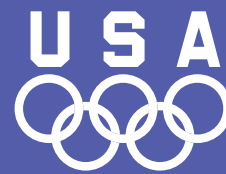


MIND GAMES
VIEW FROM THE TOP
60-SECOND SUMMARY
HOT OFF THE PRESS
DIRECTORY



OLYMPIC COACH

S U M M E R 2 0 0 8 • V O L U M E 2 0 • N U M B E R 3



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ON THE COVER

Left Top Photo: Sean O'Neill- “Doc” Counsilman Science Award Winner (Table Tennis) Right Top Photo: Sherman Nelson- Volunteer Coach of the Year (Taekwondo) Center Photo: Guy Baker- National Coach of the Year (Water Polo) Bottom Left Photo: Adam Bleakney- Paralympic Coach of the Year (Wheelchair Track and Field) Bottom Right Photo: Paul Yetter- Developmental Coach of the Year (Swimming)

Message from the
**PERFORMANCE
SERVICES MANAGING
DIRECTOR**
by
DOUG INGRAM

August 8, 2008 at 8:08pm, the XXIX Olympic Games will begin. Lifetimes of preparation are now being counted in days and even hours. Preparation time is now converging with competition time. Having been around the Games for a number of years, I can feel the change in energy as the intensity increases for our athletes and teams.

Last minute issues are being addressed now, so that coaches are free to handle any “truly last” minute issues. Equipment and uniforms that were shipped in April and May are arriving in China. The last members of the USA Delegation will be named after Trials over the next six weeks. USA teams will begin moving into the Olympic Village on July 27th. The time is now—it’s every day, not just every four years.

This will be memorable Games. NBC is planning to broadcast over 3,500 hours, more than all previous NBC broadcast Games combined. You will be able to follow the Games on TV and the Internet. You can send messages to your favorite athletes via www.amazingawaits.com and watch a great video about the Games and the commitment made by America’s best.

In this issue, we wanted to give you a flavor of what to expect, to get a sense of what the athletes and coaches will experience and the plans that have been made to help achieve their goals.

America’s finest... USOC Coaches of the Year are highlighted with photos from their award’s presentation. These coaches are special as they epitomize the best in their category for accomplishments from 2007. A truly outstanding group of coaches.

We are also announcing the design winner and showing the medallion design for the Order of Ikkos. The Order of Ikkos is for coaches of Olympic/Paralympic medalists. This beautiful medallion was designed by Jamie Franki, who designed the “new” Jefferson nickel. A special ceremony at a stunning venue in Beijing has been developed to honor our coaches for all their hard work and dedication to helping athletes achieve their dreams.

The View from the Top features Ron O’Brien, one of the finest Diving coaches ever, with seven Head Olympic Coaching assignments to his credit. His insights will be of interest to any coach.

This is another great issue of Olympic Coach. Enjoy and remember as our nation comes together to support America’s team (our Olympians), it is very special to witness years of preparation culminate in a single moment of glory.
GO USA!





2007 COACHES OF THE YEAR

Anyone who has ever coached knows the commitment of coaching. Coaches want their athletes to be successful, to appreciate and learn about the Game. The great moments in coaching come when an athlete regardless of their age accomplishes a task or a goal for the first time. That moment of child-like pleasure and excitement for the athlete and the coach is “Zen” like. It is that moment that most coaches cherish.

Each year, the USOC and the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have the privilege of honoring America’s top Coaches. Each NGB nominates a coach for one of five categories: National, Paralympic, Developmental, Volunteer and the “Doc” Counsilman Science Award. Those coaches receive a special recognition plaque from the USOC representing their accomplishments and achievements for the previous year. Every coach who is nominated is included in the selection pool for national recognition of their accomplishments and to be named as the Coach of the Year in their category. The original pool is reduced from 47 nominees to five finalists. The five finalists receive cherry wood boxes with a commemorative tile indicating their status as a finalist. The balloting then takes place to select one person to represent the USA in each of the five categories. This year, the National winners of the five categories for the Coaches of the Year were recognized at the USOC Media Summit in Chicago.

THE USOC IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE 2007 COACHES OF THE YEAR. THEY REPRESENT AMERICA’S FINEST COACHES THROUGHOUT OUR ATHLETE PIPELINE.

“Doc” Counsilman Science Award

The “Doc” Counsilman Science Award is named after the legendary swimming coach who used science and technology to revolutionize swimming. This award is presented to a coach who utilizes scientific technique or equipment as an integral part of his/her coaching methods or has created innovative ways to use sport science. The 2007 winner is Sean O’Neill from USA Table Tennis. Sean has used the latest online technologies to keep his athletes playing their best. Through the use of video and uploading over 650 video matches online, national team players and coaches can view their performances from any web connection. O’Neill has

also set up online training logs/journals for all the USA Paralympic Table Tennis team members as well as U.S. Olympic hopefuls. This allows O’Neill, who will be serving as the 2008 Paralympic Head Coach in table tennis to do remote coaching with his team, who are scattered all over the U.S.

2007 Volunteer Coach of the Year

The 2007 Volunteer Coach of the Year was nominated by USA Taekwondo and hails from Washington, D.C., where he works for the D.C. Parks and Recreation Department—Sherman Nelson. Sherman donates his time traveling with national teams to help athletes maximize their opportunity to represent the U.S. in international competition. His taekwondo program hosts a holiday event for the mentally challenged with his national competitors serving as the host for the event. Sherman has his older teens conduct peer-to-peer mentoring with the pre-teens. In 1994, he began teaching taekwondo to expose youth in the inner city to the sport that had allowed him to travel all around the world. Originally he had two sites with 16 kids at one and 12 kids at the other. One year later, he had six kids make the Junior Olympics. He has had over 300 athletes with over 25 national champions, 60 national medalists and 12 national team members. For 2007, two athletes won bronze medals at the U.S. Nationals and two won gold at the Junior Pan-American Championships with another athlete achieving bronze. Finalists: Marilyn Deister (Synchronized Swimming), Matthew Dubois (Sailing), Jock Oubichon (Table Tennis) and Bill Walker (Diving).

2007 Developmental Coach of the Year

Paul Yetter (USA Swimming) is the 2007 Developmental Coach of the Year and he typifies the description of that coach. The Developmental Coach is one who works with a youth club, high school or junior-level coach, or a coach who is directly responsible



for coaching athletes to the junior and/or elite level. Yetter is on the coaching staff of the North Baltimore Aquatic Club. He is the personal coach of Katie Hoff, who won three gold medals and set two world records at the 2007 World Championships. Thirteen Yetter-coached athletes have made Swimming's Olympic Trials cuts, which includes three of his Junior athletes. Since 2002 Paul has helped eight different North Baltimore athletes achieve over 60 #1 National Age Group rankings. Paul served as the head women's coach for the 2007 Pan-American Games where the team took home the gold medal in 14 of 16 events. Finalists: Jimmy Kim (Taekwondo), Jon Cooper (Ice Hockey), Bob Gunter (Diving), and Joanne McCallie (Women's Basketball).

Paralympic Coach of the Year

The Paralympic Coach of the Year was the coach for three U.S. athletes who broke World records in 2007 in Wheelchair events. Adam Bleakney coaches the Paralympian of the Year Jessica Galli (WR- 400 meters), Amanda McGrory (WR- 5000 meters), and Josh George (WR-800 meters). Currently he is the personal coach of five out of the 11 members of the U.S. Paralympic Elite team. Another Bleakney coached athlete, Anjali Forber-Pratt burst onto the scene this year winning two golds and a bronze at the ParaPan American Games. Adam is still actively competing and is a hopeful for Beijing. He is in a unique situation as the coach of a collegiate track and field program at the University of Illinois-Champaign in the Adapted Athletic department. Finalists: Ron Lykins (Women's Wheelchair Basketball) and Steve Wilson (Men's Wheelchair Basketball).

National Coach of the Year

35-0-1! What an incredible record for the Guy Baker-led Women's Water Polo team. Add to the unblemished record, a World Championships, World League Super Final and the Pan-American Games title and you can see why Guy Baker was named the National Coach of the Year. This is a team that re-grouped after a disappointing fourth place finish in 2006. Guy is not only responsible for the Elite team, but he directs and oversees three other National teams (20 & under, 18 & under, 16 & under). He is developing a pipeline for "sustained competitive excellence". Guy has also created two domestic events for Water Polo. The Holiday Cup is an international tournament and is the only traditional tournament outside of Europe where the Europeans will compete. The second event is the Speedo Top 40 Festival, which is a three day competition with the Top 40 Women water polo players competing. Finalists: Bob Bowman (Swimming), Mike Candrea (Softball), David Johnson (Shooting), and Tom Terhaar (Rowing).

Five coaches, five great stories and five people with a vision for the future.



Sean O'Neil



Sherman Nelson



Paul Yetter



Adam Bleakney



Guy Baker

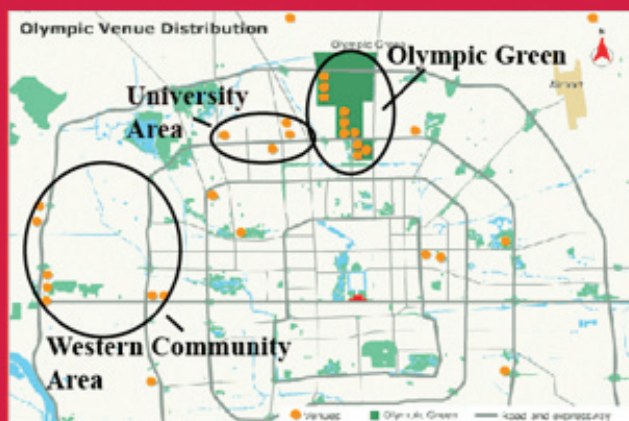
2008 Beijing Games Overview

One word can be used to describe the 2008 Olympic Games—spectacular! These Olympic Games will be unmatched in amazing venues and in a country that is rich with historic culture. U.S. athletes are preparing for a competition on the home soil of a serious competitor.



Twenty-eight sports will compete for 303 medals during the Olympics with 19 Paralympic sports competing 12 days later. Thirty-one competition venues will be located in Beijing. Sailing will be in Qingdao; equestrian will be in Hong Kong and soccer will have preliminary games in Qinhuangdao and Tianjin.

Olympic Venues



Artist drawings of “The Cube” on the left with the “Bird’s Nest” on the right.

Other competitions in the Olympic Green area will include archery, artistic gymnastics, cycling, fencing, handball, pentathlon and trampoline.

The competitions in the University Area are judo, table tennis, taekwondo, weightlifting, wrestling and volleyball.

THE DESIGN OF THE GAMES

Many of the Olympic events will be contested in an area called the Olympic Green. The masterpiece of the Olympic Green is the Olympic Park Centre Stadium commonly referred to as the “Bird’s Nest.” This will be the site of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies as well as the track & field competition and soccer finals. Within 400 meters of the stadium is another unique design – The Cube. The Cube (which looks like a giant water cube—see lower left) will house the swimming, diving, water polo and synchronized swimming competitions.

Each venue will expose Americans to the unique flair of the Chinese culture.



Artist drawing of the table tennis venue.

The Western Community Area will host baseball, basketball, shooting, softball and track cycling.

Canoeing, kayak, rowing and open-water swimming will be held in the North Scenic Area with a beautiful new site at Shunyi Olympic Rowing/Canoeing Park.



Artist drawing of the Shunyi Olympic Rowing/Canoeing Park

Triathlon will compete in the Ming Tomb Area. Boxing will be located in the city center of Beijing at the Worker’s Indoor Stadium. Beach volleyball will be at Chaoyang Park, just east of the Third Ring Road.

If you are traveling to Beijing for the Olympic Games, here are a few things that will make your trip more seamless:

Travel - There are two primary travel systems - subway and taxi..



Be aware that cars do not always yield to pedestrians, even at traffic lights.

Subways can get you wherever you want to go faster than cabs.ay going into the Olympic Green will be completed for the Games.

Taxis are an inexpensive mode of transportation, but you need to use those with red tags in the rear windows, as these are regulated. It is much like New York City in that regard. Most taxis will not take U.S. dollars, so have some RMB on hand. The regulated cabs

will have a book with photographs of all the Olympic venues, so if you and the driver are struggling to communicate,ask for the book.

Food- Chinese food in the United States is “Americanized,” so expect Chinese food in Beijing to be different and more authentic. Great meals can be found all over the city at very reasonable prices. However, English translations on menus can be difficult to understand, even with photographs, so a Chinese language book with common food words can be helpful.

The Chinese are extremely efficient and not wasteful of any portion of animals they prepare as food. For example, fish bones are cooked and used with a great dipping sauce, duck tongues are sliced and roasted, and scales maybe flash fried and used as decorations.

Heat and Humidity- Heat and Humidity have the potential to be a major player in athlete performances. Our athletes will have to be prepared and acclimatized for heat and humidity, much like preparations for Atlanta and Athens.

The average temperature will be between 82-86 degrees with a relative humidity averaging 69 (out of 100). This places Beijing on the Heat Index Chart in the Caution to Extreme Caution section. Hydration strategies will be needed.

July and August typically have the most rainfall of the year - almost four to five inches more than any other month.

Currency- Renminbi, literally “people’s currency” and abbreviated to RMB, is the currency of the People’s Republic of China. The unit for Renminbi is Yuan, Jiao, Fen: 1 Yuan = 10 Jiao = 100 Fen. The current conversion is 1 USD to 6.98 RMB.

Renminbi (人民幣)
Yuan (元)
Jiao (角)
Fen (分)

COMPETITION READINESS

Our athletes are prepared and ready to compete. A number of our teams will be in Asian locations in July getting adjusted to the climate and time zone.

As teams and athletes are named, the USOC will be booking flights for Beijing. A typical flight from the United States to Beijing is more than 12 hours. The athletes will cross the date line, so they will leave on one day and arrive on the next day. Upon landing, athletes will gather their luggage, go through the Olympic credentialing process and then to the Olympic Village.

Due to the time difference, some sports have altered their traditional time schedule. For example, the finals of swimming events will be conducted in the morning, instead of the afternoon, so U.S. swimmers are altering the times and types of training they undergo so that they are prepared for the new start time.

The USOC has completed a contract for a training location for U.S. athletes while in Beijing at High Performance Center. The location will provide housing for practice partners for the combat sports (sparring partners for boxing, judo, taekwondo and wrestling), replacement athletes (in case of an injury and/or illness), personal coaches, NGB professional staff, press officers and others.

A concern for athletes during the Olympic Games is the ability to workout when they need to and for teams to have privacy when practicing plays or routines. The USOC facility will be as

close as possible to one of our Olympic Training Centers with gymnasiums, a 50-meter swimming pool, two tracks, strength and conditioning area, sports medicine clinic and a recovery area, which will be available to the athletes and coaching staff prior to and during the Olympic Games.

As a supplement to the excellent food in the Athlete Village, the USOC will provide athletes with U.S.-style food at High Performance Center (HPC). The village will be the primary meal location, but U.S. athletes training and living at HPC, or those who wish to visit, will have a meal service available at this location.

The USOC is working to put our athletes in the best possible position to fulfill the dreams of a lifetime. We know that you will catch the excitement and the drama that only an Olympic Games can produce. Amazing Awaits!

Fun Facts about China

- The number 8 is associated with prosperity.
- Chinese dragons have five toes, while Japanese dragons have three. The Chinese legend states that all Imperial dragons originated in China, and the further away from China a dragon went the fewer toes it had. Dragons only exist in China and Japan because if they traveled further, they would have no toes to continue.
- Tiananmen Square's flag is lowered every evening at sunset. The soldiers are drilled to march at 108 paces per minute, 75 cm per pace. It's so precisely timed, the flag disappears underneath Tiananmen Gate at exactly the same second that the sun disappears. This is repeated at sunrise.
- China has more speakers of English as a second language than the United States has native English speakers.
- Pandas are called "Giant Bear Cats" because their pupils are slits like a cat, unlike the rounded eyes of a bear.
- More than 1,200 varieties of tea are grown with 17.4 billion liters consumed.
- The Chinese have the oldest known calendar. It is lunar-based.

| USA AND CHINA | CHINA | USA |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Latitude/Longitude | 35N, 105E | 38N, 97W |
| Area (sq. Km) | 9,596,960 | 9,629,091 |
| Population | 1,306,313,812 | 295,734,134 |
| Coastline (km) | 14,500 | 19,924 |
| Arable Land | 15.4% | 19.32% |
| Life Expectancy | 72.27 | 77.71 |
| Literacy | 90.9% | 97% |

THE ORDER OF IKKOS

By Rebecca Sturdy, USOC Media Intern

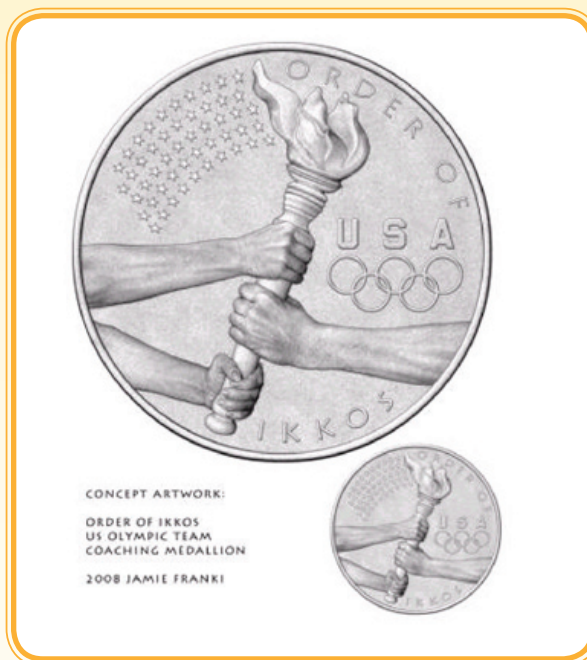
After a nationwide search, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) has selected artwork submitted by Professor Jamie Franki (Charlotte, N.C.) as the design that will grace the front of the newly created Order of Ikkos medallion.

The medallion, which will be presented to the personal coaches of future U.S. Olympic/Paralympic medalists, represents the athlete's appreciation for the integral services the coach has provided. Individual sport athletes will have the opportunity to name their personal coach. The Olympic Coach for team sports will be the recipient. USOC Coaching is in the process of collecting all the personal coach information from the National Governing Bodies (NGBs). If a coach coaches multiple Olympic medalists, he/she will be eligible to receive one medallion from each athlete. The USOC did not want to deny an athlete the opportunity to honor the coach whose work prepared them for the podium. Following the athlete's medal award ceremony, the athlete will then present the coach on record with the medallion at the USA House and the coach will be inducted into the Order of Ikkos.

The Order of Ikkos gets its namesake from Ikkos of Tarentum, the first recorded Olympic coach in ancient Greece. Ikkos won the pentathlon at the 84th Olympiad in 444 B.C. and later became known for his coaching ability as he led two fellow Tarentine athletes to gold in the same event.

"The effort and dedication an Olympic coach must have in preparing elite athletes to compete on the world's biggest stage often goes unnoticed," said Steve Roush, USOC Chief of Sports Performance. "The Order of Ikkos medal officially recognizes the knowledge, hard work and personal commitment of those coaches whose athletes achieve the greatest success at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Given on behalf of the athlete and the USOC, the medal serves as a token of appreciation for a job well done."

Franki is a tenured Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he coordinates the Illustration Program in the Department of Art and Art History. A former Master Designer in the United States Mint's Artistic Infusion Program, Franki designed the 2005 American Bison Nickel reverse



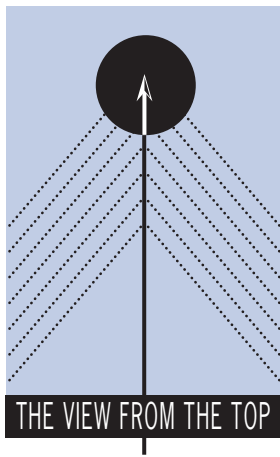
and the face of the Jefferson 1800 Nickel in 2006. Greatly influenced by the artists of the Golden Age of American illustration, Franki strives to create narrative artwork that is rich in detail, expression and accessibility to a wide range of people.

"The design of the Order of Ikkos Medallion is both classical and contemporary, a reflection upon our past Olympic heritage and our determined efforts toward the future," said Franki. "The elements of the design were chosen and placed to create an interlocked balance as well as a circular eye movement – a tribute to the joined circles in the famed Olympic Rings."

Expressing a desire to have a symbolic relevance that was universally applicable to all sports, Franki used the torch as a symbol for the guidance a coach offers the athlete. His design commemorates the passing of thanks and recognition from athlete to coach. Franki utilized iconic symbols such as a flame modeled after the Statue of Liberty's torch, 50 stars for each of the 50 American states, and the U.S. Olympic Team logo to give the medallion a distinctly American flare. In contrast to these elements, he chose a type design with an archaic Greek style to pay homage to Ikkos and to link the Order to the roots of the ancient Olympic Movement.

"The Order of Ikkos Medallion will remain the same for every Game. The medallion ribbon will denote the Games from which the coach received the medallion. We are extremely excited about the medallion that Jamie Franki has designed," said the USOC Manager of Coaching Programs, Cathy Sellers. "It is a vibrant design that will serve the U.S. Olympic Committee well into the future. We feel that the opportunity for the athlete to honor his or her coach with this medallion will be a special moment."

The U.S. Olympic Committee sponsored a nationwide contest requesting the unique designs of artists from all walks of life and design styles, beginning in 2007. After an initial review of 24 entries, Franki's original artwork was selected out of three remaining finalist designs as the competition winner. His design for the Order of Ikkos Medallion will have its debut at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. For his efforts, Franki was awarded a prize of \$2,008.



The View From the Top: RON O'BRIEN

One of Diving's finest coaches, Ron O'Brien has an Olympic Coaching career that is hard to imagine. He has served as the Head Olympic Coach for seven straight Olympic Games and an eighth as an Assistant Coach. For 23 consecutive years, an O'Brien coached athlete captured a National Championship. As a collegiate athlete, he competed in gymnastics and diving for The Ohio State University and he served as their diving coach for 15 years. The diving well at OSU has been named as a tribute to the success of Ron O'Brien

How did you get started in coaching?

At the age of 13, I joined the YMCA Leaders Club at the local "Y" and began teaching gym and swim classes. I enjoyed it very much and decided before entering college that I wanted to be a teacher and coach.

You have coached some of the country's best divers, what has been one of your favorite Olympic moments?

Seeing Greg Louganis on the award stand with the national anthem playing, after he just completed his second Olympics winning double gold medals.

What helped you become one of the most successful Diving coaches in the World?

While getting a Ph.D in Physical Education (Ohio State University-1967), with an emphasis on Exercise Physiology, Kinesiology, Anatomy etc., I realized the importance of science in the training and preparation of athletes. I spent my whole

career studying research findings from all areas related to athletic performance. Since there was little research done in the sport of Diving, I adapted information from other sports, Sport Psychology and various other areas of skill mastery.

You developed Greg Louganis and many other prominent divers from a very young age through their career. What were some of the key stages of developing him as an Olympic champion?

Helping him deal with personal issues in his teen years and keeping him focused on reaching his potential while going through some tough times. After he won two gold medals at the 1984 Olympic Games, I had to get him to refocus on becoming the most prolific diver in history. We discussed what previous great divers had accomplished, that he could exceed all the records for number of national and international titles and become the greatest diver in the history of the sport.

What are some of the changes that are occurring globally in Diving and how are they affecting the US ranks?

Over the past 20 years, other countries (China and Russia especially) increased the amount of time in training and with government support changed diving from a part-time to full-time situation. In the US, because of our commitment to education, our training time and emphasis on sport stayed relatively the same. We have now learned to better balance school requirements with training, so that our training time has increased for many of our divers to 35+ hours per week.

The difficulty of the dives has continued to increase, for both men and women. A diver wishing to compete for a gold medal needs to spend a great deal of time improving their physical profile to be able to execute these difficult dives. Many of our divers now place a lot more emphasis on their exercise program.

One of the famous sporting moments was when Greg hit his head on the diving board. As his coach, what went through your head at that time and how did you get him re-focused on the next dive?

My first reaction was for his safety, as I didn't know the severity of the injury. Once the doctors determined that it was a laceration and there wasn't anything more serious, I asked Greg if he wanted



to continue. His answer, “we worked too hard to get here I don’t want to quit now”. He expressed concern that given the low score received on the dive he might not qualify for the finals. I told him I would go out and check his position, which I did, and reported that he was still in 3rd place and would make the finals if he continued. The doctors temporarily stitched his wound and said he was clear to do his last two dives. At that point he and I took a walk down a dark corridor to an adjacent swimming pool not being used. He jumped into the cold water to jolt himself back to reality. We joked about the situation and I told him hockey players get 50 stitches in their face and then go out and finish the game, surely he could do two more dives. I knew from our long history together that Greg has a great sense of humor and that is the best medicine for him when under stress. His next dive was the same type of dive (reverse) he did when striking the board, so I strongly urged him to move the dive out away from the board more than usual. He did the best dive of all the competitors in the preliminary contest, but it was still too close to the board. His last dive was also a reverse type of dive, so I more than strongly

told him to make sure his distance from the springboard was exaggerated. He did the dive well and safely. The rest is history!

How did the Big 10 rivalry between Diving coaches influence you and the sport?

During the time I was a coach in the Big Ten, it was far and away the best diving conference in the country. The Big Ten Championship was a war and a prelude of the upcoming NCAA Championship. The work ethic of the other coaches pushed me every day to make sure my divers would be prepared for the championship season. As a result of the competition between the coaches, the US was also the leader in new dives done, changes in the direction of the sport and dominant in world level competition.

Who was your mentor and what was the greatest piece of advice that you received?

I was lucky to have three mentors at different stages of my life. Their influence was not in any specific advice they gave me, but the example they provided. The first major influence was the Physical Director and his assistant at the local YMCA (Don Geyer and Jim Traylor). They loved teaching and coaching and instilled me with a passion for it. They got me involved in teaching and helped me improve at it. It was because of them I became a teacher/coach. When I went to Ohio State, Mike Peppe was the head swimming and diving coach. He became my role model and I watched how he did things while competing as an undergraduate and graduate student.

This observation taught me three very important things, 1) when you get several good/great athletes together in a competitive training environment, the daily competition in practice produces great results, 2) you cannot create motivation in people, you find those that are motivated and tell them what they have to do and they will do it, and 3) never gloat when winning or make excuses when losing.

What has kept you coaching at such a high level for so long?

A love of the sport and how intensely individual it is. The challenge of solving the problems involved in such a complex performance sport. The concept of pursuing personal perfection, both in me and the athletes under my direction was a driving force. I coined a philosophy about perfection as the years went on and perfection was unattainable but still the goal, “Seek perfection, learn to accept less and be kind to your self along the way.”

Integration of Paralympic athletes into “Able-Bodied” High School Club and Collegiate Programs

Edited by Julie O’Neill and Lauren Richardson

Paralympic athletes, from the local level through the elite international ranks of Paralympic sport, participate in team or individual sport programs for the same reasons as “able-bodied” athletes: they want to have fun, they enjoy the sport, they want to be with friends and make new friends, they want to ‘get in shape’ and stay healthy, they want to improve their skills and performances, they want to be elite competitors at the national and international levels, and they enjoy competition.

This article focuses on the experiences of coaches Andrew Barranco, Kelly Carter, Peggy Ewald, Randi Smith and Kurt Smitz; each of whom has been successful in including Paralympic athletes on their “able-bodied” teams. In order to get an idea of how these coaches integrated Paralympic-eligible athletes into their programs, USOC Paralympic Division Associate Director, Julie O’Neill, sat down with these five coaches for a brief Q and A session. It is the hope that the experiences and insights of these five coaches will provide other coaches - at every level of sport - introductory information and ideas on how to effectively integrate Paralympic athletes into their own programs.

PANEL COACH PROFILES

Coach Andrew Barranco- is currently the Regional Aquatic Director & Head Coach for Merritt Athletic Clubs. Since starting Merritt Athletic Swimming, (MAS) in 2004, the program has expanded to two locations in the Baltimore area. Barranco has been an Assistant Coach on several U.S. Paralympics Swimming team trips and most recently was an assistant coach for Paralympic Swimming at the 2007 Parapan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Barranco is the coach of three-time Paralympic gold medalist and 2007 Sullivan Award winner, Jessica Long.

Coach Kelly Carter- is currently the Men’s Head Cross Country and Track and Field Coach at Tennessee State University. He has steered the growth of both program’s for the past eight years. In 2007, he served as an assistant coach for the Parapan American Games Track & Field Team. He has coached 25 conference champions, 19 regional qualifiers, 3 Olympic trials qualifiers and 1 Paralympic gold & bronze medalist.

Coach Peggy Ewald- is currently in her third season as head coach of the Ohio Northern University’s (ONU) men’s and women’s swimming and diving programs. She also serves as assistant facility manager and as a lecturer at ONU.

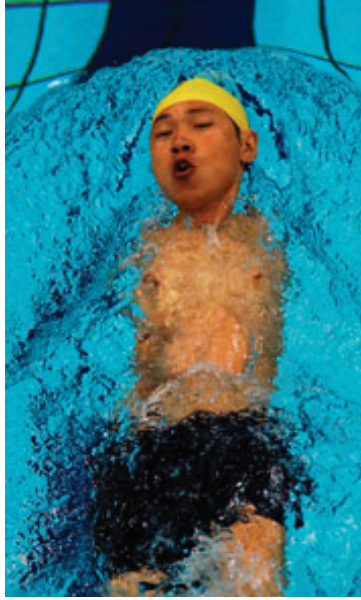
Ewald is the first full-time swimming and diving coach in ONU history. In her first two seasons at the helm of the program, she led the men’s team to the OAC Championship, earning OAC Men’s

Coach of the Year honors in 2005 and the OAC Women’s Coach of the Year award in 2006. The women’s team placed third at the OAC Championships in Ewald’s first two seasons. Ewald is a Level 4 ASCA certified swimming coach and has 13 years of coaching experience working with novice to National Champions.

Coach Randi Smith- is currently the Head Coach of the Paralympic National Archery team. She began coaching archery in the mid-1980’s, founding the Utah Hot Shots Jr. Olympic team, a program that provided the opportunity for kids with disabilities to participate on equal basis with able-bodied athletes. Smith was the Paralympic Archery Team Leader for the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games, the Head Coach for the 2005 and 2007 IPC Archery World Championships, and was honored in 2005 as the USOC’s Paralympic Coach of the Year.



Coach Kurt Smitz- is currently an Assistant Coach at the National Sports Center for the Disabled in Winter Park, Colo. It is his second year coaching Paralympic athletes. Prior to joining the National Sports Center he served as the Head Coach and Director of the Denver Ski Team from (1992-2006), winning four NCAA championships.



HOW AND WHEN WERE PARALYMPIC ATHLETES INITIALLY INTRODUCED TO YOUR PROGRAM?

Barranco: I was an assistant coach of another team before starting my current program. I was told that we would be having a 10 year old girl coming to try out and that she did not have any legs. From the first practice it was clear that she would fit right in with the team.

Carter: In 2002, I was called by the Head Paralympic coach and asked if I could coach an athlete that was coming to Tennessee State University. The Head Coach had seen an athlete, Ryan Fann, who had been featured on ESPN while playing in the Shriner’s all star football game.

Ewald: I offered to help a local student, who had been injured in a car accident and had turned to the pool as part of rehabilitation, with technical stroke development.

Smith: Our program was unique; it started out with potential Paralympic athletes, and we added non-Paralympic eligible athletes. On an international scale archery has long been a sport where athletes with and without disabilities can compete together.

Smitz: My first experience with a Paralympic athlete began with Dianna Golden, an above the knee amputee. I was to be her private coach for two summer training camps in Hinter tux, Austria.

WHAT WAS YOUR INITIAL RESPONSE TO WORKING WITH PARALYMPIC ATHLETES?

Barranco: I was excited; it was something a little different for our team and me. Swimming is a great sport that lends its self to all types of abilities. Before meeting Jessica Long I never questioned whether she would be able to keep up or fully participate. It was more like that’s great that she wants to swim.

Carter: I was concerned about the injury probability but was reassured by the Head Coach that the risk wasn’t any higher than any other athlete, so that made me more comfortable about it.

Ewald: I was intrigued by the challenge. It allowed me to grow by questioning what I thought I knew about swimming technique and propulsive forces etc, and then what I could adapt to their specific abilities.

Smith: I was initially surprised at the creativity of the archers, and the many ways they found to adapt their equipment and their style to make it possible for them to be successful.

Smitz: My initial response was one of enabling, but was quickly modified to thinking what was possible and having the athlete take as much ownership in the situation as allowed. This approach opened my vision and took away limits to conventional thinking.

WERE THERE ANY CHALLENGES THAT YOU HAD TO OVERCOME TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN INTEGRATING PARALYMPIC ATHLETES INTO YOUR PROGRAM/ TEAM?

Barranco: Not really any great challenges integrating the athletes into the program. The levels of the program are set up by ability and not age. This makes it easier to match swimmers up based on skills. Also we have a pre-team clinic program which is a great way to progress the swimmers before they are ready to join the team. There are some drills or kicking sets that some Paralympic athletes may have trouble with but finding an alternative drill is a simple solution. Most challenges can be solved with some creative thinking on the part of the coach and athlete.

Carter: No, he was able to do everything that was required from every student-athlete. He was not treated any different than any other member of the team.

Ewald: My first athlete really challenged me to review my anatomy. I actually had to break down the muscle & nerve paths to figure out what I had to work with. She was a quadriplegic so I really needed to understand what muscles we could work and which we would not be able to use. I got in the water a lot in the beginning to go through the motions and really it opened my eyes to what we could do. I focused on what we had to work with rather than what we did not have. So it was a lot of trial and error in the beginning.

Logistically, I just needed to ask for what was needed (for example on the High school team we just needed to make sure we were given a handicapped accessible bus). It really opened my eyes to the ADA laws/regulations and how far behind most facilities are to compliance. So at times we had to carry a wheelchair with the athlete down steps, etc. I also became very aware of all the facility aspects; any little rough edge could tear skin off the athlete when you are pulling them out of the water.

Smith: We did have some challenges at first, with other people wanting to help too much. Once they figured out the athletes could do it on their own, people were very supportive and welcomed us at all events. Accessibility was (and sometimes continues to be) a very big issue. Most of the archers on the Paralympic team do travel and compete in a lot of tournaments on their own. For them, the challenge can be getting someone to help when necessary – whether it’s with putting equipment together, pulling arrows, or scoring. They’ve all figured out that being polite almost always gets them the help they need.

When a brand new archer comes into the program, the biggest challenge can be getting them set up with equipment that will work and figuring out how to make it work. Because of this, we often ask them to come in for a private lesson at first. We’ll ask lots of questions; try different things and figure out how to start. Once they are set up, they can attend practice sessions along with everyone else.

Smith: As I had only worked with able body racers to that point, I needed to “empty my cup” as you would say, to allow for a natural learning curve. However, this does not preclude that coaching Paralympic athletes should only hold to a Paralympic model.

We all take things for granted, but when you look down the lane and see them keeping pace, never whining, or giving up on a set, it’s amazing the inspiration and motivation that carries throughout the team.

WHAT TYPE(S) OF SOLUTIONS DID YOU IMPLEMENT TO SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATE PARALYMPIC ATHLETES?

Barranco: We have held clinics as well as assessment tryouts so we get to know the new swimmers before the first day of practice.

Carter: I didn’t ignore his disability, but I made sure that it was never a focal point in anything that we did. I totally immersed him into our program. I even got him certified to compete under NCAA rules. No special treatment was given, and in the same respect none was required.

Ewald: It was never a problem—integration was not an issue. Again, I feel it is a mindset of the coaching staff. Ask for what you need and go from there.

Smith: At our local events, it seemed to just happen. At national and local events, one of the requests I made was to have the organizing committees at the tournaments we attend, actually put our athletes with the other athletes, rather than separating us into our own group. I also try to stay in touch with the committees and let them know ahead of time if we will have any special issues or needs. I’ve also worked with our National Judges, so they know about Paralympic archers. Our shooting rules are the same as everyone else’s, so integrating the archers is actually very easy.

Smith: The more you can bring crossover between able-bodied and disabled athletes, the bigger the gains to be had. You will know when things don’t apply or are just not going to happen.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATING PARALYMPIC ATHLETES INTO YOUR PROGRAM/TEAM?

Barranco: I think everybody benefits - coaches and athletes. It is an inspiring thing to see someone who has a disability work so hard to achieve their goals. It is a good motivator for the able-bodied athletes; they know they have no excuse for not working hard. For some Paralympic athletes I think they are out to prove how good they truly are against able-bodied athletes. Having Paralympic and able-bodied athletes train together pushes both of them to work their hardest.

Carter: Because of everything that Ryan has been through in his life, his story was an inspiration to his teammates, but also their total acceptance of him fueled his motivation to not let anything stop him. It was really a win-win for my program

Ewald: I think the best thing about integration is the perseverance aspect, and positive attitude that Paralympic athletes demonstrate every day. We all take things for granted, but when you look down the lane and see them keeping pace, never whining, or giving up on a set, it’s amazing the inspiration and motivation that carries throughout the team.

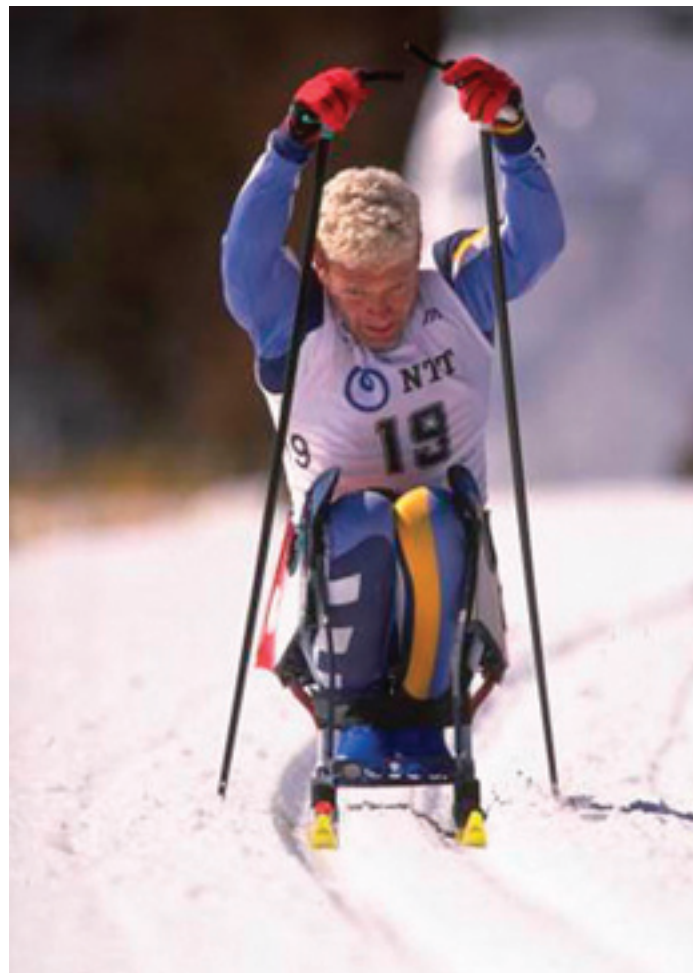
Smith: I think it allows everyone to see that everyone can be successful at some level. Not everyone goes into archery to be an Olympian or Paralympian, but it can be fun at whatever level a person chooses. I think it has also helped people in our local club realize that it takes as much work to be a successful Paralympian as an Olympian.

WERE THERE ANY ADAPTATIONS TO YOUR COACHING STYLE AND/OR PHILOSOPHY THAT YOU HAD TO MAKE TO EFFECTIVELY COACH PARALYMPIC ATHLETES (FROM A TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE)?

Barranco: One of the things I learned early on and work to instill in all Paralympic athletes is their stroke technique. I want them to have solid strokes and not waste energy or create more work for themselves with bad habits. For an athlete such as Jessica Long with no legs we focus on utilizing her upper body strength. It is important to understand the athlete and their disability; knowing how to maximize their strengths and not focus the disability.

Ewald: My coaching philosophy was a quality over quantity foundation. I was already a “non-traditional” coach. I was using science as a part of my style. I’m a teacher and come from the academic side, so my personal coaching style/philosophy fit well. The first time I worked with a visually impaired athlete, they helped me far more than I helped them. It’s was truly amazing how you “look” at things when you must process your environment without “seeing” it. There is so much to learn as a coach, it just reinforced that everything I thought I knew about swimming could be challenged. So it really makes you think about what really is absolute in the sport no matter what the athlete’s or coach’s philosophy is. I have come to realize there really are few absolutes in swimming, but those that are must be the focus of all your efforts.

Smith: My background is in Therapeutic Recreation and Adapted Physical Education. Adapting and tinkering were pretty natural! However, when I did begin working more exclusively with archery, there was a lot of learning about basic archery technique. I attended coaching classes, did a lot of reading, and asked a lot of questions – I still do! The biggest difference came when I actually started working with the Paralympic teams. Although sometimes subtle – and sometimes not – winning becomes much more



important and this has an effect on a lot of decisions and a lot of activities. I had to change some of my own behaviors and do some definite “soul-searching.” I did this by working with, talking with, and observing some of the top Olympic archery coaches of “able-bodied” athletes.

Smitz: My current position as a full-time coach for Paralympic athletes with the National Sports Center for the Disabled has allowed me to integrate some of these thoughts with the skiers I work with. We will partner up with able-bodied skiers and share common courses. Our “standing” athletes can get visual images of good posture, technique and tactics applied by the able-bodied skiers, and are encouraged to implement some of the things they see! Our mono-skiers are also told to copy certain elements of standing technique, whether it be when the ski is pressured in on a turn or keeping the upper body square to the hill with proper outrigger position - it all applies.

DID YOU NEED TO LEARN ANY NEW SKILLS TO EFFECTIVELY COACH PARALYMPIC ATHLETES? AND IF YES, WHERE DID YOU ACQUIRE THE SKILLS OR INFORMATION NEEDED?

Carter: You don’t have to necessarily learn new skills but it is always a good idea to gain knowledge & keep on top of the sport that you are involved in. USA Track & Field offers the Coaching Education Program where you can get certified as a Level 1, 2 or 3 coach. These classes have been very beneficial in my development as an educator, leader, teacher and coach.

Ewald: I’m continuing to learn new skills every time I work with an athlete. It’s a never ending process. I’m a firm believer in quality over quantity. With a Paralympic athlete, I feel this must be the focus. More attention must be given to technical efficiency and specificity of training. Use the science; it’s very applicable to every athlete, but even more important with a Paralympic athlete. I feel I must work from the frame of mind that reduction in resistive forces are paramount and focus on what they can do/ what they have to work with and make it faster. Communicate, demonstrate and don’t be afraid to be creative. Not every thing you try will work, but keep trying. Adapt as you would for any other athlete. Never coach from the perspective that one way fits all.

Smith: I found the same skills were needed with all athletes; though communication became even more important with the Paralympic athletes. Communication is not only more important with the athlete; often many more people are much more involved: parents, families, therapists of all types, transportation providers. Flexibility became more important for some things; sticking rigidly to plans became more important for others.

Smitz: Obviously, there has to be adaption to the disabled element of skiing, such as learning about the mono-ski - the different types, its shock settings, and response. In the able-bodied world we like to defer from getting too involved with the equipment and focus more on the pilot. But with Paralympic skiing, specifically the sit-skiers, the equipment is a big part of achieving success. I as a coach have gone to websites to learn how load bearing situations affect disabled skier performance.

CAN YOU SHARE SOME CREATIVE IDEAS FOR INTEGRATING PARALYMPIC ATHLETES INTO YOUR PROGRAM/TEAM?

Barranco: One thing that I have tried is a Friday night assessment clinic for new swimmers looking to get into the sport. I think it is important to have a plan and expectations before adding a new swimmer into a group. Integrating is not a one day thing. It is important to get feedback to make sure the Paralympic athlete’s needs are met. In doing so, it is also important not to interrupt the training of the entire group. Communicating expectations to the group ahead of time often helps.

Carter: My advice is to, “JUST DO IT.” Make them a part of your team and treat them accordingly. There is no difference between them unless YOU create it.

Ewald: I don’t think I used anything creative to integrate, it’s a mind set, just be open to the opportunity. In education you learn to make adaptations for all students. It’s not any different than what we should do for all students/athletes. Find a way to make it work, be a problem solver, find the edge for all your team members

Smith: The Paralympic archers are integrated into our group just as any archer would be. We move at their speed, keep it fun, and build on success. Our main program still emphasizes participation and recreation. Competition is there for those who want it, but it’s not necessary.

WHAT PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A NEW COACH WHO IS JUST BECOMING INVOLVED WITH INTEGRATION OF PARALYMPIC ATHLETES INTO THEIR “ABLE-BODIED” PROGRAM?

Barranco: Be patient. It is a great team dynamic to mix Paralympic and able-bodied athletes together on a team. Have a plan ready and be prepared to make some variations during the practice.

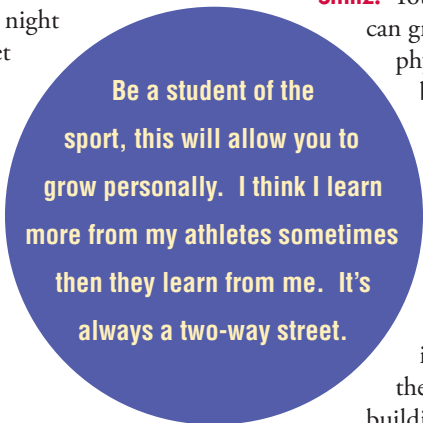
Carter: Acknowledge the disability, but don’t linger on it. Treat an athlete like an athlete. If you treat any member of your team

different (able-bodied or not) the rest of your team will follow your lead. Strong team culture will breed team togetherness.

Ewald: Be open minded, never think you know it all, focus on stroke technique, be creative and talk to other coaches. Be a student of the sport, this will allow you to grow personally. I think I learn more from my athletes sometimes then they learn from me. It’s always a two-way street.

Smith: Get to know the individual. Ask lots of questions. Spend time talking. Emphasize the abilities – not the disability!

Smitz: You need to encourage reaching farther than you can grab. Early discussion of the disability and what physical capacities a person has lends a blueprint, but one that will be changed as time goes on.



ANY FINAL THOUGHTS OR WORDS OF WISDOM YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE IN REGARDS TO WORKING WITH PARALYMPIC ATHLETES?

Barranco: Working with Paralympic athletes is a great opportunity for a coach to expand their knowledge. It offers opportunities for team building and a new perspective for able-bodied athletes. It is a good opportunity to have as a coach.

Carter: If you love teaching the sport and watching athletes grow, there is no better vocation! I absolutely love what I do and the people that I work with. Always remember that “athletes are athletes” and if you treat them in that respect they will respond accordingly.

Ewald: Find the competitive edge for them as you would any athlete. I keep my expectations the same for all team members. I want athletes that demonstrate discipline, perseverance, mental toughness, desire, and respect because I feel these personality traits give them a competitive edge. I believe without that competitive edge or spirit, success in any walk of life is hard to achieve.

Smith: Learn to laugh – with others and at yourself! Life (and coaching) is a lot more fun that way!

Smitz: The element of working with the disabled that I was least prepared for is the emotional makeup that some athletes carry. I can try to understand, but cannot walk in someone else’s shoes. As such, there are ups and downs a coach will experience when working closely with their athletes. If anything, you will gain perspective! You will also find it to be both challenging and rewarding.

For more information on ways to incorporate Paralympic athletes into your existing sports programs please contact the USOC’s Paralympic Division or visit www.usparalympics.org.



PRE-EVENT MEALS

By Helen DeMarco, M.S., R.D.

Updated by Nancy Clark, R.D., FACSM

It is well established that exercise performance can be affected by diet and, in order to maintain optimal training, the body must be properly fueled with appropriate nutrients. The pre-event meal is an integral part of the complete training plan. Of course, a single pre-event meal will not compensate for a poor training diet. For this reason, the active person should routinely follow basic nutrition guidelines. It is essential that the diet contain enough calories to cover the active person's daily energy expenditure. It is also advised that the diet be composed of a wide variety of foods to ensure adequate intake of vitamins and minerals. The training diet should be high in carbohydrates without compromising necessary protein and fat.

The pre-event meal should have a definite focus on carbohydrate intake. Prioritizing carbohydrates is supported by evidence that exercise performance is typically enhanced following a high-carbohydrate meal as compared to a low-carbohydrate meal. Carbohydrate in the liver and muscles (glycogen) can be metabolized to provide energy for the working muscle more rapidly than fat, allowing a person to sustain a higher intensity level of exercise. Therefore, its depletion would inevitably result in a need to reduce exercise intensity or discontinue exercise. Because the body's glycogen storage is limited, the diet should provide enough carbohydrate to maximize glycogen stores, particularly for those participating in high-intensity or endurance events. The basic goals of the pre-event meal are as follows: (1) prevent weakness and fatigue, whether due to low blood sugar levels or inadequate muscle glycogen stores, during the event; (2) ward off feelings of hunger yet minimize gastrointestinal distress from eating; and (3) guarantee optimal hydration. In addition, individual preferences must be considered. If a person truly believes that a specific food will improve performance, then the psychological effect of consuming that food may result in enhanced performance.

The meal should consist primarily of carbohydrates and fluids, as they can be easily digested. If the meal is small (400-500 calories), it can be consumed approximately two to three hours prior to an event, allowing enough time for digestion and absorption. If the



meal is high in fat, protein, or fiber, extra time must be allowed for digestion. Also, as the amount of food consumed increases, so will the time needed for digestion. A large meal containing appreciable amounts of protein or fat, such as a large cheese omelet, may need to be eaten five to six hours before competition. Carbohydrates high in fiber and gas-forming (bran products, legumes, and certain vegetables, such as onion, cabbage and cauliflower) are not recommended as they may cause intestinal discomfort. A liquid source of carbohydrate can be taken prior to the event when schedules do not allow time for meals or for those who have a sensitive stomach or experience pre-competition anxiety. Liquid meals can include sports drinks, juices, low-fat smoothies and shakes.

Carbonated drinks are questionable as they may cause stomach discomfort. Caffeinated drinks should be considered on an individual basis. For some individuals, caffeine may be ergogenic, most notably by making the effort seem easier. Caffeine may also spare muscle glycogen and thereby delay fatigue during endurance

events. However, for others it may cause nausea and anxiousness. Once thought to be dehydrating, we now know that athletes who are accustomed to consuming caffeinated beverages can do so and experience enhanced performance, even in hot weather.

The pre-event meal is particularly important before a morning event, since as much as 12 hours or more may have passed since dinner and liver glycogen levels could be sub-optimal. The pre-event meal could replenish glycogen stores and decrease chance of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and therefore, delay fatigue. Since early morning pre-event meals may need to be limited in size, it would be important to consume a substantial carbohydrate dinner the night before and/or a bedtime snack, such as a bowl of cereal. Again, plenty of liquids should also be consumed to ensure maximum hydration status. Consider the following pre-event food choices.

Morning events:

The night before, eat a high-carbohydrate meal (such as pasta with tomato sauce). Early morning, eat a light breakfast or snack, such as cereal and non-fat milk; fresh fruit or juice; toast, bagel

or English muffin; pancakes or waffles; non-fat or low-fat fruit yogurt; or a liquid pre-event meal

Afternoon events:

Eat a high-carbohydrate meal both the night before and for breakfast. Follow with a light lunch: turkey sandwiches with small portions of turkey; brothy soups; a bagel with a little peanut butter; fruits; juice; low-fat crackers; or high-carbohydrate nutritional bars, pretzels or rice cakes.

Evening events:

Eat a high-carbohydrate breakfast and lunch, followed by a light meal or snack: pasta with marinara sauce; rice with vegetables; light-cheese pizza with vegetable toppings; noodle or rice soups with crackers; baked potato; or frozen yogurt.

No one food or group of foods works for everybody; the person should experiment to find which foods, and the amount of food, works best. Food choices may vary based on the type of exercise, as well as the intensity and duration of the exercise. However, it is important to experiment with new foods during training rather than around competition.



Travel nutrition...more than just a “Plan B”

by Adam Korzun, USOC
Sports Dietician

A proper eating program is just as important to an elite athlete's success as their training program. At the Olympic Training Centers, we strive to make sure athletes have the best performance-based foods at their disposal. However, when athletes travel the world for training and competition finding those familiar performance-based foods can often be a challenge. Putting a low quality fuel into the body can lead to decreased performance, compromised health and other complications. Elite level athletes know what foods best fuel his/her training and performance, but it is impossible to guarantee those foods will be available everywhere you travel. Therefore, it is always a good idea to pack a “Plan B” in your checked luggage to help you fuel for success.



If you are still not sure if it is worth it, take a look at some examples of food that can be made in your hotel room in less than ten minutes! It gives you a bit of control over your meals when you are in an unfamiliar part of the world, and sure beats a dinner of six energy bars!

CRANBERRY COUSCOUS

Cook garlic herb couscous in hot pot according to package directions and add 1 pouch of Tyson chicken breast and 1/3 cup of dried cranberries. (Serves two in about five minutes)

Provides: 710kcal, 7g fat (<1g saturated), 122g carbohydrate, 43g protein per serving

SANTA FE CHICKEN

Cook southwest flavored ready rice in hot pot according to package directions, and add one pouch of Tyson chicken breast. (Serves two in less than two minutes)

Provides: 365 kcal, 7g fat (<1g saturated), 45g carbohydrate, 32g protein per serving

SUPER OATMEAL

Combine one scoop of protein powder with oatmeal package and cook in hot pot according to package directions. Add one tablespoon of peanut butter. (Breakfast for one in about a minute)

Provides: 400kcal, 10g fat (2.5 saturated), 56g carbohydrate, 21g protein

Now for the best part, thanks to Tyson Foods, the travel nutrition kits (including hot pot, power converter and Tyson shelf stable chicken breast) are available for national team athletes! This allows athletes to become traveling chefs and fuel for success across the globe!

Now, the “Plan B” that the USOC is using extends beyond just energy bars and gels! Energy bars and gels are a tremendous help when you need some quick recovery fuel, and/or a pre-comp snack; but if you need to eat 4000 calories a day, that is about 17 bars!

A solid “Plan B” includes an entire travel nutrition kit, which includes the necessary cooking supplies, power converters and shelf stable carbohydrates and proteins that an athlete can use to prepare meals from anywhere in the world.

An example travel nutrition kit includes the following:

- Hot pot travel cooker
- Measuring cups and spoon
- Travel power converter
- Shelf stable foods

So, once you have the necessary cooking equipment and power converter, each athlete can pack the foods that can fuel for performance. The goal is to be able to create a quick, nutritious meal. Some of the foods that I suggest packing are:

CARBOHYDRATES:

- Instant rice
- Granola/dry cereal
- Instant mashed potatoes
- Canned fruits
- Pasta sides
- Snack crackers
- Couscous mix
- Instant oatmeal/grits
- Instant Breakfast

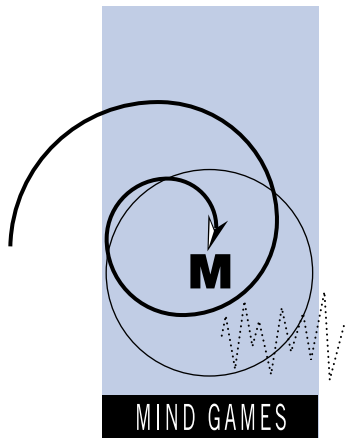
PROTEIN: (all shelf stable)

- Tyson chicken pouch
- Soy or whey protein powder
- Tuna pouch
- Natural peanut butter
- Salmon pouch
- Non-fat dry milk
- Tofu
- Soy milk powder

SEASONINGS:

- spice blends





What to do before hitting the road: Three key tasks while preparing for the “Big One”

By Sean McCann- Sport Psychologist
USOC Performance Services- Strength and Power Sportfolio

Henry Ford

Before everything else, getting ready is the secret to success.

Confucius

Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.

With the Beijing Olympics arriving in less than 100 days, the USOC is in the middle of the Olympic Trials season for our summer sports. In these last few nerve-wracking months for athletes and coaches, our USOC Sport Psychologists are regularly asked “what else should I be doing to get ready?” Although we wish this question had been asked 2 years ago, the reality is that there are some things that are worth doing in these last few months. Since this question is repeated so frequently, this column is a stripped-down list of only three items to be sure to do just prior to any big event.

THREE KEY TASKS AS COMPETITION TIME APPROACHES:

TASK ONE: DEVELOP AND COMMIT TO A PLAN

“I would rather have a good plan today than a perfect plan two weeks from now” General George S. Patton

In the last few weeks before an Olympics, the time to develop a plan is now. These days, most top athletes and coaches have already considered the issues that are components of a high performance plan. Most would also say they “have a plan”. But



often when pushed for details, they say, “well, we are waiting to find out this,” or “we have two options for that,” or “we can’t know that until we get to Beijing.” What we have here is not an inability to consider the key variables, but a failure to commit to a plan of action!

As General Patton’s quote suggests, waiting for the perfect plan keeps people in a holding pattern, and can create a kind of paralysis that leads to defeat. At some point, you need to commit to a plan based on the information you have. That time is now, when you are just weeks away from your biggest competition. For the perfectionists out there, this requires you to accept the hard truth that no plan is perfect. If you can accept that, then you can move to action.

If it is too hard to commit to a plan without knowing everything for sure, you need to ask yourself, what is riskier, staying frozen or moving forward with incomplete information. The closer you get to competition, the greater the risks of inaction. In addition, you need to understand that for your athletes, not committing to a plan leads to increased stress, decreased focus, and loss of energy. Making a plan is important. Committing to the plan and moving into action is critical. Of course you may need to adjust some details. Isn’t that what coaching is all about?

TASK TWO: BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Coaches and athletes universally endorse confidence as a critical factor in big-event performances. Yet, when asked what they are doing to build their confidence, most athletes respond with silence. The reality is that most people think of confidence as something that happens, something you have, rather than something you develop. In the last weeks before a major competition, however, one of the most important tasks of an athlete is to build and maintain confidence. There are a number of strategies for achieving this.

Strategies to build confidence in the last few weeks before a major event:

1. First recognize that confidence is a job, not a gift. Most athletes simply don't think of confidence building as something they can work productively towards. Once you accept this, the rest becomes easier.

2. Know your strengths. In the last few weeks before a major event, doubts, worries and self-criticism tends to increase in frequency. Therefore, this is an ideal time to remind yourself how good you are. This is not the time to be delusional, but a time to make note of reality-based strengths that might get lost in the anxiety and doubt of the last few weeks. Two techniques for this are:

First, make an explicit list of your best attributes. Simply have athletes take 30 minutes to brainstorm about all of the things they are good at. This can be in sport, in school, in life. The only rule for this exercise is that athletes use the "better than average" test to add it to the list. If they are a better than average student, or some aspect of their technique is better than their average competitor, it goes on the list. No attribute is too small to add to the list, but all strengths must be based in reality.

Second, work on the ability to call up imagery of your best performances. Provide and structure time in and out of practice for athletes to remember their very best performances, in as much detail as possible. Simply by "seeing" how good they can be, an athlete is reminded that their ability is real.

3. Make building confidence a daily discipline.

Techniques include:

- 1) Start a daily accomplishment log. This is a very quick but powerful daily activity. Have one line for each day, and require that athletes list one positive accomplishment for each day, leading up until the big event. No exceptions, no matter how tough practice was.
- 2) Structuring training to produce success. Build a practice structure that allows daily successes. This doesn't mean everything is easy, but every day should have at least one moment of success that is highlighted, even if it is only two minutes of a two hour practice.
- 3) Insist on daily goals, agreed to by athlete and coach, that are controllable "task goals".

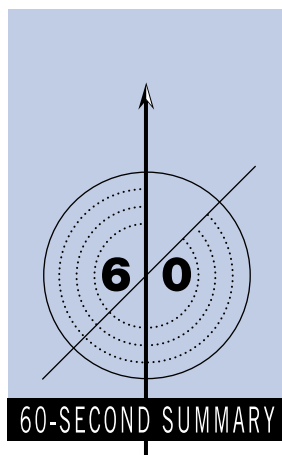
7. TASK THREE: AIRPLANE SKILLS:

Once an athlete actually starts travelling to the big event, he or she must begin to shift into a pure high-performance mode which is qualitatively different, from normal operating mode. It helps to remind athletes of five important steps:

1. Begin to "Free up memory" by compartmentalizing. This requires making sure that all the other elements of life outside of sport are dealt with, but not actively present in the mind. School, work, relationships- Decide on action plan, then let go. Begin letting go of irritations with coach, teammates.
2. Manage worries effectively. This is most easily accomplished by referring to the performance plan mentioned above. A commitment to this plan helps remind an athlete that everything is taken care of, and completing a few simple tasks will ensure success.
3. Shift mind from outcome to process. Outcome goals (winning an Olympic Gold Medal) have their place for all athletes, but the closer an athlete gets to a big event, the more outcome thoughts can create stress, anxiety, and distractions. There are exceptions to this rule, but generally, in "airplane mode" focusing on how to win is more important than focusing on the outcome of winning. Process goals, or task goals, are very useful in the last few days before a big event.
4. Be "Mindful"- Practice Staying In The Present. Athletes who perform well in big events are generally excellent at keeping their thoughts in the here and now. Have your athletes feel the energy and positive mood that comes from connecting to "RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW". Athletes can literally use the cue of buckling their seat belt on a plane to start a five-minute exercise of being in the moment.
5. SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY. Less is more in the last few days before competing. Things, relationships, appointments, stuff, worries, and everything else in the athlete's life become potential drags on an athlete. Simplifying means mentally making the call that it is too late to add anything else, and it is in fact the time to start eliminating everything from your life that doesn't help performance. In this multi-tasking world, it is useful to remember that excellence is only achieved with focus on "Singletasking". The Olympic medal goes to the best single-tasker, not the one keeping the most plates spinning in the air. While multi-tasking may feel like the right thing to do in today's complicated world, it is a recipe for mediocrity. Simplicity and focus is a necessity for athletes. How about coaches?

Johnny Carson

Talent alone won't make you a success. Neither will being in the right place at the right time, unless you are ready. The most important question is: 'Are you ready?'



Article Review Effects of Tapering on Performance: A Meta-Analysis

Laurent Bosquet, Jonathan Montpetit,
Denis Arvisais and Iñigo Mujika
Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, Volume 39, No 8,
pp.1358-1365, 2007.

This group of researchers selected 27 studies out of 182 to conduct a meta-analysis on tapering. The criteria for selection was that they had to involve competitive athletes; the study had to provide details of how the taper was conducted; and then be based on a competition or other highly regarded performance criteria.

A meta-analysis is a statistical technique that can combine the results of several studies into a single result. It allows the researcher to have a larger database and to identify key findings across different studies.

The idea of the taper is to reduce training in order to achieve a better performance at a key competition or series of competitions. The concept is one of reducing fatigue to allow the athlete to compete in a somewhat “recovered” state, but not reducing training so much that it has an effect on performance. It is easy to see from the above statement, that how you do the taper and for how long are key components.

HOW

If we want to reduce training loads, there are three main factors that can be used: volume, intensity and frequency. Volume is the amount of training done each day, intensity is the percentage of maximum effort and frequency is the number of workouts that the athlete is doing. Of course, you can manipulate all three areas independently or simultaneously.

However, Bosquet, et al found that “Maximal performance gains are obtained with a total reduction in training volume of 41-60% of pre-taper value. Training volume can be altered through the decrease of the duration of each training session and/or the decrease of training frequency. It seems that the first strategy should be preferred because decreasing training frequency does not result in a significant improvement of performance.”

The best way to do a taper is to reduce training volume, but not decrease frequency. If you feel you have to reduce frequency (cut back on two-a-day practices), they recommend “maintaining training frequency at 80% or more of pre-taper values.”

That leaves us with the final factor-intensity. “It seems clear that the training load should not be reduced at the expense of training intensity, probably because it is a key parameter in the maintenance of training-induced adaptation during the taper.”

The conclusion is to reduce training load, you would reduce volume, maintain at least 80% of frequency and maintain intensity.

HOW LONG

“Duration of 8 to 14 days seems to represent the borderline between the positive influence of fatigue disappearance and the negative influence of detraining on performance. Performance improvements can also be expected after one, three or four week tapers.” The optimal taper should then be between 8-14 days, however more data is needed to see if longer tapers may be as effective.

OTHER FACTORS

“Diet also may affect the benefits that can be expected from a well-designed taper”. The athlete is doing less volume in training, so some adjustment to diet may be in order as they go through the taper period. However, “muscle glycogen concentration has



been shown to increase during the taper.” “Consequently, a rich carbohydrate diet seems to be an important component of a successful taper.” This can be advantageous for the athlete as long as they monitor their caloric intake during this period of time. The meta-analysis looked at gender (no differences).

Overreaching/Overtraining prior to taper “results in higher performance gains, but also that taper duration and percentage decrease in training load should be adapted to dissipate this extra accumulated fatigue”.

STYLES OF TAPERS

Four different types of tapers have been studied: linear taper, exponential (slow decay), exponential (fast decay) and a step taper. Linear is a daily reduction in volume over the two week period and in a graph would appear as a straight downward sloping line. Exponential (Slow) would be a more gradual reduction and would appear as a slightly curved line ending about where the linear taper would end. The exponential (Fast) would have a greater degree

in reduction towards the end of the taper and would be more significant than the slow decay. Step is characterized by a sudden drop in volume that remains constant throughout the taper.

In this study, the linear taper and the two exponentials (slow and fast) were combined and referred to as a progressive taper. The progressive taper improved performance over the step taper. It appears that the exponential fast decay is the best of the four styles.

CONCLUSION

When medals are determined by 1/1000th of seconds or just the smallest of edges’ in team sports, a proper taper can be a determinant in a podium placement.

Through the meta-analysis process, the researchers have determined that “a two week taper during which training volume is exponentially reduced by 41-60% without altering training intensity or frequency appears to be the most efficient strategy to maximize performance gains.”

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Ready for Beijing? NBC/MSNBC has done a wonderful service for coaches and sports fans alike with their Beijing 2008 site. This is a collection of videos of performances and current news items. Make sure you tag this as a favorite site.

<http://www.nbcolympics.com/>

The United States Olympic Committee site has information on the history of the Games as well as the progress of Team USA as athletes earn the opportunity to compete in both the Olympics and Paralympics. Great place to get your Beijing Games wear as well. Embedded in the site is the Amazing Awaits video and connection center—send an athlete a good luck message- and learn more about the Games.

<http://usolympicteam.com/>

The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games website has a multitude of articles and videos about the Games with multimedia, interviews, and history. Tourist itineraries are also included on the site.

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/>

The International Olympic Committee website has an electronic journaling option for children. Every Wednesday and Saturday, the IOC introduces another Olympic sport. Each issue promotes another aspect of Chinese culture as well.

<http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/beijing/>

Athletic Enhancement via Aquatic Exercise Special Symposium for Non-Aquatic Coaches and Trainers

This unique symposium is for coaches and trainers who do not work in the aquatics field and are looking for new ways to enhance their athletes' performance. You are invited to attend a special coach's forum to learn how your athletes can become better at their sport by incorporating an aquatic component to their training regiment. Join National Olympic Team Coaches and an international group of speakers and attendees on Wednesday, October 15, 2008, for a full day at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to learn how aquatic exercise enhances athletic performance. Hosted by the Aquatic Exercise Association and USA Swimming, and sponsored by the National Swimming Pool Foundation®, this is a pre-conference event in conjunction with the 5th Annual World Aquatic Health™ Conference. Registration includes complimentary shuttle from/to the Crowne Plaza Hotel and lunch. To learn more and to register for this special symposium, visit http://www.nspf.org/WAHC_2008.html or call 719-540-9119.

WOMEN in COACHING

The tentative dates for the USOC/NCAA Women in Coaching Symposium are October 9-11 at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. This annual program focuses on Leadership and Coaching skills. This program is free, but you must register to attend. Space is limited. To register, email Cathy.Sellers @usoc.org.

OLYMPIC COACH E-MAGAZINE

The U.S. Olympic Committee Coaching and Sport Sciences Division reminds you that our quarterly magazine, OLYMPIC COACH, is now available electronically as the OLYMPIC COACH E-MAGAZINE.

This quarterly publication designed for coaches at all levels can now come to you via e-mail. The quarterly e-mail provides a summary of each article in the magazine with a link that takes you directly to the full-length article. The best news is that OLYMPIC COACH E-MAGAZINE is available to all coaches and other interested individuals free of charge.

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