Swimming-Reaserch Paper Essay, Research Paper

Swimming competitively is one of the most difficult and challenging sports there is. Why?

Because like basketball, football, baseball or any other team sport you can never “win” the game,

because a swimmers main goal is to improve there time not to win. Of course all swimmers like

to win though. Part of what make swimming so difficult is not just the in the water part but also

what is called “dry-land”, which is various exercises a swimmer would do on land to work there

swim specific muscles in a more specific way. Most dry-land programs consist of running, sit-

ups, push ups, and weight training. Weight training is done differently than in football because

swimmers want to be tone but not weighed down by excess muscle. Swimmers use less weight but do more repetitions than most athletes. Another thing that makes swimming harder that most people don’t realize is that swimmers get little to no attention especially compared to the “big

money sports” like basketball, football, and baseball. A question many top swimmers are asked is “Are you a pro swimmer”. The answer from everyone is “No, there is no professional swimming. I am a competitive swimmer-an amateur competitive swimmer.” (Swimming World March 1997, Phillip Whitten) When there is no money in a sport it seems to get over looked.

Most swimmers practice twice a day during their season. Olympic swimmer Jeremy Linn swims about 12,000 meters a day (Swimming World March 1997). Each practice has its physical demands, but also requires mental maturity. A swimmer has to be willing to accept that they are in a sport that they must always improve. Everyone can go faster, the fastest time possible is a 0.00 though it is unattainable swimmers must always strive for it. Swimmers must always try to find ways to improve their strokes, fine-tune their starts and turns to improve their time. To improve you must work harder each day to reach your physical limit.

My favorite stroke is the breaststroke, technically this is the hardest stroke. The reason for this is that your timing is so important, unlike freestyle. In freestyle, if a swimmer is strong enough they can just power themselves through the water and swim fast without a good stroke. In breaststroke, if one’s technique is poor, that swimmer cannot overcome that dilemma with strength. Typically the breaststroke includes two steps, the pull and the kick, in between these actions the swimmer pulls his head to the surface and takes a breath. When one reaches a more competitive level of swimming an extra step is added, which swimming coach Jozsef Nagy claims credit for “inventing”. Instead of the shoulders moving in the typical up and down vertical position, Nagy found that adding a shoulder lunge increases speed. He modeled this motion after noticing the curling of ocean waves (Noden 52). A problem with the breaststroke is the turn, which involves a dead stop at each end of the pool. This causes a total loss in the swimmers momentum which inturn slows them down greatly. Some college coaches are now instructing their breaststroker on a new turn that reduces the dead stop at the wall and keeps some momentum. In the turn the swimmers do not take a breath. (Noden, 54). This is harder because the swimmer must already have a large lung capacity and now they must increase it even more.

Another problem with the stroke is fighting the stereotypes that surround in. These include calling it the “rest-stroke”(Noden, 53). That stereotype is caused by many non-breaststrokers swimming the stroke very slowly, then it may be easy. Also breaststrokers are referred to as the “Crazy guys” (Swimming World). These two stereotypes for the most part are not true.

The only real monetary reward swimmers can get for their abilities are college scholarships. These are very hard to get due to the large number of swimmers and the few number of scholarships. College coaches look for swimmers that are good now and seem to have a lot of potential. To get a scholarship a swimmer must be seen. To accomplish this swimmers try to qualify for top meets such as State, Junior Nationals, and Senior Nationals. The swimmers must also try to find a team that needs someone for the event that they specialize in. For example a swimmer that is a state champion may go to a college and get a small scholarship but, a swimmer with less talent may attend a different college specialize in the same event but get a much bigger scholarship because that team really needs them.

As far as the equipment necessary for swimming, there really can be a lot. For recreational swimmers they may need only a suit and a pool but competitive swimmers need more. Most use a kick board, so that they can work on there kick solely. Pull-buoys are also used to eliminate the use of legs and also to create drag while the swimmer uses their arms. Fins are another tool that swimmers use. These are used to work your legs and to get the feeling of swimming fast. Paddles maybe worn and have the same effect as fins but on the swimmers arms instead of their feet. To create drag in practice swimmers will get a suit that is 4-5 sizes bigger than their racing suit. They do this to work their muscle more.

The most important element in a swimmer’s performance is the coach. “Without a good

swimmer to coach relationship you will never swim fast.”(Starr 62) A good coach must respect their swimmers and get respect back from their swimmers. The coach must also know where to draw the line between being a friend and being a coach. Coaches cannot always be worried about being liked but should worry about improving their swimmers. The two most important things in a coach are motivating the swimmers and once they have them motivated to tell them the right workouts to do.

In conclusion, swimming is a very good sport to get into. The athletes in this sport do not “trash talk” like in other sports, do drugs, get in fights, choke coaches, or bite their opponents. The top swimmers are good role models. They work hard, are polite, and do this for the self-satisfaction and not for the money like many athletes in other sports do. You will benefit from swimming by the great physical fitness you will get. Above all else a swimmer learns self-respect, discipline, and confidence.