

SWIMMING *for* PARENTS

*The Ultimate Education Guide for
Swimming Parents*

SECOND EDITION

Gary Barclay

www.SwimmingForParents.com

First published in 2009
Copyright © Gary Barclay 2011
www.SwimmingForParents.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the author.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Author: Barclay, Gary Andrew, 1967-

Title: Swimming for Parents: the ultimate education guide for swimming parents

Edition: 2nd ed.

ISBN: 9780646518473 (pbk.)

Notes: Includes—Index. Bibliography.

Subjects: Swimming. Swimming—Coaching. Swimming—Psychological aspects.
Swimming—Training.

Dewey Number: 797.21

Printed in Australia by Eastern Press

Front & Back Cover Credit: Megan McDonald (www.SolutionsIndata.com)

Photo Credits: Parents and swimmers at Nunawading Swimming Club, Melbourne, Australia

Photographers: Warren Bell and William Parry

Permission has been granted by all persons whose photograph is printed in this book.

To buy the books referenced in this book visit www.SwimmingForParents.com/books.

*To all the swimming coaches I have worked with
as a swimmer, a coach and a manager thank you
for your inspiration and the work you do to help so
many children;*

*To all the parents I have met over the years
around the pool, keep providing your child with
unconditional love and support at all times;*

*To my wife Nicole, thank you for your love and
support over many years;*

*And to my children, Philippa and Lachlan, you
never cease to amaze me...thank you for teaching
me how to become a better parent!*

AUTHORS NOTE

I would like to thank the many contributors to this book for their time, input and encouragement. In particular I would like to thank all the parents I have worked with over many years in my journey as a swimmer, coach and manager in the aquatic industry.

A special thank you to Megan McDonald who has spent considerable hours providing input through her own experiences and provided continual encouragement to put this book together. Megan has also designed the front and back cover and the website through her company www.SolutionsIndata.com.

Thank you also to the many parents from the Nunawading Swimming Club in Melbourne, Australia for their input and advice on a variety of topics covered in the book.

A number of coaches contributed with their ideas of what needed to be covered in a book like this in the early stages of its development. Thank you to Rohan Taylor, Chris Wedd, Grant Stoelwinder, Celia Glewis, Bernard Savage and Ted Tullberg.

I would like to acknowledge Leigh Nugent who provided input into a number of sections, Megan Ryan for her terrific insight into female development and Simon Moule for his contribution in the dryland and strength & conditioning section. Thank you to Ralph Richards for providing his feedback and support towards this project.

The first edition of 'Swimming for Parents' was very well received in countries all over the world. With sales to Australia, the USA, United Kingdom, Canada, China, South Africa, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark, Japan and many other countries, the message has been received by parents from many nations and the testimonials received back have been extremely positive.

And a special thank you to my wife Nicole and children Philippa and Lachlan for allowing me the time over a two year period to write this book and for their patience in recent months as Edition 2 has been finalised. Your love and support throughout this journey has been very much appreciated.

FOREWORD—LEIGH NUGENT

During my 28 year career as an on deck swimming coach and my last eleven years as National Youth Coach or National Head Coach of Swimming Australia, I have spoken to countless parent groups and individually with hundreds of parents of swimmers. For parents to effectively support their children in their activities, in this case the sport of swimming, they rely on information from those more experienced and knowledgeable in the field.

The obvious sources are the child's swimming coaches, other experienced parents, former swimmers and others who have had a long term involvement in the sport. Preparing for the sport of swimming is very demanding on swimmers, coaches and parents alike but it is the parent who is the least equipped to cope with such demands and who needs help and support to assist them in understanding what is going on around them.

Parenting by its nature can be on many occasions a thankless task and this is consistent for the supportive swimming parent. It becomes easier to provide unconditional support when we as parents gain an understanding of what is required for committed involvement in the sport of swimming.

We can gain this understanding from parent workshops similar to those that I present in my travels around Australia along with private and group meetings with our children's coaches and other experienced people in the sport.

I recommend that as a parent that you seek information from knowledgeable and reputable people in the sport whenever you feel you need support or assistance.

To my knowledge there has never been published a resource such as "Swimming for Parents" available to the parents of swimmers. It fills a vacuum in information for parents which has needed addressing for many decades.

Gary's authority in writing this book is vindicated by his broad involvement in the sport as a—junior swimming champion, a champion age group swimmer,

an elite senior athlete including two years as an Australian Institute of Sport scholarship holder, a teacher of swimming, a coach of Victoria's once most successful junior program, a multi-medal winning Australian Age coach, a head coach of one of Victoria's most successful clubs, an organizer of Australia's major swimming events, currently Chief Executive Officer of one of Australia's most successful swimming clubs and now a parent of two junior swimmers.

The information in this book is invaluable to parents and will provide insight which will assist in the understanding of their swimming child at virtually every stage of their development as a swimmer and a person.

It is a book which parents will keep in a prominent place for easy access for the remainder of their child's swimming career.

I for one will be recommending "Swimming for Parents" as a resource for parents at every opportunity.

LEIGH NUGENT

National Head Coach

Swimming Australia Limited

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Benefits of Swimming	3
Life Skills	5
Time Management	7
Goal Setting	8
Friendships	9
Teamwork	11
Chapter 2: The Swimming Parent	13
Teaching Independence	15
Providing Support	19
Managing Success and Disappointment	22
Performance and Enjoyment	24
Financial Considerations	24
Volunteering	26
Parent Etiquette	27
The Pressure Parent	30
Chapter 3: The Parent/Coach Relationship	33
Progress Concerns	34
Communication	35
Chapter 4: The Coach/Swimmer Relationship	37
Coach's Expectations	38
Chapter 5: The Young Swimmer—7 to 9 years	41
Number of Sessions	43
Session Structure	43
Skills Learnt	44
Competitions	45
Chapter 6: Junior Competitive Level—10 to 13 years	47
Number of Sessions	47
Importance of Technique	49
Other Sports or Activities	49
Competitions	50
Chapter 7: Age Competitive Level—13 to 18 years	53
Number of Sessions	53
Technique	53
Swimmer Progression	54
A Focus on Results	56
A Focus on Process	57
Improvement in the Teenage Years	58
The Decision to Quit Swimming	59
Family Holidays	61
Chapter 8: Athlete Development	63
Physiological Changes	63

Sensitive Periods.....	65
Psycho-social Development.....	65
Chapter 9: Female Development.....	67
Puberty...and Body Changes.....	67
Puberty...and Periods.....	68
Puberty...and Performance.....	69
Puberty...the Good News.....	70
Body Image.....	70
Chapter 10: Swimming Clubs.....	73
Choosing a Club / Coach.....	74
Changing Clubs or Coaches.....	74
Swimming Club Operations.....	77
Club Membership for Parents.....	78
Committees.....	78
Volunteering.....	79
Team Uniform.....	80
Chapter 11: Swim Training.....	81
Training Frequency.....	81
Training Hours.....	81
Training Equipment.....	82
Log Books.....	82
Balancing Swimming, School & Social Activities.....	84
Illness, Injury & Training.....	86
A Taper.....	88
Taper Design.....	89
Handy Taper Hints.....	90
Indoor versus Outdoor Pool.....	91
Different Length Pools.....	91
Chapter 12: Dryland Training.....	93
Dryland Warm-ups.....	95
Stretching.....	96
An Introduction to Weight Training.....	98
Chapter 13: Swim Meets.....	101
Entering Swim Meets.....	101
Preparing for a Swim Meet.....	103
Pre-race Preparation.....	103
Race Time.....	105
Parent Behaviour at Swim Meets.....	108
Comparing Children.....	110
Relays and Relay Selection.....	111
Long Course versus Short Course Meets.....	111
Length of Meets.....	112
Measuring Improvement.....	113
Training Immediately after a Competition.....	114
Chapter 14: Nutrition.....	115
High Performance Eating Strategies.....	116
Nutrition ... Training and Competitions.....	120
Nutrition...Some Family Tips.....	122
Fluids.....	123
Chapter 15: Rest and Recovery.....	125
Summary.....	127
Appendix One—The Language of Swimming.....	129
Appendix Two—References.....	133

INTRODUCTION

For many parents having a “swimmer” in the family is not something they planned. Most swimmers begin in a learn-to-swim program and progress through to advanced lessons. From there they are asked to complete a couple of sessions in a junior squad and before you know it they are entrenched and absorbed by the sport of swimming. By this stage, parents begin to realise the commitment required by a swimmer to complete the necessary training and competitions offered in the sport.

As a swimmer I had the opportunity to observe my own parents first hand and how they managed me as a swimmer, and how they worked with, and communicated with my coaches. I was also fortunate enough to be coached by three of the most talented and experienced Australian swimming coaches—Julie Dyring, Bill Sweetenham and Leigh Nugent.

As a coach for more than a dozen years I worked closely with swimmers of all ages and have been directly involved in the introduction of parents to the sport of swimming. For a swimming parent, understanding the role of the coach, the role the parent is required to undertake, and the responsibilities of a swimmer is critical to ensuring a positive and successful experience for the whole family.

Yes, the whole family is affected by having a swimmer in the family and learning how to balance your time and other family member’s needs around the swimming schedule can be a challenge.

Over the years I have observed many parents who are introduced to swimming for the first time when their child is promoted to a junior squad. This book has been written to educate these parents and ones already involved with junior or teenage swimmers. It will assist parents to understand the many facets involved in the sport.

For most swimmers who train for competitions, the measurement of their improvement is through performance and this book looks closely at the many

**‘Swimming for Parents’
is a lifelong project
that draws on many
of my experiences
as a swimmer,
coach, swimming
administrator and now
as a parent of young
children who enjoy
swimming.**

different aspects to training and competitions in an effort to provide parents with a more complete understanding of the sport and what a swimmer is experiencing.

One of the aspects I love about swimming is that when swimmers compete, no one else can affect their performance. They have their own lane and no one can tackle them, bowl them out, hit the ball past them or affect their performance in any way. It is just the swimmer and the black line.

Children who choose to train and swim competitively learn so many life skills as they become more exposed to the sport. In general their grades improve at school, their time management skills improve and they learn how to win and how to lose with grace. They are introduced to goal setting and taking responsibility for themselves. They are also exposed to the concept that if you work hard on a skill and commit to doing something correctly over and over again, it will improve.

You will find some duplication in the pages of this book. Many times, a point made in one chapter will apply equally in another or will be reinforced later in the book. Rather than attempting to disguise it, I have deliberately repeated the principle if I felt it was important.

My sincere thanks to the many swim coaches and swimming parents who have shared their experiences and made contributions to ensure this book is accurate, informative and based on real life experiences. Thanks also to all those coaches and parents who have read the first edition and promoted it widely to their peers, leading to an earlier than expected publication of this second edition.

My goal is to educate you and your family on how to get the most out of your involvement in the sport of swimming.

‘Swimming for Parents’ is a vital resource for all swimming parents and has been written to cater for each and every one of you. The one thing that I ask is that if you enjoy reading the book and benefitted from its contents, that you encourage your club to promote the book on their club website and encourage fellow parents to buy the book at www.SwimmingForParents.com.

If your club would like to promote the book to its members, in any country around the world, a new affiliate program is now available. All you need to do is promote the book on your website. See <http://www.swimmingforparents.com/resources/affiliates.html> for more information.

If you have any suggestions for inclusion in future editions please email your ideas to gary@swimmingforparents.com.

CHAPTER 1

THE BENEFITS OF SWIMMING

It is no secret that learning to swim can save someone's life and for many parents, ensuring their young children are safe in the water is a priority. Every child should be taught to swim and be safe in the water. Swimming lessons incorporating water safety are conducted in swimming pools all over the world and a majority of children begin their relationship with the water when they attend these classes.

Swimming is a wonderful sport and provides healthy recreational exercise to all participants. The sport of swimming is popular in many countries around the world. In Australia for example, the bulk of the population live around the coastlines of the country, near the sea. If you live away from the coastline, there are thousands of lakes, rivers, water holes, dams and other swimming spots that can be enjoyed. Every young child who is exposed to water, whether it be at the sea, lakes, rivers or the local swimming pool, must learn to swim and be safe in the water.

While many children begin swimming lessons to preserve their own life, those who continue into squad training and develop a strong swimming ability can play major roles in saving others. Whether it is volunteering as a lifeguard at the local beach, being paid as a Surf or Pool Lifeguard or just being in the right place at the right time, there are many stories over the years of current and former squad swimmers saving other people's lives. The ability to save someone in the water is just one of many skills that children who continue in swimming programs possess.

The skills developed by participating in a structured swimming training program include improvements in discipline, commitment, dedication, time management,

The sport of swimming has produced thousands of participants who have established and developed a multitude of skills that will be useful throughout their entire life.

One of the great aspects of swimming is that in a race, no one else can affect your performance. When a swimmer stands behind the block they are on their own and while this can be frightening for young swimmers, once they master the feeling and have control over their emotions and actions, it will give them a great feeling of independence.

independence, taking responsibility, working together; and winning and losing. While for many involved in competitive swimming, winning and improvement are heavily valued at the time of participation, the life skills learnt by swimmers at training and competition will assist them for their entire life.

Participation in squad training will assist your child to be fit and combined with a healthy eating plan, provides them with the foundation for a healthy life. Swimming does not have the physical impact of many other sports. Running for example involves the jarring of muscles each time a foot lands on the ground. There is also no body contact in swimming leading to fewer injuries than participants in many sports. As each stroke uses a large variety of muscles, young swimmers will develop muscles evenly across their body including their arms, legs, shoulders, back and abdomen.

The longer a person swims in a squad the fitter they will become and their lung capacity will also increase which will help them to be successful in other aerobic sports like cross country running or rowing. There are many swimmers who have been successful in their school cross country events and other aerobic sports based solely on their swimming fitness.

Independence can be groomed in many ways. While swimmers at a young age will depend on their parents for assistance in packing their swim bags before training or competitions, parents should encourage their child to pack their own bags by the age of 10 years. By all means double-check they have everything for a few months but then leave it for them to do—all the time.

Swimmers should also be involved in what food they take to the pool and take responsibility for packing it. All swimmers should have a water bottle at the pool and they should take responsibility for filling it prior to training and refilling it as necessary. The number of times I have seen parents run to their child's aid to fill their water bottle for them either before training or during training is disappointing. Let them take responsibility for this task.

Many swimming clubs will introduce swimmers to the experience of travelling, often starting off with a one day trip. These trips will expand to include an overnight trip to a weekend swim meet as a progression to participating in longer training-based or competition trips of three to eight days. Travel may occur within the State or Territory that you live in and expand to include interstate or even overseas travel. By this stage children should have a number of year's experience packing their own bags for training, competitions and trips away, and looking after themselves on these trips.

While early in a child's development, swimmers may want the security of their parents being there for them at competitions, it is important that parents allow their child to become independent and travel by themselves with their Club team or Squad group by the age of 12 years. The independence and confidence gained by children from these experiences can be life changing for many children.

Many children begin swimming because of problems with asthma. Their doctor advises them to do swimming and over time they develop a passion for the sport and continue with squad training and participating in competitions. Swimming is a great way to assist people of any age who have asthma.

There are many other benefits of encouraging your child's involvement in swimming.

While you are reading this book, remember that the 'little picture' in swimming is how well your child performs in the pool. The 'big picture' is what they learn from participating in the swimming and sport experience that will help them for the rest of their life.

Life Skills

Dr John Hogg from the University of Alberta, Canada made the following observations based on a study done on twenty-one Olympic swimmers. Although the direct reference is to Olympic swimmers, the two phases of learning and the progression from one phase to the next are applicable to the training of novice, junior and age group swimmers.

There is also scientific evidence to suggest that regular involvement in physical activity enhances the growth process and physical performance of children. Energy is required for both growth and training and coaches should be careful to watch over their athletes at all times.

The skills of self discipline, self reliance and how to work as part of a team are also learnt by children involved in competitive swimming.

Amongst the benefits from a well directed program the child learns how to win and how to lose, something that is very important in this sport.

Swimmers have been found in many studies to be high in such attributes as independence, confidence, leadership qualities, sociability, punctuality, self discipline and are usually low in anxiety. The effect of swim training on school work has lead to most students claiming they are more awake at school and has lead to an increase in grades.

Swimmers learn how to improve from making mistakes and being defeated and, as a result, turn temporary setbacks into long-term gain.

Winning and Losing

While every child needs to win sometimes if they are to gain satisfaction from swimming, the fact remains that in a 10 person or 8 person swimming race, there will only be one winner in each heat or final, so a majority of swimmers will not experience winning in each race.

One should not be taught to win every time, or to be resigned to losing; rather, children and adults should be taught to expect both and to cope with both.

Coaches and parents should remember that the occasional defeat is as important to an individual's development as the occasional victory is. Some coaches avoid strong opponents when choosing swim meets. I do not agree with this. To limit a child to the field of victory is to deny the child the chance to develop the capability to deal gracefully with defeat or coming second.

Most coaches select swim meets appropriate for a swimmers ability level and age group. By competing at these selected meets, swimmers will learn how to win and how to lose. A good rule of thumb each season is to select competitions in a ratio as follows:

- ❖ 3 swim meets where a swimmer will be successful by winning medals or ribbons or receive some sort of reward. Winning is important and if a swimmer never gets to win or place they will never learn how to.
- ❖ 2 swim meets where a swimmer will have to work hard for success, swim fast to make a final or get the placing they would like.
- ❖ 1 swim meet where they are swimming out of their league, where the competition is fast and they have to work hard and focus on themselves.

This combination will provide swimmers with the experiences of winning, together with the challenge of tough competition and teach them how to focus on themselves when racing.

In his book '**The Double Goal Coach**' (see www.SwimmingForParents.com/books) Jim Thompson talks about displacing the win-at-all-cost model of coaching and parenting and replacing it with the "Double-Goal Coach who wants to win (goal #1), but even more importantly, is committed to using sports to teach positive character traits and life lessons to young athletes (goal #2)."¹

¹ Thompson, J., 2003, *The Double-Goal Coach*, HarperCollins

It is very important for young swimmers to learn that within defeat, there is often victory; an improved time, a personal best, the attainment of a short term goal or the contribution of points towards the team's point score at a local swim meet.

"The real value in youth sports is teaching the kinds of character lessons that are learned from striving on the field—lessons that bear ultimate fruit years later in a person's profession, values, citizenship responsibilities, and family life."

JIM THOMPSON

In regards to winning, Thompson explains that “It would be nice if we lived in a non-competitive world, but we don’t. There’s nothing wrong with competition. Learning to compete effectively is virtually a necessity in our society... Trying to win holds the whole sports experience together. It creates the opportunity for great things to happen.” He is however totally opposed to the win-at-all-cost mentality that has come to dominate youth sports today. This book is a terrific read for coaches and parents and I can highly recommend it.

Another important skill learnt through the participation in swimming is time management.

Time Management

The time management skills learnt through your involvement in swimming will assist your child and you as a parent for the rest of your life. With the regimented training schedules that swimmers experience in their club or squad training programs, a swimmer’s time management is crucial to fitting everything into each day.

Swimming training is conducted primarily before and after school, work or university, so families need to allocate time to travel to and from training around their normal daily routine.

The training requirements for swimming mean that swimmers develop time management skills from a young age. Balancing school, homework, swimming, sleep and time with friends or participating in other activities can be quite demanding and most swimmers develop their own time management plan to fit everything into each day.

The established time management skills are very useful when swimmers are completing high school and university and assist them to coordinate study and swimming.

Equally important as managing your time for activities is allocating time to do nothing. Many swimmers will find ‘doing nothing’ difficult because they are always on the go. Rest, recovery and relaxation are equally as important to a swimmer’s development as training and school.

Ensure that your child allocates time for rest and recovery.

It is important that we all learn how to use time effectively and goal setting will assist to achieve this.

Swimming successfully is as much about time management as it is about training hard. Fitting in training, schoolwork, rest and recovery and having some time to yourself is a difficult juggling act even for the most committed and dedicated athlete.

WAYNE GOLDSMITH

These time management skills are often transferred into other areas of life, with a majority of former swimmers maintaining the time management skills developed when they swam and utilising them in their work and social lives.

Those times when your body is growing, adapting and developing are fundamental to swimming success. Allocate some time every week for recovery.

WAYNE GOLDSMITH

Goal Setting

“Every year since I have been swimming competitively, I have set goals for myself. In writing. The goal sheet was mandatory. I got used to it and it became a habit.”²

MICHAEL PHELPS

Goal setting is something that a majority of swimmers are taught in their current swimming program. Accomplished swimmers and experienced coaches use goals on a daily basis to improve performance on the day, knowing that when it comes to competitions they will improve.

The importance of setting goals is appropriately summarised by Michael Phelps in his book *No Limits, The Will to Succeed* (see www.SwimmingForParents.com/books).

The setting of goals by swimmers of all ages is an important skill that will assist them to improve their swimming performance and provide them with direction. Goals can vary from improvements in stroke technique in each of the four strokes and improvements required to starts and turns, to time goals that focus on the outcomes of races. It is important at a young age that goals are measurable and time based goals are very popular for newcomers to the sport. Time based goals are useful up to the age of 12 or 13 years of age when more complicated training and process-orientated goals will take over. More about these later.

By writing down their goals, swimmers are taking the first step to achieving them. Swimmers are encouraged to put them up on the wall next to their bed or somewhere in their room where they will see them every day. Their goals will become part of their life.

As a swimmer and coach who used written down goals to achieve the outcomes I was after, I am amazed at how few adults use goals themselves in their lives. Goals provide you with direction and without them, many adults and families go through life directionless and without purpose. Writing down your goals provides you with an anchor point that you can refer to over the short, medium and long term.

I encourage you to start using goals, if you do not already, and encourage your children to use them, in their swimming and in all aspects of life.

² Phelps, M., 2008, *No Limits, The Will to Succeed*, Simon & Schuster

Friendships

The memory that a majority of swimmers will hold when they finish competitive swimming are the friendships they made and the people they met. Swimming does not discriminate and children from all corners of life come together to participate in the sport.



Friendships are very important to swimmers and are one of the major reasons many children stay in the sport.

In junior squads, children will form groups of friends within the squad and start participating in activities together. They may also begin travelling to meets together, particularly if there is long distance travel involved. Friendships start forming in these junior squads.

Once a child begins morning training sessions, they bond quickly with many of the swimmers in their squad. The experience of getting up at 4:30am to attend swimming training is very difficult to explain to children and teachers at school. Many friends at school do not understand why someone would get up so early to go swimming or why they have to go swimming after school, rather than hanging out with friends. It is an experience only swimmers can relate to.

The sport of swimming is quite demanding as children get older. They train more on weekdays and become involved in competitions on weekends. Friendships become a major part of the swimming experience and for most children the friendships made at swimming will surpass many friendships they have at school both in quality and length of time.



Participating in swimming training and social activities with teammates can lead to life-long friendships.

On a social level, swimming friends understand when you have to train and will organise sleepovers or parties around their swimming schedule. Weekends with swimming competitions are usually no-go-zones and Friday night activities normally give way to an early night before Saturday morning training.

School friends, unless they are very special, will often plan their parties, quite rightly, around their own activities and unfortunately these clash with swimming obligations at times. This can lead to children having to make difficult decisions on a regular basis especially when special occasions come up like 16th and 18th birthday parties.

Teamwork

While swimming is primarily an individual sport, the team atmosphere and spirit of cooperation created by the coach in most swimming programs leads to team members working together to reach their goals. Because of the nature of most squads, between 4 and 15 swimmers may be training in any one lane. These swimmers work together to complete the sets and not get in each other's way.

Prior to each training session, swimmers will stretch together and assist each other with the dryland exercises that need to be completed.

In training, if a squad is using multiple lanes, swimmers will push off in waves. A wave is where a number of swimmers across the pool push off together, and then 5 or 10 seconds later another group of swimmers push off next to each other and so on. Swimmers will race each other, pace off each other, or compare components of their stroke, start or turn with each other, all the time while they are swimming. They work as a team to pass each other in the lane and complete challenging sets together.

Teamwork becomes very important when swimmers attend swim meets. There is no better feeling as an athlete than the knowledge your teammates are there to support you. When your name is announced at the beginning of a race and you hear people call out words of encouragement, it can provide a swimmer with a great boost in confidence.

Teamwork is also vital in relays. Young children should participate in lots of relays both in training and at competitions. Relays teach children how to work together and rely on each other, particularly when it comes to the changeovers.

There are many benefits of being involved in the sport of swimming. For a majority of participants, these life skills are used for many years after they become involved in the sport.

The next section in this book is about 'The Swimming Parent'. For those of you have been involved in the sport of swimming for some time and understand the common language used by coaches and swimmers you are welcome to read on. If you are new to the sport, may I suggest you have a quick look now at Appendix One—'The Language of Swimming' where all the common terms used throughout the remainder of this book are explained. You can then return to 'The Swimming Parent'.