

SENIOR

Coach of the Year Nominations

(Bio information was submitted by the person who submitted the nomination and has been edited only to delete references to non-USA Swimming programming.)

Jeff “Doc” Leid (LJAX)

He is a phenomenal coach, always going above and beyond for his kids. His rapport with his kids is beyond amazing, and is truly someone who embodies what we as USA swimming coaches all wish to achieve.

Michael Polak (TJCC)

I would like to nominate Mike Polak, Tucson Jewish Community Center. Mike has elevated the TJCC program to another level. He has successfully created a senior squad within the 160 member TJCC squad and has for the first time had swimmers qualify for Junior Nationals. Additionally, he has a swimmer qualified for the U.S. Open Water Championship along with the Arena Pro Swim Series. Mike's dedication and enthusiasm for the swimmers is incredible. Mike continues to raise the bar for his swimmers while helping each swimmer to obtain their maximum potential. Mike's outgoing personality on the pool deck is infectious, everyone has a better swim meet when he is coaching, including other coaches and the officials. Prior to coaching at the TJCC, Mike is particularly good with coaching distance swimmers as evidenced last Arizona Senior State Long Course when the top two 1500 finishers were boys who swam for Mike.

During the past year, Coach Michael Polak has elevated the Stingrays Senior program to a new level. Their achievements include:

- First TJCC swimmers to compete at Junior Nationals, with one individual and a relay. The highest rankings earned were 22nd and 23rd finishes in individual races.
- First time scoring at Senior Sectionals, finishing as the 6th highest scoring Arizona team at the 2014 SCY meet.
- 8th place at 2014 SC States & LC States – highest place ever for TJCC, and the first time finishing in the top 10. At Short-course States, Stingrays earned 2nd place individual high point for women and 3rd place individual high point for men.

Kevin Zacher (SAC)

I would like to nominate Kevin Zacher as AZ Senior coach of the year for 2014 based on his athletes results at the LC National meets and Dec short course National meets.

Bryan Crane (DTAC)

Bryan has coached for 19 years, taught for 23 years, and most recently with Desert Thunder Aquatics Club for 10.5 years. He also is currently the Director of Teams for SWIMkids USA. Bryan has trained under Bill Boomer at the Olympic training center for 5 years. Bryan has also spoken both Nationally and Internationally on many topics surrounding the swimming world. Bryan has coached many swimmers who have taken Top 10 finishes at State Champs, Individual State Titles, Top 10 National Performance Rankings, and many more

Scott Lathrop (DTAC)

Primarily for his unique development of Alec Lezcano since the age of 13 to break out performances at SC Senior Sectionals and the Mesa Grand Prix in 2014.

SCY Senior Sectionals

50 Free: dropped from 21.25 to 20.64

100 free: dropped from 46.22 to 44.96

200 free: dropped from 1:43.83 to 1:40.55

200 back: dropped from 1:53.19 to 1:51.30

LCM Grand Prix

50 Free: dropped from 24.64 to 23.76

100 free: dropped from 54.60 to 52.68

Alec's performances have afforded him the opportunity to earn a scholarship from the University of Tennessee.

Michelle Hojnacki (AZAC)

Michelle Hojnacki's accomplishments this year are a reflection of her lifetime achievements and a testament to her approach in teaching. The developmental integrity of a program is reflected in success after club. Michelle puts a premium on developing her athletes' character. The number of her former athletes pursuing coaching underscores her influence; four of her swimmers joined the coaching ranks this year. In essence, Michelle's program prepares athletes to be successful in all aspects of life long after their club careers are over.

Debbie Meek (NEP)

Debbie Meek has been coaching in Arizona for three years. In that time she has developed over twenty first time sectional qualifiers and a first time junior national qualifier. Her swimmers have been successful at the state, zone, sectional, and national level. Her commitment to her athletes to be their best both in and out of the pool is producing great results in the lives of her athletes.

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