

LaneLineNews

Fall 2025 Edition



Top - FLAGS 10&Under session

Bottom Left - Senior Test Set Day

Bottom Right - Futures crew



Summer Pool Updates and Future GSC Satellite

Next April the O'Connell Center indoor pool will be undergoing renovations. GSC will be displaced from the pool until renovations are complete (estimated September 2026) but we have been in talks with the North Central Florida Community Center (former YMCA) to refurbish their pool this winter in preparation for our use during our time away from the O'Dome. For those of you that have seen the old YMCA pool, it has been in definite need of some TLC for a while. We have already earmarked funds to help with this project that includes a full resurfacing of the pool, adding cooling, adding lighting, and installing starting blocks.

Additionally, we will also have use of the city pools (Mickle and Northeast) as well as some use of the outdoor 50m pool at the O'Connell Center.

With all this said, we are definitely going to be spending a lot more on our pool rent next summer. The good news is the investment into the North Central Florida Community Center and the renovation of the indoor pools at the O'Connell Center mean that for 2026 and beyond we will have some nice new facilities at our disposal.

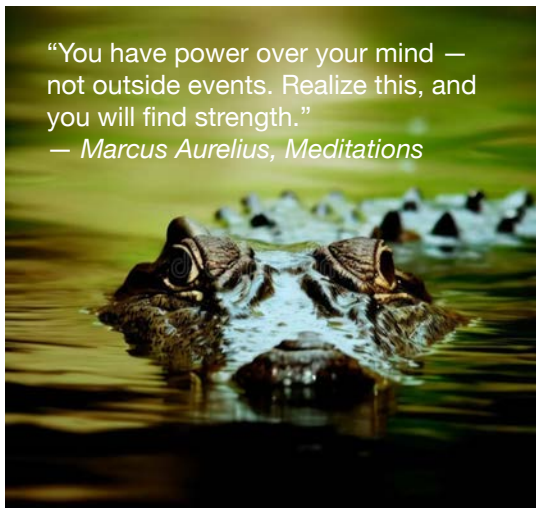


The Deci Experiment and Our Dependency on Reward: The Overjustification Effect

Coach Gus Pastos

In 1971, Edward Deci, a behavioral psychologist for the University of Rochester, conducted an experiment that would challenge the currently held belief of what motivates people, or extrinsic motivation: the carrot and the stick. The notion was that of punishment and reward and as they were offered, behavior and its efficiency toward a task changes predictably.

Participants on Day One were given puzzles then instructed to solve as many as they could within a standard amount of time. They were then given a free period where they could continue to work on the puzzles, or do what they pleased. This first day was a baseline measurement on their own internal, or intrinsic, motivation. No reward or punishment was offered. On Day Two, one group received a payment per puzzle solved, the other group received no payment. They once again had a free choice period where they could do what they pleased. On the third and final day of study, no one was paid for either of the groups, and the observation of who continued to tinker with their puzzles during the free choice period continued.



So what happened? Maybe it's expected that those who had been paid previously would continue to work harder and show interest during the free period? After all they were the only ones who ever received compensation for their efforts.

On Day Two, the results followed the carrot and the stick model, the paid group worked harder and continued to solve puzzles during the free choice period. However on Day Three, when the payment was removed and there was no compensation for any puzzles solved, the group that was previously getting paid showed a significant decline in motivation and efficacy. The unpaid group, however, continued to show as much or even more interest in the puzzles compared to day one.

The Deci Experiment established the "Overjustification Effect" - a psychological phenomenon where offering external rewards for an activity the person already loves to do can decrease their own internal drive and motivation to do the activity.

Okay cool, thanks for the lesson, but what did that have to do with swimming?

My point is this. If all else fails, rely on your love for the sport, I strongly believe that this reliance is your strongest tool. Your coaches, parents, or teammates cannot want it more than you do, and if they did, would it even matter? It's your training, it's your racing, it's you doing the work, and if you can't identify your passion for what you're doing, I doubt any amount of medals and ribbons will prevent a burnout. If the awards and the praise suddenly disappear, I implore you to remember your love for the sport, and if you can't remember it, establish it once again. Fall in love with the process, the endless grind, the work, the fatigue. Treasure your progress and your effort. Celebrate every PB, learn from your mistakes, and change. Stack your wins, your "W's." Start your day with a win and end it with more.

Rest and Recovery — Practical Ways to Improve Sleep, Decrease Stress and Maximize Performance



Train, eat, rest, repeat. You may be thinking, “Ok, but is the ‘rest’ really necessary? How can I outwork the competition if I’m letting up?” If you had that thought, you’re not alone. It’s a common misconception that rest is for the weak of heart or the lazy. While it may seem counterintuitive at first, proper rest is one of the key components to achieving maximum potential. In this article we will focus on practical ways that you as a swim athlete can improve your sleep and decrease stress levels – therefore maximizing recovery and performance.

One of the most tried and true ways to improve your sleep is to keep a regular schedule. Just like you train your body in the pool and during dryland, you’re also training your body when to sleep. With a regular schedule your body will know when to release calming hormones before bed, and stimulating hormones when it’s time to wake up. While meets will likely start and end at different times, your practice times and school schedule will likely be consistent throughout the week. Simply adjust as needed on weekends. According to the National Sleep Foundation, recommendations for ages 6-13 are 9-11 hours, 8-10 hours for ages 14-17, and 7-9 hours for 18+.

Caffeine is our next topic. We do not recommend athletes under 18 supplement with it. Why? While it CAN enhance performance when used properly, it brings with it a host of problems for young athletes. Too much of it affects sleep quality and duration, which in turn affects the hormones that control appetite and metabolism. Ultimately, this detracts from optimal body composition and performance. Caffeine can also negatively affect the gastrointestinal tract, creating the perfect recipe for an upset stomach or acid reflux. Relating to stress, caffeine can cause anxiety, restlessness, and irritability. Anxiety releases a hormone called ‘cortisol’ which inhibits muscle growth and causes the body to store more fat. In a nutshell, caffeine is very hard to keep in check. If you get the ok from your doctor to use it in the appropriate amounts, make sure you are aware of the potential side effects on your sleep and stress. For more info on the topic of caffeine, check out our [article](#) on the website.

A well-balanced diet cannot be overstated in its effect on sleep, stress, and recovery. What does this mean for the elite swimmer? There is no one-size-fits-all diet, however there are general principles that will help your body stay in optimal condition. Eating frequently throughout the day (5-8 small meals) is a great place to start. Eating enough is crucial to keeping your hormones in check, including stress hormones. It also ensures that you won’t try to play “catch up” at the end of a long training day, eating everything in sight. Eating a large meal before bedtime can cause stomach issues and affect your sleep quality. Equally important to frequency/amount of food is quality of food. Athletes need a variety of complex carbohydrates, complete proteins, and healthy fats. Your body literally can’t recover properly without them. A well-balanced diet does NOT mean eating the SAME amount of carbohydrates, protein, and fat; but it does mean intentionally including all of these. Quality matters because these three macronutrients contain micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, etc.) in varying levels. The greater the quality, the greater the impact on recovery. There are several helpful documents on the SwimStrong Dryland Website if you are wondering what a diet consisting of these things might look like for a swimmer ([PowerPoint – Nutrition for Developing Swim Athletes](#), [PowerPoint – Swim Meet Nutrient Timing](#), [SwimStrong Dryland Grocery List](#)).

Last but not least, master the art of the brain dump. First on our list: electronics. We recommend limiting screen time throughout the day (helps reduce stress levels), and turning off electronics at least 30 minutes before bedtime. The blue light stimulates our brains and makes it harder to fall asleep. Another great way to “brain dump” is by writing/journaling. Can’t fall asleep because you have a laundry list of assignments due this week? Write down every single one and when you plan to work on it. Feeling anxious? Try journaling about it. It may sound simple or even silly, but can make a big difference. Some other ideas that may help clear your brain: get outside, practice deep breathing, take time to reflect/meditate/pray, volunteer and help others.

Improving sleep and decreasing stress levels are important steps to maximize recovery. Keeping a regular schedule, avoiding caffeine, eating a well-balanced diet, and mastering the art of the brain dump are a great place to start. If you aren’t used to incorporating any of these yet, that’s ok! Pick one to start with – once you have it down pat, you can add another onto your list of superpowers.

7 Keys for the Perfect Swim Streamline:

- Wrists/hands overlapped with thumb hooked
- Biceps squeezing the ears (or behind the ears, [as some coaches are now teaching](#)) versus behind the ears is a topic unto itself. We won't go too deep in it but you can read a longer discussion about that [HERE](#). The main point, regardless of your preference, is there should be no space between your biceps and your head to achieve the perfect swim streamline.
- Shoulders flexed to form a straight line with the torso and legs (not angled forward)
- Trunk neutral. No rounding or excess arching. Some arching in the low back is acceptable as the spine does have a natural curvature. The arch should not increase beyond the swimmer's normal resting posture.
- Face looking straight ahead with the head stacked directly in line with the torso. The neck may feel "tucked" but not so much that the chin is resting on the chest. A more common flaw to avoid is the neck overly extended when the swimmer looks forward
- Legs fully extended and held closely together
- Toes pointed



Coach Nick repping GSC on his hike while at a USA Swimming Strength and Conditioning clinic in Colorado Springs!



GSC crew at the Sporting Jax Halloween Invite! Thanks Leo for the balloon animals!

Playing Favorites

JOHN LEONARD

COACH AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN SWIM COACHES ASSOCIATION

One day a few years ago, a club board member accused me of "having favorites" on our club team. Several other parent board members nodded their heads in agreement.

The implication was that this was a terrible sin. When I was a younger coach, I thought it was terrible also. And he was right. I did have favorites.

My favorites were those athletes who most fervently did what I asked of them. Those that did, I gave more attention to. I talked to them more. I spent more time teaching them. I also expected more of them. The implication that he was making was that my favorites got better than the others because they were my favorites, and that was somehow unfair. He mistook cause for effect.

The fact is that the athletes who came to me ready to learn, ready to listen, ready to act on what they learned and try it my way, even if it was more challenging, more difficult than they imagined, were ready to get more out of our program. And they were my favorites. As a coach, I have only one thing to offer to an athlete. That is, my attention. Which means that I attend to their needs. The reward for good behavior should be attention . . . attending to their needs. The consequence of inattention, lack of effort, unwillingness or un-ready-ness to learn or just plain offensive or disruptive behavior is my inattention to that athlete. How could it be other than this?

If you have three children, and you spend all of your time and energy work working with the one that is badly behaved, what does that tell your other two children? It tells them that to capture your attention, they should behave badly. What we reward, is what we get. As a coach, I want athletes who are eager to learn eager to experiment to improve, eager to work hard. I want athletes who come to me to help develop their skills both mental and physical, and are willing to accept what I have to offer. Otherwise, why have they come to me? And I am going to reward that athlete with my attention. In so doing, I encourage others to become like the athlete above. If I spent my time with the unwilling, the slothful, the disruptive, I would only be encouraging that behavior.

The link I want to forge is between attention and excellence. Excellence in the sense of achieving all that is possible, and desired. My way of forging that is to provide my attention to those who "attend" to me. This does of course result in increased performance for those that do so. I am a professional coach, and when I pay attention to a person, that person is going to improve. Over time, this makes it appear that my "favorites" are the better swimmers. Not so at all. The better swimmers are those that pay attention, and thus become my favorites.

What the board member didn't realize is that you must have favorites if anyone is to develop in a positive fashion. The coach's job is to reward those who exhibit positive developmental behaviors. Those are my "favorites," and they should be.

SwimStrong Dryland Nutrition: 5 High-Protein Breakfasts Ready in 5 Minutes or Less



Make-ahead smoothie packs

Instructions: Add ½-1 cup frozen mixed berries, ¼ avocado, large handful spinach, and 1 banana cut into slices into a freezer safe ziplock. In the morning, add to the blender with milk, 1 spoonful of almond butter, and protein powder (optional). Drink it on the go!

Greek/Icelandic yogurt + granola + fruit

Instructions: Grab a quality Greek/Icelandic yogurt from the fridge. Put in a bowl and top with granola + fruit of choice.

Pre-hard-boiled eggs + instant oats

Instructions: Get eggs that are already hard-boiled, or hard boil in batches for the week. Grab from the fridge and eat with instant oats (Purely Elizabeth has good instant options).

Kodiak cake waffles + nut butter + berries

Instructions: Put the Kodiak waffles in a toaster. Spread nut butter of choice and add berries!

Peanut butter banana overnight oats (Makes 2 servings)

Instructions: Mash a banana in a large bowl. Mix in 1 ¼ cups milk + 1 cup vanilla Greek/Icelandic yogurt (until creamy). Stir in 1 cup oats, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, 1 tablespoon chia seeds, and 2 tablespoons peanut butter (or other nut butter). Split mixture in half between two jars/containers that seal tightly and refrigerate overnight. Grab from the fridge in the morning and enjoy!

PROTEIN	+	CARBS
Milk/RTD shakes, individual greek yogurt/cottage cheese		Dried mango/fruit/packets/TCJ
Dry roasted Edamame, Chickpeas, Broad Beans		Oat bars/fig bars/dates
Pumpkin seeds, cashews, almonds, pistachios, peanut butter		Oat packets/cups/granola
Beef jerky, tuna/chicken pouches		Pretzels, whole grain/seed crackers, instant rice/grains
Protein Bars/Protein Powder Packets/Fuel for Fire/Noka		Electrolyte packs, Honey Stinger waffles/chews, honey/maple syrup

SNACKS TO PACK OR FIND WHILE TRAVELING

✓	VS	✗
familiar foods		new foods
minimal fat & fiber near race time		high fat & fiber near race time
fast food menu guide + travel meet snacks		fried/greasy foods + forgetting snacks
quick carbs + electrolytes before/between races		energy drinks before/between races
pre-order food to maximize recovery/nap time		trade recovery time for social/ other activities

MEET WEEK FUELING CHECKLIST

Winter/Spring 2026 Meets

January 9–11	FAST Meet	D2–A1 (Sat/Sun), A2–S3 (Sat Only)	Ocala
January 11	Gator Distance Meet	AG2–S3	Gainesville
January 30–February 1	FAST Meet	AG2–S3	Ocala
February 12–15	Sectionals	Qualifiers only	Plantation
February 21–22	SLAC Meet	AG1–S3	Clermont

Championship Meets

February 28–March 1	Area 4 Champs (Last Chance)	D2–S2	Ocala
March 5–8	FLAGS	14&under qualifiers	Ocala
March 12–15	Senior Champs	Senior qualifiers	Orlando

Spring/Summer 2026 Meets

March 28–29	EAJ Meet	D2–S3	Jacksonville
April TBD	Novice Intrasquad	D1–D3 novice only	Gainesville
April 15–18	TYR Pro Series	Qualifiers only	Orlando
April 17–19	SPA Meet	D2–S3	St. Petersburg
May TBD	Gator Meet (Proposed)	D2–S3	Gainesville
May 15–17	FAST Meet	D2–S3	Ocala
June 4–7	Sectionals	Qualifiers only	Ocala
June 5–7	Makos Summer Splash	D2–S2	Gainesville
June 25–28	FAST Meet	D2–S3	Ocala

Championship Meets

July 9–12	FLAGS	14&Under qualifiers	Ocala
July 16–19	Senior Champs	Senior(s) qualifiers	Ocala
July 25–26	Area 4 Championships	All without FLAGS/Seniors	Tallahassee
July 29–August 1	USA Futures	Qualifiers only	TBD



This January GSC will run our third Swim-a-Thon (the last one was in 2021) to help raise funds for the North Central Florida Community Center pool renovation.

This will be a full time satellite facility for us in the summer of 2026 and beyond, so the more bells and whistles we can add the first time the better for our swimmers!

We are hoping to get a scoreboard at the facility as well and be able to run some more local meet options for our Developmental and Age Group kids.

The Swim-a-Thon will be held on a Sunday at the O'Connell Center pool. Swimmers can get pledges of a dollar amount per lap they complete, or flat donations are also welcome!

Watch your email for more details!

We are just about a month away from GSC's Speedo Holiday Classic!

December 5–7 • Ocala

Volunteers needed!

This meet is the main opportunity for your family to fulfill the volunteering obligation of three shifts per swim year.

We have lots of positions to fill both on the pool deck and off, and we need your help to run this event, even if your child is not competing.

Volunteer signup is open via the GSC website, or contact Christie at admin@gatorswimclub.com with questions!

