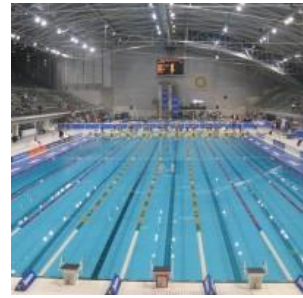


## Observations Australian Age Swimming Championships

There is something about watching really good swimmers. It doesn't matter how young or how old they are, they move through the water so fluently and gracefully. They just make it look so easy.

Over the past few days I attended the Australian Age Swimming Championships at the Sydney Olympic Aquatic Centre to see the best 12 to 18 year olds in the country race against each other. While I was there I looked out for common traits amongst the best of these swimmers.



### Distance per Stroke

The best swimmers moved a long way forward on each and every stroke. Their body position was excellent and this meant that they cut through the water with very little frontal resistance. These swimmers held the water and accelerated their body forward past their hand. Sometimes, their hand would exit the water in front of the position it entered the water... similar to the way Ian Thorpe used to swim.

### Excellent Skills

In a majority of 50m and 100m races, the swimmer who led at the 15 metre mark, won the race. The best swimmers have excellent skills. These include starts, turns and finishes. While their reaction time off the block was similar to their competitors, the power they obtained from pushing off the block at the start and their ability to streamline effectively through the water provided them with a distinct advantage.

### Coach / Swimmer Relationship

I watched closely as many of the best swimmers worked with their coaches. You could tell by body language and what they were saying to each other that they were on the same page. Coaches can be valuable assets to a swimmer at a meet, particularly when they remind them of things they should focus on throughout a race.

### A Hunger to Succeed

The best swimmers had a hunger.... A hunger to improve, a hunger to make finals and a hunger to win. They used positive self-talk and were surrounded by a positive support team. This included their coach, their parents and their team mates. But it was their intrinsic motivation which stood out. They were self-driven and used their coaches advice and tactics to their benefit. They had set goals and then gone after them with the knowledge that they had done all the training required.

### Learn and Develop Your Swimming Skills

For children aged 8 to 14 years, Behind the Goggles includes all the information they need to know to compete at a National Age level. There are tips and hints throughout the easy to read book that will help them to improve their swimming. They will learn about many of the areas that their coaches and parents have not talked to them about. Find out more at [Behind the Goggles](#).