly isn't a cure. It takes more than a brochure of facts to break through this illness. And not seeking professional help at the right time leads to significant disruption to one's mental and physical performance.

I reached my breaking point at the age of 15 and went to my first therapy session which was followed by 5

more years of therapy and 3 hospitalizations. It took 5 years to get stable, and even still I occasionally revert to destructive behaviors if I'm not being careful.

For the longest time, I never understood why I was being lapped by the swimmers that I used to be ahead of before my eating disorder developed. I still remember the countless times when I hid in a locker room stall and cried my eyes out after each competition where I was forced to watch my body fall apart during races. Because I was amid my illness, I couldn't piece together the fact that starving for success eventually leads to failure. My 11-year-old self couldn't piece together that pinning ribbons on and stacking medals and trophies against both of your parent's bedroom doors doesn't stop the fights or ease the tension. All my 11-year-old self craved was safety and security, but it came out in the form of starving for success.

USA Swimming affiliated teams only train and hold competitions for athletes who are 18 and under (with the exception of Olympic Trials). I was 20 by the time I was physically able to return to a swimming program that no longer had a place for me.

My story is not unique, but I hope that sharing it and having one more vocal survivor out there will move someone else a step closer to reaching out for support. I am passing on the message of hope through my story because someone passed it to me when I desperately needed to hear it. Although it was too late to save my swimming career, the help that I got saved something far more important. It saved my life.



Jayson Iara

Jayson is a long-time student-athlete. Originally from Dallas, Texas, Jayson grew up around the pool, starting off with lessons around 5 years old and joining a club team at the age of 9.

After moving to the Bay area during his junior year of high school, he started swimming for US Masters and began teaching private swim lessons to kids as young as 3 years old and to swimmers who were transitioning to club teams. Jayson's passion lies in sports medicine and sports psychology, and he is currently earning his Associates degree at Foothill College in Los Altos. In his free time, Jayson's work has been showcased on various online platforms including Palo Alto High's Verde Magazine, The Script (Foothill College's Student News), and Swim Swam Magazine.

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What's Up Doc?

By Cay Andres

James Councilman was born in Birmingham, Alabama. He and his brother were self-taught swimmers. Then, growing up in St. Louis, Missouri, he swam at the Downtown YMCA. His natural ability blossomed under Coach Ernie Vornbrock. Vornbrock influenced young James through the arts and music and opened his mind to achieve excellence in and outside of swimming.

He swam at Ohio State University for four years, beginning in 1940 to 1942. At this time, he became a World Record holder in the 50 and 300 breaststroke events.

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Photo permission from
Jill Morris Councilman.

Special thanks to Jill Morris Councilman for her kind feedback in the story of her legendary father.

At this time, he became a World Record holder in the 50 and 300 breaststroke events. James Councilman took a reprieve from his college swimming to serve our country in war times. In 1943 he wed his wife, Margorie. It was in 1945 when he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, for saving an entire crew while piloting a damaged bomber to safety in Yugoslavia, while serving in the US Air Corps during WW II.

In 1943 he wed his wife Margorie while still in the service. In 1946-1947 he finished his collegiate swimming at Ohio State.

Another very important influencer in James Councilman's life was Coach Soichi Sakamoto. In the summer of 1946, the Ohio State swim team trained with Coach Sakamoto in Hawaii. James

Councilman took a strong interest in coaching and was able to serve as both swimmer and coach for the Ohio State team.



Many of Coach Sakamoto's innovations were developed much further by Doc Councilman in his career. Doc also inspired new innovations. Doc was constantly thinking and innovating in a forward progression for the sport of swimming. One very valuable attribute which both Doc and Coach Sakamoto shared was that they were both humanitarians in the sport.

"We all need love and affection; we need to feel a part of a group, We all have the need to express our creativity, and we have a need for recognition. Of course if a young man is very successful, he may require a little head shrinking. But I would never strip a young man of his dignity."
A testament of Doc Councilman's humanitarianism.

Doc took his studies very seriously. And was able to apply all his studies towards his scientific understanding of the sport of swimming. At Ohio State he graduated with an undergraduate degree in Biology. His Master's thesis was on the breaststroke at Illinois. He received his PhD in Physiology from Iowa where his thesis was the freestyle. Councilman served as an assistant while working towards his higher education. He coached at Cortland State in New York, prior to moving his family to Bloomington, Indiana in 1957. After the passing of Coach

Royer, the University named Doc, Head Coach at Indiana in 1958.

Doc was extraordinary in the observation of his swimmers. He developed observation techniques through video and underwater observation rooms in 1961. He would use a microphone and speak to his swimmers in real time from the observation deck.

My first personal experience with an underwater observation room was at the Monmouth College pool in New Jersey. This room at Coach Dick Steadman's pool was something that made me awestruck as an age group swimmer in the early 1970s.

His scientific research was respected by all coaches across all sports. He was a pioneer for his theories in the physiology of swimming. He developed interval training, way before it was utilized in other sports. Doc was an innovator in the use of sports psychology for peak performance and training. His awareness of the individual was somewhat phenomenal. His leadership can be reflected on through the many articles written for ASCA as well as Swimming World Magazine. He was a coach for the World.

Doc served as Olympic Coach in 1964 and 1976. Both of these teams saw great successes. The swim seasons of 1968 were extraordinary for Doc. He completed his book, Science of Swimming, which has been printed in 22 languages and is still being printed today. The Indiana University Swim Team won their first NCAA Championship. (Indiana continued their dominance as NCAA Champions for six consecutive years, five more Championships after 1968.). As well, Doc had numerous Indiana swimmers on the Mexico City Olympic Swimming Team.

Doc had a most amazing encounter in a post-Olympic training trip in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He ran into a swimmer from the Mexico City Games, Mark Spitz. Upon stepping out from the Men's room, Doc congratulated Mark on his fine swims at the Mexico City Games. In their casual communication, Mark revealed his interest in competing at Indiana.



Cay Andres

Cay graduated with a BA in Psychology with an emphasis in Sport Psychology from the University of Hawaii. She has been teaching swimming for 45 years and has been coaching swimming for 40 years
Her email is
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The Apprenticeship™

Think of a recent miscommunication outside of your direct control. For example, a facility not allowing spectators due to COVID regulations or last-minute schedule changes due to facility changes.

The pandemic was the push that many needed to address their perspective and outlook on business, relationships, and facets of everyday life. Versatility and adaptability in these areas may make the most significant distinction in your personal and professional development, but how can you address and improve these areas?

This is where skilled communication becomes essential. Communication is a skill based on the process of sending, receiving, and interpreting messages through different mediums. Excellent communication is the most significant factor in improving relationships with your family, co-workers, athletes, team members, and friends while influencing and navigating complex social situations.

Weary of dealing with people who waste time and impede tasks from being accomplished? Take a deeper dive into the nuances of communication through improv games, role-playing, case studies, self & peer evaluations, and discussions that demonstrate the messy realities of communication and leadership.

The Apprenticeship™

I had the opportunity to work on communication in ways that transfer to real life by attending and fully participating in The Apprenticeship™. The Art of Coaching Apprenticeship™ is a highly interactive 2-day workshop created by Brett Bartholomew that creates a new educational experience. It is execution-focused, highly-engaging, and allows you to have hands-on practice applying concepts in real-time. Improvement requires engagement. Put yourself to the test to improve and gain experience using ideas. You'll learn fundamental, actionable strategies to enhance communication in all parts of your life.

For example, think of a time you were working with a highly skilled athlete, but they lacked attention to detail. You couldn't get them to slow down and focus on not breathing off their start. It felt like you tried everything, then with a metaphor, everything suddenly clicked!

Brett's unique and practical designs blend lecture

and application, taking the guesswork from applying and getting involved. I wanted to be a part of what happened during each breakout session. Self, peer, and group evaluations add another layer of meaning and learning. It is like breaking through an invisible wall you didn't know was holding you back, just as excess scar tissue builds up, overstaying its welcome.

A DEEPER LOOK

Improv Games

Improv games are a force multiplier for self-awareness, creative problem solving, listening, and experiential learning. Improv is not about comedy. It is about using tactical exercises to help others overcome constraints that impede decision-making, team cohesion, and social skills. Communication is a process, and improv helps refine that process. Communication only fails when it stops, and using these games will ensure you can keep communication flowing.

Time Traveler

We played an improv game, Time Traveler, which entails explaining a modern-day element to someone from the 15th century. This game quickly demonstrated context's importance when articulating an idea or thought. To be more clear and concise, the lessons of this game aid me when speaking with athletes new to the sport of swimming about swimming-related terminology. For example, if an athlete doesn't know what a build swim is, they will not know how to increase speed throughout the swim. Explaining exactly how you want the build swim to be executed helps all athletes succeed in that part of the practice.

New ideas, concepts, and terminology can be a big gap to bridge as these aspects can be puzzling. Providing more context with key details helps

athletes to understand the situation better. For example, consider when someone gave you technical information about a vehicle repair, something you needed to do for your taxes, or think back to when you competed as an athlete. At first, the information seemed like it was coming at you too quickly, or as if you weren't entirely sure what it had to do with your situation until they contextualized everything by giving you more specific info or helping you think about it differently. There are many improv games to share, but participating is necessary.

Role-Playing

I gained valuable insight through role-playing a situation from a different perspective than I usually am in. We had three coaches, one who was arriving late for shifts, one who wanted to dismiss the coach and one who offered solutions to the coach's habit of arriving late. I played the coach's role, who wanted to dismiss the coach for arriving late. This was the devil's advocate role to being the solutions finder, which I'm usually in. Understanding why the coach wanted to dismiss the coach helped to understand that coach's pain points. When providing solutions, it helps to address how the solution will impact the other person's pain points. Playing a new role enabled me to understand another perspective within the situation better, thus understanding the whole situation in a new way.

Bet on yourself and gain valuable experience. When these situations occur in life, you've been there or in a similar situation before and have the experience to draw upon. This is like already programming your nervous system through visualization. You are prepared for the obstacle and have practice and experience to call upon. This practice makes real things happen in your brain and body. You can practice with multiple reactions and constraints within the situation. Learn to control your emotions. Just as when you have a swimmer continue swimming with water in their goggles to replicate their goggles filling up in a race. These experiences give you armor when facing problems in real life. This is a GAME CHANGER.

Think of things you want less of in your life: less time wasted, arguments, misunderstandings, fallouts

that didn't need to occur, a breakup, a mediocre job interview, egos, and drama. Learn ethical uses of persuasion, power dynamics, influence tactics, and tactical forms of communication that accomplish more in less time while building trust with those around you.

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Chaos creates clarity. Despite our best efforts, life can be chaotic.

The fact is that turmoil creates a deeper bonding and social cohesion between individuals. Chaos exposes you to new experiences, a deeper understanding of concepts, and how to apply them. Experience using concepts in real situations leaves you a changed person. It amplifies your ability to progress.

The Apprenticeship™ provides these experiences, and it is the ONLY workshop where coaches and leaders of all types learn more about how to navigate power dynamics, how to use ethical influence tactics when dealing with difficult people/moments, and learn more effective methods for connecting with your athletes, parents, co-workers, officials, family, community, and friends.

Every aspect of life requires communication of some type. When we're interacting with athletes and their families, communication is present. Communication is present when we speak to our loved ones or fill any other role we have in our lives. The Apprenticeship™ was the MOST PRODUCTIVE weekend at a workshop, clinic, or certification I've attended. Each section of The Apprenticeship™ sets itself apart, yet it all comes together. You leave armed with multiple skills to start implementing into your daily experiences. The Apprenticeship™ is a distinctive, memorable, and unforgettable weekend gaining experience in various settings and roles in everyday situations.

Learn more about The Apprenticeship™ and where you can attend.

Hear more on this episode of the Art of Coaching Podcast: The Apprenticeship™: Bonus Episode. Earn 10 ASCA CEUs for attending!

I would love to connect more. Reach out klyons333@hotmail.com



Kaitlin Lyons

Kaitlin is an assistant coach with SOLO Aquatics and Central Catholic High School. She works with The Ready State. Kaitlin's coaching background includes age group and masters coaching at Golden West Swim Club (Huntington Beach, CA), Irvine Novaquatics (Irvine, Ca), and ANA Hurricanes (Andover, MA). She is an ASCA Level 2 and Masters Certified Coach. She has completed course work with The Ready State and Art of Coaching.

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