

## **HEAD COACH Responsibilities** (Swimming) .. thoughts by Bill Sweetenham

This is a very brief outline of what I believe to be the basic and most important duties of a club team Head Coach.

This is one of the most often asked questions when I talk to club officials during club visits. The answer may vary from club to club when taking into account differing situations that might occur. In this regard, I have only offered the very basic outline of this very important position of Club Head Coach.

As I see it, the responsibilities are:

1. Offer the Club Board professional advice regarding the overall direction of the club, especially regarding team goals and training objectives, team competitions and club selections. Provide a positive, progressive goal orientated teaching, development and training programme to meet the needs of the club's competition schedule.
2. Provide coaching and advice to challenge talented individuals within the club and to encourage increased participation, involvement and commitment.
3. To teach, coach and train the club's more advanced and senior dedicated and committed athletes. Provide quality coaching and quality time with quality athletes.
4. To educate, advise and direct the coaching staff in identification, education, motivation, participation and evaluation of the club's athletes and parents. Provide a clearly identifiable teaching, coaching and training model to suit, stimulate and challenge the athlete's needs. The Head Coach would oversee and supervise this programme without interference or compromise from the Club Board or parents within the club on acceptance of the plan and programme by the Club's Board or parent body.
5. To ensure the club has adequate, appropriate and suitable pool space, gym equipment, training equipment etc. by communicating these needs to the Club Board or by providing or arranging for provision of these items.
6. With the coaches' capabilities, ensure the health and wellbeing of swimmers participating in the programme. This includes injury prevention skills and drug education skills.
7. The Club and Head Coach work together to build a fully integrated, multi-dimensional teaching, training and education programme.
8. The Club must accept and understand that it is not possible nor is it expected that the Head Coach can coach each swimmer in the club. Whilst this may be desirable by both parents and Head Coach, it is not practical or possible to suggest it. The Club has the Head Coach's programme, not the Head Coach coaching each and every swimmer in the programme. Allowance must also be made for periods when the Head Coach is absent at competitions/camps with the senior or higher achieving athletes.
9. Report to the Club Board regarding results and needs of the athletes and progress being made or required changes to the programme. I strongly believe that all competitive swimming clubs have a responsibility to offer on a graduating scale a **minimum** of 18 hours of supervised coaching each week for at least 45 weeks per year. This is the Club's responsibility and expectation. Please feel free to offer this opinion and advice to Clubs with current or aspiring top swimmers.

**A sure-fire recipe for failure** is when Board members ie. non-technical people become involved in technical issues. In any business, and particularly sport, it is an absolute No-No for non-technical personnel and Board members to become involved in these issues.

**The golden rule is that Board members should be bored members in terms of anything technical!**

The standard to look for is a programme where the 13 and 14 year olds are looking to average in excess of 2,000km a year in an 800 hour timeframe spread out over 44-46 weeks in the year.