

# A Complete Aquatics Program

As an individual searches the Nation for a college or university with an outstanding swim program, one cannot help but notice that these schools and the cities in which they are located are also home to outstanding High School, Age Group, and Pre-Comp Swim Teams. Anytime there is any outstanding sports program in a college or university you will find an interest in that sport in the community as well. Swimming is no different.

In order for any University to establish and maintain a significant Swim Team there must be significant High School Swimming to feed its program. Likewise, for any High School to have a significant Swim Team, not only are good highly trained coaches required, but an established Age Group Swim Team is required to provide the High School with trained and dedicated swimmers.

This chain of one aquatic program leading into the next continues in this manner starting with swim lessons at a very young age. Swim Lessons should be established and organized with the intention of feeding a “Pre-comp Swim Team”, that will feed an “Age Group Swim Team” that in turn will provide the local High School and University with swimmers. There are areas, however where the financial status of the community would probably not support an Age Group Swim Team. In these circumstances considerations should be given to expanding the Pre-comp Swim Team program to a more advanced level.

The first mistake that many pools and Coordinators make is with the idea that Swim Lessons and a Pre-Comp swim team need to be two separate programs. At many pools where a successful “Pre-Comp Swim Team” is found, the “Pre-Comp Swim Team” is considered and sold to the public as a Level 4 Swim Lesson. Sessions are run at the same time, and pay periods are at the same interval as the swim lesson sessions. In some instances the Pre-Comp Coach is also the swim instructor for the upper levels of swim lessons in the time slots before “Pre-Comp” starts.

There is no reason why any High School Pool should not be able to establish and maintain an excellent swim program. It may take some hard work and the creativity of a pool manager, but it is always possible. There are many larger aquatic facilities being built around the Country, however, there are still usually two or three High School Pools which are located “closer to home” than these facilities.

Being spread out across the valley, High School Pool Managers have to learn how to recognize, understand, and adjust to the needs and abilities of the community. In some areas, pools may be able to generate large amounts of revenue with their programs ranging from open-plunge (rarely if ever profitable) to a Complete Aquatics Program (Highly Profitable). Programs can include anything that is currently available at pools across the country. (Swim Lessons; Swim Teams; Water Aerobics; Scout Merit Badge Classes; Lifeguarding, CPR, and First-Aid Classes) Program Revenue must be expected to change depending on each location due to the economic diversity of the city. Other pools where it is known that economics is a great community concern must learn to find ways to provide their citizens with the same services that

are available to others. There are many options to do this ranging from a simple drop in prices to applying for grants and seeking local business contributions. In some cases, perhaps swimmers of a team are not required to pay full amounts for swimming, but instead are required to participate in local service projects, or fund raisers sponsored by local residents and/or businesses. Sometimes Revenue from highly profitable areas may be needed to subsidize areas where such financial income is simply not available.

There are many more benefits to a local swim program than the making of money. The greatest and most important outcome of these programs is serving the community. As time passes on it seems that there are more and more ways for parents to loose their children to Drugs, Alcohol, Gangs, Violence, and even simple idleness. Obesity is quickly becoming a growing concern in America. Each year a higher percentage of Americans are considered overweight. For the first time, Human life expectancy is actually believed to begin declining due to this problem.

A busy child is a healthier child. Also, a child or youth that is kept involved in sports programs is less likely to spend his/her time out causing crime. Swimming, like track or weight lifting, is an individual sport. A member of a swim team not only gains the friendship and feeling of unity of being on a Team, but is also able to track his/her own personal times, set goals to better them, and ultimately feel the satisfaction of working hard and obtaining a set goal. This is an invaluable life skill to learn and understand.

In the U.S. drowning is the second leading cause of injury related death in children under the age of 15. On Average, more than 9 children drown in the United States every day. This is an even more crucial reason for the development and continued use of efficient and high quality swim programs at all of our city's available pools.

Instead of hearing constant rumors of high school pool closures, it is our hope that we will hear of possible enhancements made to their programs. We would also hope that those trying to better the programs in the communities that need it the most, will be not only allowed to do so, but will be supported.