Hej, from Denmark!

Two weeks into my new position as National Coach of Denmark. I’m situated just outside Copenhagen in Farum, near the Danish Swimming office. The country isn’t that big, perhaps a third of the size of Ontario with 6 million people, 180 swim clubs boasting between 1000 to 5000 members in each however only 10% of the members actually compete. As of right now Denmark has 6 swimmers in the Top 10 in the World, they are shaping up well for a few podium spots this summer at the worlds and the women’s 4x100 Free and Medley relays look good as well. I look forward to the challenge, the change and with the intent to make a difference, improve what can be possible. From first glance lots of potential, and as always will be some road blocks and resistance to change however with a shared vision and responsibility of the many contributing programs to continue the momentum of the current world swimming success into 2020 and beyond. The reliability of performance presence can’t rely on “chance” it must be more of design. You see “same s….t-- different pile” scenario, however I did receive this week great response to my arrival by the coaches and clubs. Once settled, one of my short term goals will be to bring a team over to Toronto for the December 2016 OJ1 to compete, train with the Academy program and watch the 2016 World Short Course that will be held in Windsor. Hope to see many of you then.

This year was a busy one for me with the launch of the Ontario Swimming Academy and the daily camp deliveries of 33 camps in 40 weeks as well as all the other responsibilities to the OHPSI and other Performance programs. I truly enjoyed the Academy experience from working with the swimmers, their coaches as well as the CSI Ontario service providers. I believe the camps delivered what they intended to the athlete, whether it was the reminder to swim more efficiently to developing better starts and turns to having a better understanding of nutrition and overall health and well-being of oneself. Regardless one or all intentions the swimmers were able to fill up their “tool boxes” with valuable tools to assist in performing better down the road.

I also had a chance to work beside and observe the daily routine of World Class coaching and swimming performance development lead by Ben Titely supported by the CSI O IST consistently with Ryan Atkison. I saw Ben and Ryan work harmoniously with the full time group as well as the swimmers who would drop in. One of the key opportunities with the Academy came with the breaststroke squads who swam a session or two with Martha McCabe—they say a picture is worth a 1000 words, well think of this moment where I gave the swimmers an illustration of World Ranking times from 25th to 300th. In reality,
the sheet just provided times but the real experience was later that day when they got into train with Martha and they witnessed the intensity, the skill required to be world class (14th to be exact). The swimmers were shown in real time where their own swimming was and where 14th in the world is; a Very Real and Special recognition. This is one of many attributes of the Swim Centre and the Academy can provide. I urge you to take full advantage of the opportunities as they come your way—I believe that it can be the difference of almost realizing your potential and perhaps surpassing it.

I was pleased to close out my time with Swim Ontario with two important initiatives that I believe continue to help shape the swimmers and their swimming to where it needs to be. The Tri Camp May 6-10 in Montreal (see details http://www.swimontario.com/announce_detail.php?id=2928) the swimmers - identified in the age group gear toward the 2017 Canada Games - were the first to see the newly renovated and rebuilt Olympic pool and the INS (comparable to the CSI O). The swimmers were exposed to the best of the sport science area with focus on Physical Literacy, Nutrition, Mental Skills and 5 days of ‘attention to details’ of swimming technique and efficiency. The Competition portion’s focus was to gather parts of the race such as the 15m start time, the turn times, finish times, stroke counts and splitting. This information is now with the coaches to work on in a weekly process. The Ontario swimmers slo followed a protocol with video and time breakdowns for the start, turn and finish - this is a tedious job and will be in the hands of the coaches soon.

Charlotte Pro Series Meet May 13-18 (see details http://swimontario.com/page.php?id=1688). The Pro Series/Grand Prix have always allowed our swimmers to be exposed to world class swimming.

As my days were wrapping up, Canadian swimming received the sad news that Coach Randy Bennett’s cancer battle was over. Whether you knew Randy or just knew what he did in swimming, it is a huge loss for Canadian swimming. Beyond that, as a personal friend, I was able to attend the memorial for Randy in Victoria. I went to morning practice where the Victoria Centre swimmers were training lead by Ryan Mallette (Randy’s trusted right hand man); to see the athletes obviously in shock, in pain, they persevered regardless. As we came to the main sets a moment came that I will not forget, one that humbled me Ryan handed me a set of watches and said “These are the boss’s. Can you time these two lanes? Let’s get to work”. Even as I write the flow of emotion is still strong. I leave you with a message conveyed by Allan Wrigley, Swim Canada Lead IST and close colleague/friend of Randy’s that he summed up during the memorial –

“Try” and “Was it good enough” where never heard around here. He hated both phrases. Randy simply said “Make it so.” His philosophy was that everyone did the easy things. That’s the bare minimum. If you are trying to better, you need to do the things that are hard. Trying to do them wasn’t good enough. If it was difficult, then it just had to be done. Figure out a way to make it work. His criteria was very much black and white. You either did it or didn’t, so ‘good enough’ implies that you haven’t quite got there yet.

I commend Swimming Canada for their support of the Randy’s memorial “Celebrating Life”. It was a very good tribute to Randy and to his family; we all thank them for the time that they shared him with us.
As this is, I will refer to Boles’ Notes Final edition, I leave you with the breakdown of the 2015 Trials; yes we saw improvement but is that ‘good enough’? I trust you will see where greater work needs to be done and where more work has to be continued. I have also attached (in my mind) some key messages over the six years in my role as Provincial Mentor Coach. I will miss my colleagues in the Swim Ontario office, John Vadeika worked hard at creating and maintaining a Team approach. My six years at Swim Ontario has not only prepared me well for my new role but the Provincial Mentor Coach role itself is being mirrored across Canada and now being viewed positively in other countries.

2015 Trials - 😊
We have improvement 11+% and Ontario was better than the “All Club” stats.

Congratulations to you and your program - if you contributed to the positive outcome - A bit of an edge to that line {it was good but is it good enough?} - you be the judge as you see the stats of the other piece “Slicing and Dicing”. This time I was also looking at the “cause and effect” and I was surprised to see actually our top end moving their swimming forward but the bottom end was disappointing; the lack of positive improvement from the bottom end really hurt the improvement.

I trust you have done your own Team/Program Review - done your Gap Analysis and have a strong plan in place and will see it through to better results in the summer.

Anyways as I have said and illustrated, you might be served well to seek some assistance to move your program from being stuck, or being left behind or just simply not in the Performance Game at all. Go and visit these programs, pick up the phone, email these coaches before your swimmers do.
2015 Pan Am / World Championship Trials
April 1-4 2015 Scarborough Ontario- New Pan Am Pool (TPASC)

All Clubs

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<tr>
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<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total Overall</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Clubs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimmers</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>573</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved Times</td>
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<td>292</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Improvement</td>
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<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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</table>

Session Preliminary Reports:
Wednesday: Women Improvement 28% Men 32% Improvement
Thursday: Women Improvement 25% Men 29% Improvement
Friday: Women 27% Improvement Men 32% Improvement
Saturday: Women 25% Improvement Men 27% improvement

Ontario Swim Club Performance Statistics
Pan Am/ World Trials April 1-4 2015 LCM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Clubs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Improvement</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Congratulations Swimmers and Coaches
10 Ontario Swimmers Pan Am Games Team
5 Ontario Swimmers World Championship Team
4 Ontario Swimmers FISU Games Team
7 Ontario Swimmers World Jr Team
Congratulations to Ben Titley Head Coach Pan Am Team/Staff Coach World Championships; Alan Swanston, Matt Bell and Bill O'Toole Staff Coaches for the World Jr’s.

In Summary, the 2015 Trials yielded better results:
2015:  29% All Teams Improvement, Ontario Teams Improvement 32.5%
2014:  21% All Teams Improvement, Ontario Teams Improvement 21%
2013:  23% All Teams Improvement, Ontario Teams Improvement 21%

More Slicing and Dicing: “Preparing for the Situation”
Compare (Performance on Demand) Top Half of the field to that of the Bottom Half during Prelims.
TOP 10 from Preliminaries: Average 40% Improved Time/ High 80% Low 10% Improvement
11-20 from Preliminaries: Average 40% Improved Time/ High 70% Low 20% Improvement
21-30 from Preliminaries: Average 35% Improved Time/ High 70% Low 0% Improvement
31 and Below from Preliminaries: Average 20% Improved Time/ High 30% Low 0% Improvement.

For the past 3 Trials, the meet improvement has appeared to be very low and this last analysis may shed some light on to why? The above numbers illustrate that the swimmers qualifying for the Finals (in this meet’s case TOP 10) performed relatively well, whereas each group of 10 showed lower improvement as you go down the entry and the greatest amount of failed improvement came from the bottom half of the meet entry/result places numbers 31st - 50th, 60th, 70th entries.

Without having more information, analysis and comparison in this fashion, I would convey that the athletes performing better and showing reliable performance improvements have prepared and delivered better than the bottom half - one concept would be they have had more practice swimming fast in the morning; a simple rationale. Most of these swimmers have swam at higher level competitions (Jr Pan Pacs, Worlds, Tours, senior meets, Grand Prix, Mare Nostrum etc.) requiring the pressure to perform your best in the prelims as it may be their only swim. I would suggest that the bottom half of the meet has not taken swimming fast in the mornings throughout the season seriously enough and lack the necessary experience; too often swimmers throw or waste racing opportunities because it is relatively easy to get a final swim.

There may be several reasons and one of them would also be the fact the swimmers prepared earlier (Eastern/Western Canadians or even Provincial Championships) to swim their best and weren’t able to reliably perform again.

Swimming Canada did a Top 10 per event ranking from the weekend of February 19-22 where three LCM meets took place (CIS Championships; Speedo Easterns and Speedo Westerns). This ranking also included the performance equaling the World Team standard as well as the percentage back scenario. I have taken a look at how we did converting those performances six weeks from Trials - the big meet, the key meet, through to the Trials. Here are the results: **Women: 44% improvement** over the collective group of events while the low was 20% (400 IM) and the high 80% (100 back) by individual event - **Men: 63%** with a low in one event of 30% (100 fly) and a high of 90% (100 breast).

The objective of getting better performances at the “big meet” or Key Performance Moment- we need to prepare better, the only way to do this is truly evaluate the performance and the program that produced the performance—make it more reliable and a true performance predictability, more by design rather than by chance. When considering those factors I reflect to the number of performances Brent Hayden swam sub 50, sub 49 for the 100 free years prior to his 2012 Bronze medal swim- well over 80 swims (100m races within 1% of the ultimate target)—another moment where the reliability and systematic approach shown in 2013 when 3 male swimmers were under the FINA world standard in the 1500 free (all from Island Swimming captained by Randy Bennett) and most recently a similar scene at the 2015 Pan Am and World Championships where 3 swimmers guided by the same coach were under the FINA World Standard- Women’s 100 free captained by Ben Tittley). We have examples of
performances with promise—we just need to be better at the process! We need to learn from these leaders of Performance development.

Reflect:

Did you have swimming performances contributing to the bottom half of the Trials more so than the top half? If so this needs to be addressed and changed!
What can you and your program do to help remedy this?
Remember to also ask the question, ‘why did we have good results?’ - the effort for reflection on that question will help shape and deliver future reliable results.

Some Key Messaging from previous Boles’ Notes

June 2011
This will be the path taken for 2012 and beyond. In regards to the Performance strategy and having all facets and levels integrate and fit we must consider the following areas:

1. We must build a Sustainable System (Bottom to Top/Top to Bottom)
2. We must allow time for Clear Messaging and Strong Communication
3. We must embrace the idea of High Expectations and Standards as critical ingredients for World level Swimming in Ontario
4. We must provide opportunities for the best swimmers (“like level swimmer s”) train together with great programs of Purposeful Content and Objectives.
5. We must provide Clear Competitive strategies with targeted competitive experiences
6. We must establish a province wide Talent & Potential ID system (World Class Potential—World Class Development—World Class Performance)
7. Create Targeted Coach Professional Development Opportunities
8. On-going Critical Review and GAP Analysis Process

20 + points from Mark Schubert

✓ It imperative that the swimmer’s expectation be higher than that of the coach (help them create their high expectation)
✓ No matter how good an athlete is—don’t assume they know anything (the coach is the key to their success)
✓ Train for Gold Medals/to Win every day (teaching them about immense goals is a good thing (visualize beyond)
✓ Develop disappointment into DETERMINATION
✓ Competition is practice—Confidence is born in practice—consistent improvement in practice
✓ Goals- the process in achieving them is key (Visualize—making progress, making the practice count, making it fun) Competing in practice with their competitors—Create Training Opportunities
✓ Experience—nothing can replace it “trial by fire” “battles” “struggles”—Learn to win at the higher level by experiencing the higher level
✓ Observe—watch everything the better swimmers do—“the observation is that they act like they were the only ones that mattered—a swimmer observed Phelps and Coughlin behind the blocks.
✓ You are a complete coach when your athlete can perform without you
✓ Routine—takes the anxiety of the equation—one of attention to detail
✓ Dedication—coach as a mentor (define it)
✓ Aware of Social Dynamics—pay attention outside of the pool (experienced athletes are mentors)
✓ Create solutions to train together—competition in practice
✓ Distractions deter performance
✓ Occasional Meetings—lead by experienced athletes—focused briefings—truthful debriefings—share
✓ Be a mentor not a servant to your athletes (not a slave driver, tell them why they need to do it, be responsible for their success
✓ Do little things well—be accountable and Responsible for performance: Be relentless developing Starts—Turns—Relay Takeovers. Learn to Swim Aggressive—to adjust your plan—know your competition
✓ Have the constant desire to improve—use strengths and weaknesses to improve
✓ Anxiety (Performance Anxiety) teach coping strategies, face your fears, admit, know when to turn it on/turn it off—Lochte is a perfect example of keeping the sport fun—this is important!
✓ Not the coaches responsibility to make it fun—it’s the athlete’s role—Compliment more than criticize
✓ Communication is critical

He reiterated the main points:
* this is theirs—not yours
* no matter how good they are don’t assume they know anything

February/March 2012
Considerations for Coaches for Developing a Winning Program:

• Develop Skills first, then develop Fitness
• Emphasize importance of Dolphin Kick—in all orientations, including Vertical Kick
• Emphasize importance of Kicking ability in all strokes
• Emphasize Kick Out distances—Count number of Kicks
• Measure breakout distances
• Train in all Strokes
• Race all 13 Olympic (pool) events at least once per season
• Focus on Stroke Counts first, then focus on Stroke Rates
• Develop Pace awareness and Pace Control
• Consider using objective descriptors for effort: Heart Rate, Percentage Effort
• Use the 4 Energy Zone Chart for education and references
• Use the Percentage Efforts Charts
• Compare the individual swimmer performance threshold across all events: Use—Club Rankings, Club Records, Ontario Rankings, National Rankings, FINA Points
To Train Endurance for an Event use double the distance (ie: 200 Free – Train and Race the 400 Free)
To Train Speed for an Event use half the distance (ie: 100 Back – Train and Race 50 Back)
Each Training Session requires: Theme and Purpose
Swimmers must know their best times (and splits) in all events
Swimmers must know how to use a Pace Clock
Swimmers need to start to take ownership & understanding over their Training

April 2012:
TOP 11 “Lessons Learned” from the 2012 Canadian Olympic and Para Trials:

* Dream Big-- Believe--Prepare Well!
* Take one day at a time - One race at a time.
* Get a Lane! You are not in the Game if you don’t have one!
* Execute the Race Plan
* Race with Composure and Confidence
* Better to be a tired finalist than a well rested spectator
* You are only as good as your next race!
* Those things you cheat on in practice show up in the moment of truth
* It’s not the suit that matters - it’s what’s in the suit that matters!
* Swimming at the Olympic level not only produces character...it reveals it!
* THANK YOUR SUPPORT TEAM!

Process VS Outcome: have a read
http://www.usaswimming.org/ViewNewsArticle.aspx?TabId=0&itemid=7712&mid=14491

And perhaps one of the most important “take aways” is get in the habit of doing a critical evaluation not only on your swimmer’s progress but also on yourself and develop your Gap Analysis to move the program/performance forward. This is the one thing Randy Bennett impressed on me. “And he always took responsibility if it was on him”

Gap Analysis:
Having the OHPSI program come into play for Swim Ontario has had many interesting opportunities and challenges. The first activity the program demanded was to have the coach establish the IEP (Individual Excellence Plan) for each of the identified swimmers. This plan had the foundation and philosophy of creating a plan that was not a normal club activity but rather a plan toward international focus and result. As we go through this season the next step is to undertake an exercise of evaluating the program and the results of the program. We also started measuring the performance in a “percentage back” form—the idea is to calculate the percentage from the target if not met. Whatever the target, whether it be TOP 5 world, Olympic Qualifying Standard or any provincial/national standard knowing how far away from the target helps. Now comes the exercise of closing the Gap, hence “Gap Analysis”. Here is
an example of the areas to critically evaluate the status of swimmer and the performance to date and what needs to be done in order achieve the standard or target.
Here is the example we are working with:

**Athlete Performance Assessment and Gap Analysis**

**Name:**  **Age:**  **Date:**  **Discipline:**  **Event:**

*Inserting a graph of best times over the 3-4 years vs world best times and Canadian best times each year allows you to estimate progress against the rest of the world. Or develop a similar type comparison fitting to the level of the swimmer:*

**Sport Performance Analysis**

I. **Technical – Swim Ability**
   - Stroke
   - Turns
   - Starts
   - Other

   *After an inventory of the above-Prioritize importance*

   **Monitoring**

II. **Tactical – Race Ability**

   **Monitoring**

   Utilize Race Analysis stats from this swimmer and key competitors to build an ideal race model
   Develop a race video database

III. **Physical Capabilities – Fitness and Physiology**

   Identify Strengths and Weaknesses for:
   - Energy Systems (Anaerobic and Aerobic)
   - Upper and Lower Body Strength and Power
   - Core Stability
   - Body Composition
   - Mobility and Agility
   - Other Factors important to swimming

   *Prioritize the Above*

**Psychology**

Insert key observations from coach and or Sport Psychologist that are relevant to both training and competition. Factors to be explored include: Race ability, arousal, recovery after negative experience, confidence (self)(coach), distractions, success, focus, discipline and other factors

**Monitoring**

TBD with Sport Psych

**Lifestyle and Personality**
Insert key observations about this swimmer's personality and lifestyle outside of swimming that may influence progression.

**Monitoring**

- Consider monitoring sleep, nutrition, fatigue
- Monitoring techniques need to be set up with specialists
- Consideration to life outside of sport is important as a balanced athlete is generally more successful

**Health Status**

Insert general observations of coach and specific information from medical doctor or other health professionals.

**Monitoring**

- A complete medical should be scheduled 1 x year
- A complete functional assessment should be done by Physiotherapist 1 x year
- Need to establish a blood profile with regular testing
- Other specific strategies outlined with health professionals

All the best, practice limiting your compromises and be relentless during the attention to detail process. Wishing Ontario and Canadian Swimming great success.

Med venlig hilsen - Best Regards

Dean