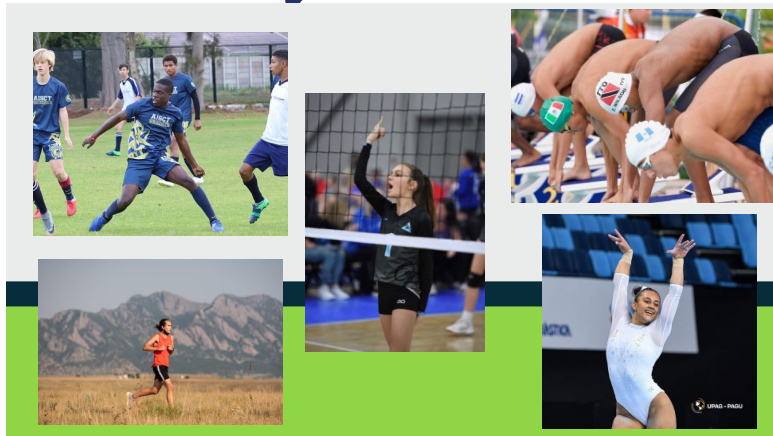


Flipturn



Off the Blocks, Again!

By now, you have been in the water for a couple of months. You are feeling stronger, more confident, and are ready to race. What happens when you get behind the block for the first time in months? A little bit of nerves is good; that tells you your adrenalin is charging and you are psyched and ready to race! Your goals are set because you have brainstormed with your coach how to achieve them. As challenging as it might be, relax before your race...your muscles and your brain.

(cont. p.2)

Do you have an Academic Plan?

If you are in your 11th grade year, your senior year is right around the corner! You need to continue to work hard in your academics and stay involved in your activities.

11th grade:

- Start narrowing your college list
- Take PSAT in the FALL or SAT/ACT if you already completed Algebra 2
- Register for the NCAA Eligibility Center and start the certification process.

(cont. p.2)

MY STORY María Inés Flores

As a little girl, gymnastics was my life! I wanted to be at the gym all the time. I was training six hours a day by the time I was 13. By age 15, when my body started changing and I no longer burned everything automatically, I started working with a nutritionist which helped some, however, my diet and the process was too strict. I started to really crave pizza, chocolate, and desserts and the cravings were intensified by knowing that I shouldn't eat them.

(cont. p.3)



Off the Blocks, Again! cont...

Use your imagination and visualize all facets of your event. Tell yourself 'you can do this' and remind yourself how you have prepared to race again. Focus on your race. Own your race and no one else's. The finish Line.... is only a few feet away! Your head is down, your kick is powering you into the wall. Regardless if your best time is flashing on the score board or not, you have taken the first step to a new successful season.

As you evaluate your meet, identify your success, even if it wasn't your best time. This is where you learn how to be a better competitor.

There is always something in your race that you did perfectly, be it a start, a turn, stroke count, the finish...this is progress!

Recognize how to refine your races. Embrace new strategies, new technical tweaks, and different mental preparation.

As you take the blocks for your second meet of the season, what you learned from your first meet will be imperative to your success.

Swimming is a thinker's sport, and you can't fake the work involved in order to be successful. Build on each meet, each race, and great things will follow!

By Lori Payne

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Academia Do you have an Academic Plan? (cont...)

It is important to make a plan and stay organized during your search for colleges.

Set up a system where you can keep track of colleges that may meet your criteria such as location, college size, academic majors, cost, swim team, test score requirements, etc...(this can be started in your sophomore year as well!) Learn about the financial aid at the colleges of your interest and start searching for scholarships.

Stay involved! Colleges look for consistency and depth in extra curricular activities as opposed to a little involvement in several activities. Is there an organization you love to help? If you haven't started volunteering, it is not too late, but you need to get started now!

Start asking for letters of recommendation. Teachers, coaches, volunteer organizations, club leaders all need time to write these letters.

Visit your top colleges. As a junior, you are allowed to meet the coach in person and attend official and unofficial visits. The NCAA allows a recruit to make only five visits to Division I schools, limited to one per school. Official visits to DII and DIII schools are also limited to one per school, but there is no limit on total amount of visits. Also, go to college fairs, attend college nights, and speak to representatives who visit your high school.

If your schedule permits, apply for a summer job or internship that goes along with your field of interest. This looks impressive on your college application.

By Melynda Nash

Academic Advisor

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As the pressure to perform well at international meets grew, I started to have episodes of bingeing and then I'd skip meals to make up for it. I felt confused and anxious about my food, worried about how I looked, and I learned to manipulate calories for my weekly weigh in with my nutritionist.

I got really obsessed and found myself thinking about food *all the time* and truly thought eating healthy meant *100% ON* or *100% OFF*. I thought this mounting pressure was an inevitable part of getting to the Olympics and that I just had to suck it up, forget about chocolates, and train harder.

After the Olympics, I retired from gymnastics and I started to eat everything in sight, quickly gaining 30 pounds. I felt guilty and terrible but I couldn't seem to be able to stop eating despite starting a "new diet" almost every Monday.



This painful cycle went on for five years, until I discovered that I was going about it the wrong way. Instead, I decided to do one small thing differently and master it. A few weeks later, I changed another small thing until it became a habit... and then I tackled the next small thing. My anxiety subsided and my confidence grew. By letting go of constantly analyzing and judging myself based on what I ate and focusing on tiny tweaks instead of an absolute ON or OFF, I was able to recover my fitness. Most importantly, I developed a new vision of myself where eating healthy is *totally stress-free and natural*.

Many years later, I realized that if when I was a teen athlete, I would have had someone who understood what I was going through guide me through managing the pressure of competitive sports and teach me healthy and stress-free eating so I could explode my performance, I could have been a better athlete and avoided a lot of suffering.

I discovered that I had a passion for stress-free nutrition and helping people, so I became a Certified Nutritional Coach. I created my methodology based on stress-free eating, easy habits, and developing a strong mindset, and I kept gravitating toward working with kids.

I found that most young athletes don't eat in a way that helps them perform at their best. They're really good at sports because they have a strong internal drive and push through fear, exhaustion, injury, and other obstacles. They're constantly told to "eat healthy" by their coaches and parents, but often they don't know what that really means. Some of them consume huge amounts of meat and protein bars because they're trying to bulk up, others worry about getting fat and think their problem is too much food, so they skip meals and cut out entire food groups. These things then backfire, causing fatigue, extended recovery time, sluggishness, and increased cravings for junk food.

If they continue this way, they'll perform way beneath their full potential and risk their health.

Some of these athletes are so talented and determined, that they actually think they can just work harder and out-train a poor diet. In reality, they only need three things: 1) to master basic nutrition concepts, 2) to create a personalized, realistic nutrition plan, and 3) to develop a strong mindset along with good habits so that eating healthy becomes stress-free, natural, and permanent.

Your children do not have to go through this type of difficulties, they can have it all!... eating healthy while enjoying their food without stress and performing at their best!

I help young athletes incorporate stress-free nutrition and lifestyle changes that are key to unlocking higher levels of energy and agility, fast recovery times, and confidence so they can consistently perform at the top of their game.