

The KING Rambler, Vol. 1, No. 3
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**CONGRATULATIONS,
CHAMPIONS!!**

The King Aquatic Club triumphed over all comers at the Pacific Northwest 14 & Under Championships this past weekend. We swam well, especially in the evening finals sessions. And in the process we got a lot of good practice at swimming under pressure, at racing fast competitors, at challenging ourselves to swim fast in the morning and then come back to swim even faster at night, at maintaining our momentum from session to session over a multi-day meet, etc. The weekend was a fitting benchmark at the halfway point in our short course season. More later as we get all the statistics.

The KING Credo.

“Credo” is Latin for “I believe.” The Credo is a compilation of the attitudes and beliefs that I think serve as a roadmap to excellence (or success) in whatever you do, not just swimming. I first wrote the Credo when I coached the Salt Lake Country Club summer league team back in the late 1980’s. At the time I was a big fan (and have become an even bigger fan) of Coach John Wooden of UCLA basketball fame, and I’m sure this was my attempt at taking his Pyramid of Success and doing something similar for my swimming team. It has followed me ever since, changing the name of the team but little else.

This is the most important piece of paper detailing what our program is about. The affirmations serve as the attitudes and behaviors that KING coaches are trying to

teach our swimmers every day. Underlying its affirmations is the idea of *arête* (or *αρετη*) -- an idea I borrowed from ancient Greece (I’ve warned you in various emails that I am a geek) and that means, essentially, an all-encompassing excellence – athletic, intellectual, social, ethical, etc. In the end, this target is much more important than the ‘details’ of a program, such as how many yards this or that training group swims, or who is at what pool when, or how often the 11-12’s train each week.

>Credo, attached.

**SWIMMING AND DANCING OUR
WAY TOWARDS PERFECTION...**

I have stolen a lot of ideas from ballet. There are so many similarities between swimming and ballet: done well, they both result in beautiful and artistic movement; dancers and swimmers start young and gradually develop over a course of years; technique is a priority; all movements are whole body movements requiring coordination of multiple body parts; dancers and swimmers must maintain precise technique when fatigued, etc., etc.

I read an interesting article by Silas Farley, a dancer for the New York City Ballet, in the most recent issue of *Dance* magazine. I was first attracted by the title: “The Power of Striving for the Impossible Perfect.”

“Every morning begins with technique class, which is a refiner's fire. Class is designed to bring the entire body into order by accomplishing a systematically laid out vocabulary of movements as perfectly as possible. That can seem daunting... [b]ut if I accept from before entering the studio that balletic perfection is an impossibility, and *that the real goal is to arrive at a greater personal mastery than the previous day, then the class is a joy*. I can view the exercises as a treasure

trove to be mined. I can savor the intricacies of each step. *Every gesture becomes precious and worthy of my utmost attention.*" [my emphases]

Even the most intricate and athletic ballet routines performed by world-class dancers are comprised of fundamental positions and steps. And even while rehearsing full-length ballets like Swan Lake or Coppelia, the dancers spend time each day in 'technique class', practicing those simple fundamentals over and over, like 6-year old novices. How much like swimming!

If we can view daily our training as pursuit of mastery over swimming skills; if we can give our full attention to performing our skills perfectly, right now; if we can celebrate the incremental improvements we make from day to day – then we can appreciate and take joy in coming to practice, working hard, and perfecting ourselves.

Signing out, Coach Michael