

**The KING Rambler, Vol. 1, No. 6  
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Happy New Year's, KING Families. Here's to committing to making 2018 a great year in and out of the pool! Arete here we come...

**I JUST LOVE WHAT YOU'VE  
DONE WITH THE PLACE!!!**

Those of you who have recently had the pleasure of attending practices at Evergreen pool will have noticed a design change. Coach Sean Piper has taken it on himself to gather great quotations, laminate them nicely, and plaster the columns at Evergreen with the sayings of champions. Each quotation is from someone who has achieved greatness in his or her field – mostly athletics, but not exclusively – and the collection as a whole represents a roadmap to success in and out of the pool. Swimmers and parents are encouraged to get to Evergreen practices early so as to read through and ponder a few quotations each time. It is never too late to start building the mind of a champion. Kudos for Coach Sean!!!



**WHEN IS NOT-SWIMMING  
REALLY SWIMMING??**

On one of our 'dryland' morning practices during the post-Christmas week, we watched the documentary *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, the single best movie about swimming ever made, and one of my favorites. Ostensibly, the movie tells the story of a 90-year old sushi maker from Tokyo, but it's really about swimming. Jiro owns a sushi-only restaurant (it looks like a diner, with seating for 10 at the bar) in a subway station in Tokyo, which happens to be one of only a handful of Michelin 3-star restaurants in the world. The décor is modest; the attraction is the sushi, which is *always* superb. The film is about craftsmanship; it is about working very hard and very long hours and caring deeply about what you do and never being satisfied and trying to do it perfectly; it is about starting with the very best ingredients (fish and rice) and preparing it step by step according to your highest expectations; it is about learning and getting better throughout a 75-year career in making sushi; it is about passing down the knowledge you have gained through long apprenticeships; it is about taking very simple elements and yet making tastes complex and life-changing; it is about finding what you love to do and giving yourself to your craft; it is about the arête of sushi. In other words, it is about the process of swimming excellence. Highly highly recommended to all seekers of excellence.

**KUDOS**

Congratulations to fourteen of our KING age group swimmers who have qualified to represent Pacific Northwest in the upcoming All-Star meet, where they will race against the best from Southern California, Oregon, and Pacific (northern California). They were chosen from their performances at the recent

14 & Under Champs meet, where KING won the team title for the umpteenth time in a row (but special for me because it was the first I've been associated with).

KING's All-Stars:

**Megan Lei**  
**Makenna Portmann**  
**Sloane Wichelmann**  
**Lily Siripipat**  
**Gillian Tu (alternate)**  
**Kyle Chew**  
**Maya Clise**  
**Sandy Li**  
**Hannah Weissman**  
**Maisy Barbosa**  
**Pauline Deng**  
**Mary Vertetis**  
**Colin Wood**  
**Justin Wang**

## **BABY-STEPPING TOWARDS EXCELLENCE**

The New Year is obviously the time for resolutions – concrete promises (or at least strong suggestions) to yourself about how you are going to live a better life this year than you did the last one. But everyone knows that most New Year's resolutions fail. The reason they fail is because they are too big -- they require huge changes, revolutions even, to our normal way of doing things. So we start with great motivation and momentum, which lasts a few days, but we quickly backslide and give up.

As a swimming example, suppose my walls are awful. I decide that I am going to do 8 dolphin kicks off every wall, because I saw Ryan Lochte do 8 dolphins off his walls at the Olympics. If I am used to doing zero or maybe one or two dolphins, and my physiology is prepared to do one or two dolphins and that's it, then my 'resolution'

will last only a few minutes until fatigue takes control and crushes it.

A solution to this resolution problem is to think small. Rather than attempting to leap from one dolphin to eight, instead step from one dolphin to two dolphins, every single time. Then, when that is your 'new normal,' progress to three, every single time. In this fashion, baby-step your way from your original one dolphin to your eventual goal of eight dolphins, but over the course of a season or two.

*Kaizen*, Japanese for 'continual improvement', is an important idea here. Rather than a revolutionary change that requires us to turn our entire life topsy-turvy, we are looking for a small change, or a series of small changes, that will eventually result in huge improvements. (Remember building Chartres Cathedral stone by stone.) Each of our KING swimmers should give some time to thinking about a simple question:

**What is a small -- 'easy' -- change that I could make that would make a big difference in my swimming?**

There are several 'places' to investigate, such as:

- = *Mental/psychological* (thinking 'better' so that you swimmer better and faster, especially under pressure)
- = *Technical* (improving your efficiency in the water, or improving your walls)
- = *Physiological* (building a bigger engine: Ferrari not a Kia)
- = *Tactical* (allocating your resources intelligently, so that you can be good from start to finish of your races)
- = *Lifestyle* (living a life of *arête*, in and out of the pool; nutrition, rest and recovery)
- = *Practice preparation* (pre-practice 'routine' that helps me get more out of each practice)
- Etc.

When you have decided upon a few changes that you can make and will make, write them down, post them around your house, then be ***consistently attentive*** to those things when you practice. Because the steps are small, the likelihood of success is high, so you can literally see and feel yourself getting better.

Small steps, CONSISTENTLY performed, create good habits. Constellations of good habits lead to great performances.

### **YOU SPENT ALL YOUR MONEY ON *WHAT*???**

I am an Olympics freak. Every two years I camp out for two weeks in front of my television and revel in watching the best athletes on the planet competing to their utmost. So when I discovered that the Criterion Collection had just compiled (and cleaned up and put into very good format) about 150-odd hours of video footage of Olympic competition from 1912 to 2012, I practically started hyperventilating. My Christmas money went toward purchasing the collection, which has just arrived, to my great pleasure. I've already cried over London 2012, Vancouver 2010, and Torino 2006, and there is SO much more!

Many of our winter sports have already begun their Olympic Trials, many of which are on television (NBC and its various spinoffs). Yesterday I was glued to the tube for the Trials of the men's Nordic Combined (ski jumping and cross country skiing paired) from Park City. The competition was riveting to the end. I hope that you all have an opportunity (or can make the opportunity) to watch the trials and especially the upcoming Olympics from South Korea. The beauty, grace, and *arête* of the athletes cannot fail to inspire you to reach for your best in your chosen sport and other activities.

### **THANKS FOR A HELPING HAND**

During our recent pool troubles up north, we were helped out a lot by Andrew Nguyen, head coach of Bellevue Swim Club, who graciously let us use some of their pool time when we were scrambling for water. This is sport as it should be: fierce competitors in the pool, respectful and helpful friends out of it. THANK YOU, ANDREW & BELLEVUE!!!

### **WORDS OF WISDOM**

**"I believe in the basics: attention to, and perfection of, tiny details that might commonly be overlooked. They are fundamental to your progress in basketball, business, and life. They are the difference between champions and near champions."**

**John Wooden, the greatest basketball coach ever**

Looking forward to a wonderful 2018,

Signing out, Coach Michael