

Q&A WITH COACH JEFF PEASE

By Karlyn Pipes-Neilsen

Coach Jeff Pease, head coach of North Coast Aquatics in Southern California, never loses sight of why he coaches—to help each athlete achieve his or her own personal greatness. The June issue of *Swimming World Magazine* features a Q & A with Pease, entitled, "A Passion for Coaching." In it, Pease talks about his background in swimming, how he founded the North Coast Aquatics team in 1979, his coaching philosophy and much more. Following is the second part of that interview, which focuses on one of his top swimmers, Jessie Schmitt.

Q: Swimming World Magazine: Coach Pease, tell us a little bit about one of your swimmers, Jessie Schmitt, who is a member of the U.S. junior national team.

A: Coach Jeff Pease: Right now, I have one of the best groups at North Coast Aquatics I have ever had, and they could end up as the best generation of swimmers I have ever coached. Next to Blake Hayter (who is also a member of the junior national team and will be attending Cal this fall), Jessie is the most accomplished of the group and can train consistently at a level that I have never seen before from any of my athletes.

Q: Can you give me a recent set that Jessie did that impressed you?

A: In March of 2006, she did a set of 3 x 400 yard IMs on 6 minutes, and went 4:26, 4:24 and 4:22. One year ago, for the same set, she went: 4:36, 4:34, 4:32.

Q: Wow, that is pretty impressive! At what age did she show promise in the IM?

A: She was always a nationally-ranked breaststroker, but when she moved into my group in 7th grade, she started showing promise in the IM. At 13, she qualified for the 2004 (Olympic) Trials in the 200 breast and time-trialed a 400 IM and went 4:57. We have worked on her other strokes, and now she has national cuts in free and fly. She still has a lot of work to do on backstroke, and her improvement in backstroke will truly determine her ability to compete at the next level.

Q: I have seen Jessie swim breaststroke, and I noticed that her head jerks. Does this concern you?

A: Yes, Jessie does throw her head forward on breast. She used to jerk it back, which I did not like, but we have gotten her to stay more in front with her head, and she is so good at getting up and over. At this point, I am not sure I need to monkey with her head.

Q: You mentioned that you have been working with Jessie on her backstroke technique. Is there anything that you would change about her breaststroke?

A: I am constantly telling her to extend to a full arm lockout in front as she is finishing her kick. She gets so much from the end of her kick that I want her to fully maximize the glide. Jessie can train at 18 cycles for 50 meters long course, which is really impressive. When she gets physically stronger, I plan on having her increase her stroke rate, but for now, I think her stroke is about where it needs to be for her 200 breast and 400 IM.

Q: Sounds like you have quite a swimmer in Jessie Schmitt.

A: Yes, I love coaching Jessie because she is the hardest working swimmer in my program, not just because she's the most accomplished.

Karlyn Pipes-Neilsen grew up in San Diego in the 1970s and swam for Coach Mike Troy. She currently holds over 46 FINA Masters world records, spanning three age groups. Karlyn and her husband, Eric, own Aquatic Edge, Inc. of Kona, Hawaii, and host swim technique clinics and camps worldwide.