



BeInSynch

Education Newsletter

JANUARY EDITION • 2018

Welcome to the 2017 4th Quarter Education Newsletter!
 Our goal is to share information with you from experts, volunteers, coaches and officials. If you have suggestions to be included in future newsletters, please send them to shari@usasynchro.org.

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- Artistic Impression in Figure Performance
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WOW – THE NEW “SYNCHRO SISTERS” BOOK IS AMAZING!



Magnolia—daughter of 2008 Olympian Kate Hooven-Nesbitt

Children with dreams, become adults with vision.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1/5 – 1/6 Grade Testing 1-4 Buffalo, NY	1/26-28 CCP Level 2 Williamsburg, VA
1/6 – 1/7 Grade Testing 1-3 York, Pennsylvania	1/26 Grade Testing 1 & 2 Portland, OR
1/6 – 1/14 Grade Testing 1-4 Tampa, Florida	1/27 Grade Testing 1-4 Las Vegas, NV
1/12-15 2018 2&U and 13-15 Natl Team Trials Phase 1&2	1/27 Grade Testing 1 & 2 Michigan
1/13-14 Grade Testing 1-3 Arlington, VA	1/28 Grade Testing 3 & 4 Medford, Mass.
1/13 Grade Testing 1 & 2 Berkeley Heights, NJ	2/9 – 2/10 CCP Level 2 Houston, TX
1/20-21 CCP Level 2 La Mirada, CA	2/23 – 2/25 CCP Level 2 Longmont, CO
1/20 – 1/21 CCP Level 2 St Paul, Minnesota	2/24 – 2/25 CCP Level 2 Olympia, WA

Judges Update Training

The 2017-18 season is the year that FINA reviewed and updated all of their rules, figures and elements. To stay up to date, **ALL Judges, no matter what level, are required to attend an update training before judging at any competition.**

Please try to attend one of the scheduled updates, as individuals who have not attended a training are not certified to judge until they have completed an online program and test. As in past years, this will not be available until the first part of April.

Attending an update does not qualify as a training for any specific level. All Coaches, or any other individuals interested in judging, are welcome (and encouraged) to attend a training.

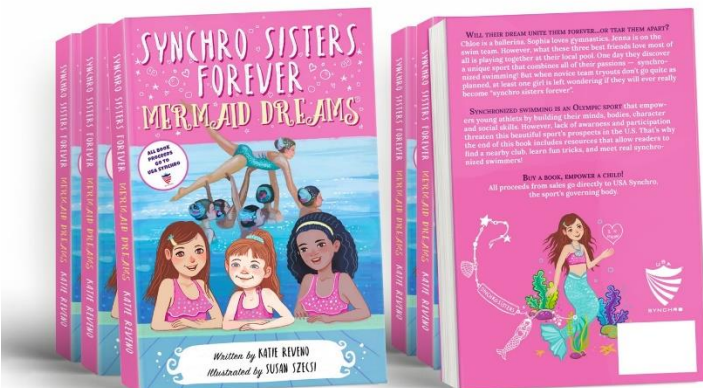
To stay current on the schedule of updates, please check out the Judges Resources area of the USA Synchro website.

Here's an Idea!

The new Synchro Sisters Forever book by swimmer Katie Reveno is out and is a great tool for marketing your club!

Purchase a few copies, then insert your team's contact information in them and donate them to your local schools!

The books can be purchased at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7aquk28> for only \$14.99 + shipping.



VERY IMPORTANT SAFESPORT MANDATE & COURSE INFO!!!

Starting January 1st, 2018 the SafeSport course has been reorganized into 3 - 30 minute courses. Note: ALL 3 courses must be completed. You will receive a certificate after completing each section – please do not send all of the certificates in to us. We are able to run a report and see everyone who has completed the course. Below is a link that will take you directly to the course for USA Synchro. Around the 1st and 15th of every month a current list will be posted, you may review this list to make sure you are included.

If you are current in SafeSport, there is no need to take the course again at this time. There will be a requirement for a Refresher Course every two years - you will be notified when that is available.

Please use this link and access code to complete the course.

Link to SafeSport course for USA Synchro

<https://safesport.org/authentication/register?token=ef4afb93-c79a-426f-92cb-0c5ce3e0a2f6>

Access Code

4CRM-NJDP-FGLI-HWGH

**As mandated by the USOC,
ALL individuals listed on the next page
MUST complete the SafeSport course
as soon as possible!**

SAFESPORT – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Everyone has a role to play in creating a healthy environment for our sport and our athletes. SafeSport helps raise awareness about misconduct in sport, promote open dialogue, and provide training and resources. Providing a safe environment to protect the health and well-being of athletes is a high priority for USA Synchronized Swimming.

PLEASE NOTE: It is now **MANDATORY** for the following individuals to complete the course.

USA Synchro

(Staff, Board Members, Support Staff, and Consultants)

National Team

(Head and Assistant Coaches, Volunteers, Consultants & Chaperones)

National Talent/National Elite Camps/Olympic Development Camps

(Head Coaches and Assistants, Consultants, Volunteers & Chaperones)

National Team, International Relations & LTAD Committees

(All 18 years old and over)

Club Teams

(All Volunteer, Employed & Contractor Coaches and Chaperones)

Club Teams

(All Support Staff; includes Dance, Acrobatics, Flexibility, Swimming, etc., at any Training Facility)

All Judges

(Levels 1 through FINA A)

Approved Club Options/Private Invitations

All Staff - including coaches, managers and adults traveling with the team)

Optional but highly recommended

Club Teams - BOD members

Coaches – 15-17 years old

USA Synchro has added an area on the website solely dedicated to SafeSport. Under Resources, you will find information on how to take the course, the complete list of individuals who have taken the course, information on the US Center for SafeSport, and USA Synchro's Abuse and Harassment Policy.

SafeSport for Parents is not an accepted certification, nor is any other outside program.

If you have any questions, please contact shari@usasynchro.org

FUN WITH MUSIC



Education on the horizon...

UPDATED Level 1 CCP
Beginning January 1st, 2018

*The **New Level 1 CCP** will be available online for a cost of \$105 – the course will now include a free **Coaching Tips Manual!***

JUDGES UPDATE TRAINING

Mandatory Judges Update Training for all judges regardless of level, and all related material. See Judges Resources for a list of all updates scheduled at this time.

Judges - Level 1F, 1, 2F, 2, 3F, 3, 4F & 4

Study Guides to be posted mid-January under Judges Resources on the website.

Judges – Review Sheets

To be posted under Judges Resources on the website mid-January.

12&U Age Group Figures
13-15 Age Group Figures

Tips for training can be found in the Members Only area of the website under National Team Trials. (New Figure Count Recommendations & New FINA Figures Coaches Recommendations)

16-17, 18-19, Junior Elements

Tips for training.

PreSchool Program

Dance, Gymnastics and Swimming program for 4, 5 & 6 year olds.

Skills

Play a piece of music – when it stops the athletes must do whatever the selected skill of the day is (i.e. Fishtail or Vertical Holds, Boosts, Ballet Legs), until the music starts again.

Movement

Put on music and athlete has to choreograph in different ways:

- Arms & legs but not allowed to bend elbows or knees.
- Only in circles, no forward or backward allowed.

Emotions

Give athletes an emotion that they have to convey.

- Face only
- Only body – no arms or face
- Arms and legs – no face
- With everything

Characters

Give athletes a different personality or feeling to add to a routine lap:

- Swim Lap 1 as a snake
- Swim Lap 2 angry
- Swim Lap 3 like a soldier
- Swim Lap 4 as if holding a ball



Jumping into the new year!
USA Jr/Sr National Team

ARTISTIC IMPRESSION IN FIGURE PERFORMANCE

Artistic Impression in figure competition is not listed as a judging factor, however, even though judges are trained to evaluate only those aspects of performance as related to the figure, at a subconscious level their score may be influenced by extraneous factors in particular “manner of presentation”.

For routines, Manner of Presentation is defined as “the way in which the swimmer presents the routine for the inspection or consideration of the viewer” – i.e. judge. This same definition is certainly applicable to figure performance. Synchronized swimmers, in both figure and routine competition, must demonstrate complete control and command. A good figure performance must have total command – confident, poised and effortless. Other judging factors include stability, extension, uniform motion, stationary (when applicable), and ease of performance. These judging factors can be, and should be, demonstrated in the presentation portion of the figure as well as in the figure itself. This includes the entrance and set up – swimming out, acknowledgement of the judges and reader, assuming the designated layout position, the “break” from the layout or vertical at the completion of the figure and the exit. All of these factors constitute part of the artistry and command of figure performance.

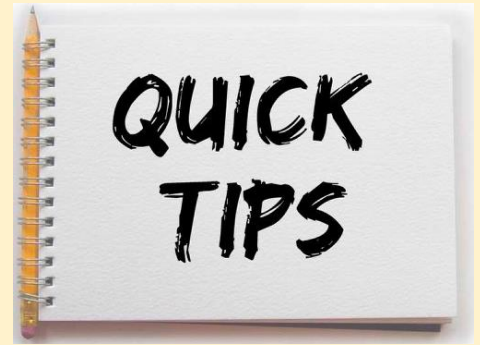
Our job, as coaches, is to make sure our athlete’s presentation of their figures is equivalent to, or in most cases should surpass, the technical ability of their figure performance. Just as we spend considerable time on walk-ons, swim outs and bows for routine competition, time should also be spent preparing the athlete on the presentation of their figures.



Eggbeater out with confidence.



Sculling should be calm, relaxed and effortless.



- * Make sure your athletes know where to line up with the marker.
- * Swim outs need to be quick and confident.
- * Effortless command should continue as the athlete assumes the layout position.
- * Completion of the figure and the figure “break” (back tuck somersault) should look effortless and in keeping with the tempo of the figure.
- * Exiting and surfacing from the end of a figure should be easy – exhaling should not be heard.
- * Aesthetics also play a role in the “look” of command and effortlessness we want in figure performance.

More of this article can be found on the USA Synchro website in the Members Only area under Coaching Resources.

Contributed by Gail Emery, former Natl Team Coach & Coach for Walnut Creek Aquanauts

Coaching Recommendations for New FINA Figures 2017-2021

A document has been specifically designed for you to provide some material and assistance with the new FINA figures for 13-15 and 12 & U age group athletes.

The document is broken down into 3 parts: judging information, 13-15 figures and 12&U figures. We believe that you will find this information extremely useful, but also encourage recommendations and the sharing of knowledge between everyone. Information and feedback should be sent to shari@usasynchro.org or myriam@usasynchro.org.

You can find this document, and the New Figure Count Recommendations, in the Members Only area of the website under National Team Trials Information.

Below is a sample for the Ariana.

Suggested drills:

Land exercises for strength and flexibility:

- Land exercises to reinforce hamstrings and glute strength
- Land exercises to improve split, hips and lower back flexibility
- Handstand splits and knights (foot on wall), bridges
- Lower back exercises
- Shoulder flexibility for split scull and totem scull

For split scull technique and strength:

- Laps of split scull (work on both sides)
- Feet at the wall, lifting the leg from Surface Arch (working on both sides)
- Hips facing the wall, lifting the leg from Surface Arch (working on both sides)
- Trying to lift both legs from Surface Arch Position
- Practice lifting one leg and holding the most difficult part

For Knight and Split Positions:

- Knight Position at wall (foot on wall) and with bottles
- From Knight to Split Position with bottles

For splits:

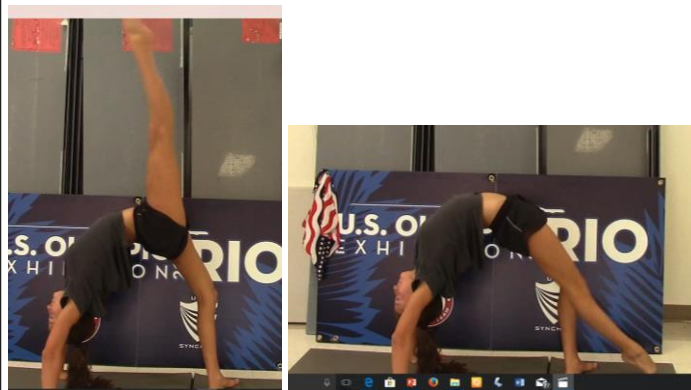
- Ariana rotation with therabands
- Middle split facing the wall
- Middle split with partners pushing legs down

For Surface Arch to Back Layout Position transition:

- Surface Arch to Back Layout Position with feet at wall

Land Exercise:

In a bridge position, one leg is extended towards the ground. The athlete lifts that leg as far as possible (max split range of motion) and returns to the starting position. Repeat many times on both sides. This exercise can also be done in a handstand position with feet against the wall.



Tip:

Note that there is no middle Split Position in the description of this figure, so there should not be any pause in middle Split and the athletes should always be in motion rotating from one Split to the next. For improved smoothness we recommend to rotate one hip at a time starting with the back leg without stopping in the middle Split. This will stop the legs from popping up or the athletes to be in a straddle.

Spotlight on HIP Flexors

Preventing and Treating Lordosis

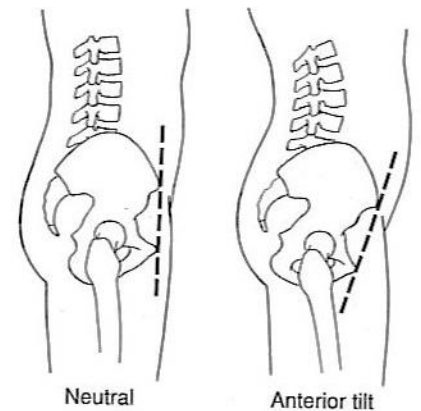
This article will emphasize correct hip flexor muscle length and appropriate abdominal exercises for the swimmer with lordosis (too much low back arch).

I was an elite gymnast with short hip flexor muscles and an arched low back position (anterior pelvic tilt or “lordosis” vs. neutral). I did what I was told to do in the gym, with traditional conditioning exercises at the core of my training. I wrote my workouts in a “diary” for several years, so I know what I did – it included bent knee sit-ups, “rowboats”, V-ups, and standing back flips. All of these exercises primarily use the hip flexors and I was not taught anything about the external oblique (lower abdominal) muscles.

Many swimmers with short hip flexors stand and move in lordosis and are unable to achieve a “straight line” during synchro. Their body will either look arched or they will show a pike at the hips. Sometimes no matter what you say to correct it, they just cannot seem to line up straight and they need specific instructions from a posture point-of-view. **First, make sure they know the basics of good posture:**

GOOD POSTURE:

- Knees straight (not hyperextended)
- Low back curved forward only slightly (keep abdominals pulled UP and IN while sitting, standing and moving!)
- Upper back erect and chest held slightly up and forward (avoid the “hunch-backed” position)
- Shoulders in line with ears (with chin tucked in/ shoulders pulled back)



Next, there are 4 quick tests for hip flexor shortness/possible abdominal weakness/lordosis (below are 2 of those tests:

1. Have the swimmer stand against a wall, with their heels about 3 inches from the wall. They should place one hand behind their neck and the other behind their low back. If there is too much space between their low back and the wall (if they can easily move their hands back and forth more than an inch), they need to correct their posture.
 - Coaches Note: The lordotic position in standing places the one-joint hip flexors in a shortened position.
2. When the swimmer is standing and bends forward at the waist, note the position of the low back when they return to standing.
 - Coaches Note: Normal return to standing means that the swimmer contracts their gluteus maximus (buttock muscles) and their hamstrings first to initiate the standing position. Then the hips and spine continue their extension movement until the swimmer is upright. Watch for the swimmer that stands up incorrectly in this case. This swimmer will initiate movement at the lumbar (low back) spine. This type of motion increases the compressive forces on the lumbar spine. (Sahrmann, 2002)

Hip Flexors - continued

Hip Flexor Stretching

The following stretches for the one joint and two joint hip flexors will consist of strengthening the lower abdominal muscles and the hip extensors, thereby stretching the hip flexors (without doing movement that would otherwise strengthen the already short hip flexors).

SUPINE EXERCISES WITHOUT LIFTING THE FEET OFF THE FLOOR:

Begin by backlying with feet flat on the floor. Contract your abdominal muscles by pulling your belly button toward your spine (Pull UP and IN). Slide one leg down while keeping your pelvis still. This will stretch your hip flexors. Slide your alternate leg down and then return by sliding one leg back at a time. Make sure you contract your abdomen as you bring your legs back up. Repeat 5 times slowly.

TWO-JOINT HIP FLEXOR STRETCH supine:

To stretch right hip flexors, lie on back with right lower leg hanging over end of a sturdy spotting block or table. Pull left knee firmly toward chest to flatten low back on table. (When there is hip flexor tightness, this position will bring right thigh from table.) Keeping back flat and knee bent, stretch right hip flexors by pulling thigh downward using the right buttock muscle, trying to touch thigh to table. (Hold for several seconds up to a few minutes.) ATTENTION: please avoid pushing down on swimmer's leg. If tightness is severe, try gently distracting the leg then pulling down slightly! Remember that the swimmer needs to use their own muscle power (gluteals) - strengthening the antagonist to create a stretch on the hip flexors. To stretch left hip flexors, pull right knee toward chest and apply the stretch to left thigh as described above. NOTE: This exercise can be done at the top of a flight of stairs, if no sturdy mat or table is available.



More of this article can be found on the USA Synchro website in the Members Only area under Coaching Resources

52 CARD PICK-UP WORK-OUT



LAND

Each suit represents a different exercise.
Card value = number of reps to perform:
(1=1, 2=2....J=11, Q=12, K=13, Jokers = 1 min rest)



JUMPING JACKS
or
SQUAT JUMPS



V-UPS
or
CRUNCHES



TRICEP PUSH-UPS
or
LEG RAISES



LUNGES
or
FROG JUMPS

WATER

Each suit represents a different exercise.
(J=25 yds, Q=50 yds, K=75 yds,
Ace=your choice, Jokers = 1 min rest)



DOLPHIN KICK
or
FLUTTER KICK



EGGBEATER
or
BALLET LEG HOLD



TORPEDO SCULL
or
DOLPHIN SCULL



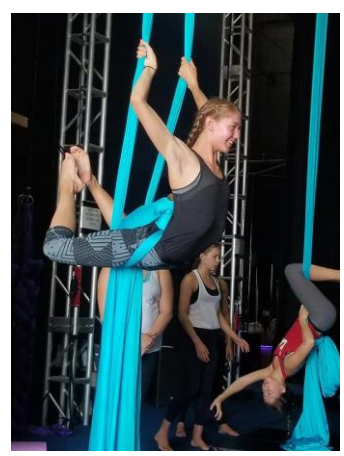
KICK/PULL/KICK OVER
or
HEAD UP CRAWL

HAVE FUN WITH TEAM BUILDING

At any level of organized sport, it's critical that team members create a bond and work toward one goal. The way athletes interact can influence and impact a team's performance and overall success. It is important to create a cohesive group that practices & competes with enthusiasm, confidence and shared goals both in and out of the pool.

Here are just a few ideas for your athletes to have fun in a non-competitive environment, outside of the pool.

- Movies
- Yoga/Aerial Yoga
- Sleepovers
- Bowling
- Dance Classes
- Fundraising events
- Amusement Parks/Water Parks
- Dinners at a teammates's house or restaurants
- Photo Shoots
- Shopping
- Kidnap Breakfasts
- Escape Rooms
- Running 5K Races



Aerial Yoga

What Meditation and Mindfulness Have to Do with Mental Toughness

Dr. Alan Goldberg – Peak Performance for Athletes, Coaches and Parents

There is a tendency in the world of sports to be “tough” and put on a brave face no matter what, to push yourself through obstacles with force, and to keep yourself moving because the alternative of slowing down might mean that you’re “falling behind.” But the problem with that full-speed-ahead approach is that it’s bound to burn you out in the long run, and it’s not going to help you mature as an athlete.

Real Mental Toughness requires slowing down both physically and mentally.

Many of the techniques I teach, such as controlling your eyes and ears, staying focused in the NOW, and emphasizing the process over the outcome are a unique way of applying the concept of mindfulness to sports. But if you really want to grow as an athlete it’s helpful to understand the broader definition of mindfulness and apply it to life both on and off the field so that you can benefit in multiple ways.

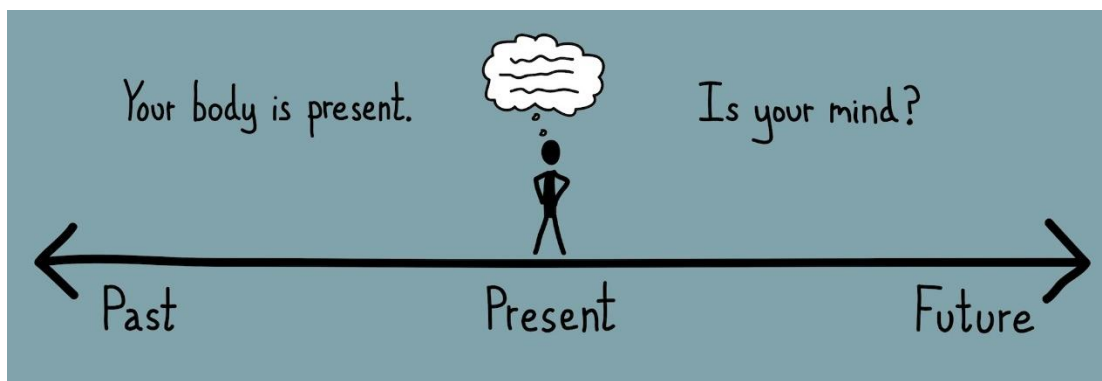
So what is mindfulness?

If you’ve ever time-travelled in your head and got distracted with thoughts while your body was doing something on autopilot then that’s a good example of what mindfulness is NOT, and what it aims to address. When “the lights are on but nobody’s home” so to speak, you are not doing whatever it is you’re doing to your full capacity.

If you are in practice and thinking about how you really need to win the next game, how embarrassed you are about some mistake you made in the past, or how you are failing chemistry then your concentration will suffer because your body and mind are in two separate places. Mindfulness helps bring the two back together so that you have more focus, clarity, and are able to perform better.

It’s a concept rooted in the Buddhist tradition that basically asks that you **bring more conscious attention to what you’re doing in that moment**. Whether you’re brushing your teeth, having a laugh with family, or stretching pre-performance, being mindful means keeping your thoughts only in that action rather than allowing them to wander elsewhere.

The more you get in the habit of doing all sorts of things mindfully the easier it will be for you to access the concentration necessary to reach peak performance when it’s crunch time!



(The rest of this article can be found in the Members Only area of the website under Coaching Resources.)

What Makes a Great Teammate?

Not every athlete has been blessed with great talent, but every athlete, regardless of ability can be a great teammate. Here are 12 qualities of a great teammate. Do these qualities describe you?

- 1) A great teammate gives relentless effort.
- 2) A great teammate is unselfish.
- 3) A great teammate is honest.
- 4) A great teammate is humble.
- 5) A great teammate holds themselves and their teammates accountable.
- 6) A great teammate strives to improve.
- 7) A great teammate is optimistic.
- 8) A great teammate has respect for others.
- 9) A great teammate is a leader.
- 10) A great teammate is resilient.
- 11) A great teammate helps foster a family atmosphere.
- 12) A great teammate takes responsibility.

(The rest of this article can be found in the Members Only area of the website under Coaching Resources.)

You don't inspire your teammates by showing them how amazing you are.

You inspire them by showing them how amazing they are.

Robyn Benincasa
World Champion Adventure Racer

THE 2017-2018 GRADE LEVELS 1-4 MANUAL IS AVAILABLE ONLINE!

The Latest edition of the Manual, dated **9-20-17, v5.0** can be found in the Members Only Section of the website.

**UPDATED SCORESHEETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE!
PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ARE USING THE MOST RECENT VERSION - V5.0!**

PATCHES FOR GRADES

Patches are available for Levels 1, 2 & 3.
Only \$4.00 each!

Go to www.usasynchro.org
Events Registration / Merchandise



GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR 2017 & 2018

US Nationals—Grade Levels 1, 2, 3 & 4
National JO's – Grade Levels 1 & 2

LATE FEES

Please Note:

There is a **\$30 late fee** for applying for sanctions less than 30 days out from a competitions, and **\$60 late fee** for sanctions less than 7 days out.

There is a **\$5/athlete late fee** for registering after the deadline.



NEW & IMPROVED CCP LEVEL 1

Starting January 1st, 2018 a new CCP Level 1 will be launched. We hope that you will find the course much more informative and helpful as your coaching career begins.

The cost of the course will be increased to \$105.00 and will now include the Coaching Tips Manual (and shipping) which will be sent to you after completion and passing of the Level 1 online test.

COACH CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CCP)

CCP 1 - Required for all coaches to be on deck at any meet.

CCP 2 - Required for all coaches to be on deck at any Regional, Zone and National Meet.

CCP 3 - Required for all coaches to be on deck at any Zone and National Meet.

SafeSport is required for ALL coaches to be on deck at any time.

Please see the list of Mandatory requirements in this newsletter and on the website under SafeSport Resources.

Everyone who had an expiration date of 2016 has now been moved to the “Missing 1 or More” list. Anyone previously on the “Missing 1 or More” list that had an expiration date of 2016 has been removed from this list.

Please do not forget that First Aid, CPR and SafeSport must be current to be fully certified. Send ALL First Aid and CPR certificates to shari@usasynchro.org

Swordtail

Glute Strength, Lower Back and Hip Flexibility

The beginning of this figure requires an important amount of glute strength. Without the glute strength, the athlete will rely on scull and arm strength to stay closer to the surface.

Check out the Coaching Recommendations document on the website under Members Only for more suggested exercises and tips!



Did you know?

Starting with the 2017-2018 season

- * Elements in ALL Solo & Duet Technical Routines (including Intermediate) are required to be performed parallel to the sides of the pool.
- * Team Free Routines are allowed a maximum of 6 acrobatic moves.
- * For 16-17 & 18-19 Age Group and Junior routines, the final award will be determined by Free Routine and Technical Routine scores added together.
- * Intermediate routines will be judged as Technical routines with Execution, Element and Impression panels.



The next time you see a successful athlete, think of the necessary efforts that this person had to make in order to achieve their accomplishments.

If you are willing to make similar commitments and efforts then go for it! That is when you will have the chance to become as successful as your example.

Ovia Masters Camp



Join in this amazing opportunity!

Who wouldn't want to go to Las Vegas February 23rd – 25th?! The Ovia Masters Synchro Training Camp is a high level training camp created exclusively for USA Synchro Members, providing a variety of classes for synchronized swimmers seeking to develop their aquatic skills and technique capabilities. Train with World-Class competitors and International performers under the direction of Ovia's Aquatic Training and Coaching Director, Ludivine Perrin-Stsepaniuk.

Sessions include Yoga, Ballroom Dancing, Synchro technique, Basic lift technique, artistic workshop and choreography. LeReve Show tickets for Saturday night may be purchased for 40% off! Camp Rate is \$185 per person. All other information can be found on the website under Athletes Resources/Masters.

Routine Critiques

Members have the opportunity to have their solo, duet, trio, team and combo routines critiqued by our High Performance Director, Myriam Glez & a FINA Judge. Small routines are \$25/each and Team or Combo routines are \$50/each. Registration is open and available now!

To register:

1. Go to www.usasynchro.org
2. Click on "Events"
3. Click on "Event Registration Login"
4. Click on "My Account"
5. Click on "Register for Events"
6. Click on Routine Critiques
7. Choose the Participant, click "Continue"
8. Paste a link to the location of your video(s) into the first field
9. Enter the email address of the person to receive the critique results
10. Check the appropriate check boxes for the routine size(s) that you are requesting to be critiqued
11. Enter the quantity of routines to be critiqued
12. Click "Pay in full at checkout" to pay by credit card; or
13. Click "Use payment plan" to mail in a check within 10 days
14. Click "Continue"
15. Continue to proceed to checkout

