

Check out what Dr. Alan Goldberg Has to Say On...

Dr. Alan Goldberg is a sports psychology consultant at USA Swimming.
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Last year, I didn't do well at J.O.'s. They're coming up again in a few weeks, and I'm afraid I'm not going to do well again. How do I bounce back from a disappointing performance at a big meet? (To work on between now and Summer J.O.'s)

One of the key ingredients in swimming fast when it counts the most is to stay focused on what is important and let everything else go. Your focus of concentration on the days leading up to a big meet and right before or during your races will always determine whether you swim fast or not. What's most important for you to focus on behind the blocks and in the water is what I call the "NOW". That is, you need to focus on what you are doing in the moment, one race at a time, and in that race, one stroke at a time. If you're worried about last J.O.'s, this a PAST focus. If you're worried that you might repeat your failures from last year, this is a FUTURE focus. Letting your concentration "time travel" back and forth between the past and the future will make you nervous and undercut your self-confidence. Instead, you need to discipline yourself to stay in the NOW over these next few weeks and during your big meet. If you find your thoughts and focus wandering back to last year or jumping ahead to the "what if's" of the future, then quickly bring yourself back to the NOW. Understand that what happened last year is in the past and therefore is totally out of your control. What times you'll get in this meet are in the future and that too is out of your direct control. To stay calm and confident, work on keeping your focus in the NOW, both in practice and during your races. Treat each race as a brand new event that is totally unrelated to any race that came before it.

"A goal without a plan is just a wish".

Gaston Rebuffat

"I know now that I can't control anything my competition does, so I have to concentrate on the things I can control.

Mary Descenza

