

## *Out of the Blue : Sharing insights and positive perspectives about the sport of swimming from those that have lived the experience. By Cynthia Owens*

Yann de Fabrique is a returning member to the SCSC Board of Directors and his story is inspirational. Yann is a two time French Olympian (1992 and 1996) who achieved a world ranking of 7th in the 200 meter freestyle. He was also a 3-time All American at the University of North Carolina, from 1991-1995. From 1997 to 2000 Yann was the Assistant Swim Coach for the University of Georgia, under Jack Bauerle (US '08 Woman's Olympic Coach). There he met, fell in love with and married our own Julie Varozza, a long time SCSC alumnus, and 1-time NCAA champion herself. They have two young children. Yann is currently the General Manager of the Hotel Sierra at Rivermark, in Santa Clara.

Yann is a huge asset to our club because of his extensive swimming expertise. He brings a necessary 'global' perspective as well as considerable swim 'business' acumen to the Board of Directors. He has creative ideas on how to leverage the unparalleled SCSC legacy and the club's potential to restore our place as a leader locally, nationally and internationally.

I recently had the opportunity to interview Yann. Here are a few excerpts for you to enjoy.

### **Q: What has your swimming experience meant to you?**

Y: This sport has not only enabled me to learn how to be disciplined, the value of a hard work ethic, time management and goal setting, but has also taught me how to evaluate and how to persevere through challenges and obstacles. These life skills served me well not only in swimming, but also in life. In swimming, more often than not, you have to perform at an individual level and therefore succeed or fail on your own; this creates an environment where the responsibility is constantly on your own shoulders. The attributes that I have taken from the sport of swimming left an indelible, positive impact on my professional and personal life today.

### **Q: You know that only a small percentage of swimmers actually reach the Olympic pinnacle that you did. Therefore, in your opinion, how important is it for an organization to hold that high standard, especially when the competition is so stiff across the nation?**

YANN: It is really important for a world class organization like SCSC to have that standard. It is true that only a very small percentage will actually attain that goal, but every other swimmer, regardless of ability, benefits from the dream. It is the "process" and the "pursuit of *excellence*" that builds all of the attributes I mentioned in the previous answer; it's not the actual Olympic berth or the gold medals. The fact that you were in the same lane, doing the same workout, stroke for stroke means you will take away from the swimming experience the exact same life skills that those who reached the pinnacle attained. In addition, when a club aspires to "Olympism," every part of the program becomes a stepping stone, and therefore the quality of the program will just be better at every single level.

### **Q: What do you envision as a realistic future for this club and your kids here?**

YANN: I definitely envision this club putting swimmers on the US Olympic Team again. We already have the name recognition, the history, the legacy and the longest Olympic roster of any club in the world. If we are of a mind to do so, we can capitalize on these incredible, unique strengths. I envision this club one day being a magnet for top swimmers not only locally, but nationally as well. If my kids do swim here one day, and I hope they will, I envision them being encouraged to *dream* of going to the Olympics and being given the opportunity to attain their very highest potential.

*Out of the Blue* will become a regular monthly feature in our club newsletter to showcase stories of inspiration, motivation and humor from those who have strong ties to our great sport.