

# ***RACING WITH PASSION, HARD WORK, AND SMART WORK***

**BY JEFF GRACE, SWIMNEWS JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2006**

***Reprint with permission from Swim News***

When watching Aaron Peirsol, Brendan Hansen, and Ian Crocker swim, a lot of similarities can be seen. They are all world record holders, they all have tremendous technical skill in their individual specialties, and they all race with intensity and tremendous toughness.

These similarities have not appeared by chance. Each one of these great swimmers has another aspect in common: they are all coached by one man, Eddie Reese. Reese has been the Head Coach of the University of Texas since 1978 and in that time has coached some of the best swimmers in the world.

Throughout his coaching career, many people have come to Reese looking for the secret of his success, "I am constantly being asked to do talks all over. I'm looking for the secret of my success, but there isn't any," explains Reese. "I don't know why a lot of the things I do work, but they do and I do them."

Reese's philosophy is a simple one that is centered on three main principles: racing with passion, hard work, and smart work

When talking about what makes his three star pupils great, Reese feels that it comes down to one important similarity that they all have: a passion for racing.

"What makes them special is they all love to race," explains Reese. "Anybody who is at that level is a racer. Hansen races the clock, Peirsol will move from lane to lane to find people to race, and Crocker, he is a man who will race on the day when it counts."

Racing is the final part of a process of preparation, and Reese is a master of that process. When describing his program and how he trains each individual, he points out that he does not believe in training individuals for races too specifically, but he believes in giving them an aerobic background that will enable them to swim at the top of their potential.

"I had someone come to me years ago after his swimmer swam well in the 200 breaststroke but not in the 100 breaststroke. He said that they were going to go back and train for the 100. I told him that it was a mistake. None of us are good enough to do that. I know I am not."

"It turned out that his swimmer swam much worse in both the 100 and the 200 the next year. It is like Brooke Bennett. She won the 800 freestyle in 1996 and she upped her volume from 95,000 metres a week to 105,000 metres a week and her 200 freestyle became a lot better."

When describing how he plans his season, Reese likes to quote his

swimmers on their description of the two main phases of training. There is the "non-championship with real hard work" phase and then the "taper" phase.

During the "non-championship real hardwork" phase, Reese's group typically trains three mornings for an hour and half, five afternoons for two hours, and Saturday mornings for two hours all in the water, averaging 6000-7000 yards a workout. In addition to their swimming session, they also do dryland training five nights a week. Weights are done on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and an endurance circuit is done on Tuesdays and Thursdays

During this phase, Reese goes about developing the aerobic capabilities in his swimmers in many different ways, but the primary tool that he uses to build the athletes' aerobic base is freestyle. He designs sets where swimmers are challenged in both their swimming and kicking capabilities. Two typical sets that he uses are:

- 5 x 200 free swim (yards) on 2:15 holding between 2:00 and 2:05 + 100 free kick (yards) fast on 1:40.

- How many times you can make 50 swim (LCM) on 30, and 50 kick (LCM) on 40 sec.

As part of the process, Reese believes in having swimmers swim distance no matter what event they are training for. "I have told Peirsol that he can't leave the distance lane until he can go under 4:25 in the 500 (yards), Hansen can't leave the distance lane until he can go 4:30, and Crocker can't leave the distance lane until he can go 4:35."

Reese develops speed through training strength and power. "We train for speed in the weight room," states Reese. "The best example I can give is that I had a 5th-year senior that I had red-shirted come back and he had been swimming the 50 yard free at 20.1 or so for a long time. That year we started doing dead lifts and that was the only thing we changed and he ended up going 19.7 at the end of the season."

Along with a weight program that focuses on developing strength and power, Reese's swimmers do a lot of endurance work on land using body weight exercises and "wheels," which is an exercise where swimmers propel themselves up a ramp that is about 35 metres long with their knees on a two by four with wheels using their arms to move themselves forward.

The primary goal of the "non-championship real hard work" is to have the swimmers under a consistent amount of training stress both in the water and on dry land. "Basically I set up the season with one goal and we swim the rest of that way to that goal. The only way for the body to make changes is under stress, and I really believe that we have to keep the body under stress. Sometimes what we do doesn't make body logical sense, but sometimes things don't work in a body logical sense way."

When Reese sets up the second phase of his season, the "taper" phase, he sticks by the methods that have worked for him for years. "I believe in doing a drop taper where we will do a dramatic drop in our volume. It is what I have done for years and it works."

"Swimmers will feel terrible for the first little while, but it takes two to three weeks for the muscular system to recover and five to six weeks for the nervous system. When going through taper for each individual, I live by the principle that if they don't look good, rest them more."

When training, it doesn't matter what the plan is if you don't have the right environment to execute the plan. Reese's talents do not stop at the creation of the training plan. He knows how to develop an environment that the swimmers want to come to every day and give their very best efforts. His philosophy on this is as simple as all of his others, "You have to appeal to their sense of play and adventure. We are all still little kids at heart," explains Reese.

With the most recent successes of Texas's Big Three - Peirsol, Hansen and Crocker - Eddie Reese has proven once again that achieving success can be simple. The secret is no secret at all: he simply creates an environment where swimmers want to work, and develops a plan based on hard work and consistency. That's all there is to it. ●



## Finis Z2 Zoomers

**Does it feel like you are reaching limits on how fast you can swim or on the effectiveness of your workouts?**

*The new Zoomer Z2 can dramatically improve efficiency, allowing you to push beyond current limits because the kicking movement is easier to do.*

**Why is it important to make the kick easier?**

*The downward kicking movement requires great effort but produces very little propulsion. This high-resistance movement causes the upper leg (quads) to fatigue quickly. Once the quads fatigue, the legs become ineffective.*

*The streamlining element of the Z2 lets the foot slice down through the water more easily, dramatically decreasing the effort required to kick.*

*By decreasing loading of the quads, less lactic acid is produced, less oxygen is required and fatigue is postponed. Legs stay much more active throughout the workout. Active legs equal faster swimming, higher heart rates, better cardiovascular conditioning, and greater decreases in body fat percentage.*

*The Z2 model results from years of ongoing field research, and incorporates a series of design characteristics to truly feel like a natural extension of the foot.*

Visit [www.finisinc.com](http://www.finisinc.com)  
for additional training  
& product tips.

U.S. Patent #6979241

