

CONDITIONING : THROWING AND SWIMMING ... THE SURPRISING RELATIONSHIP !!!

We have reproduced here and partially commented this article by Wayne GOLDMITH published recently in the Australian swimming federation bulletin and you will see that the **SAME CAUSES PRODUCE THE SAME EFFECTS**

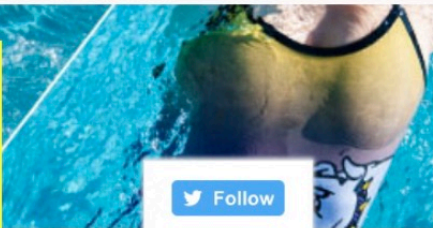
Gennadi Touretski – Recollections Of A Swimming Genius During His Days Down Under



Gennadi Touretsky - Photo Courtesy: Swimming Australia



IMPORTANT POINTS ; FOLLOW THE ARROWS



by **WAYNE GOLDSMITH**

21 August 2020, 02:16am



Gennadi Touretski passed away earlier this month, *Swimming World's* obituary accompanied by tributes, including one from swimmers who worked with him, at the helm **Alexander Popov**. Here, **Wayne Goldsmith** reflects on Touretski's time Down Under and the legacy he left world swimming.

Commentary: This commentary is intended to give honour and respect to an outstanding swimming coach and in my view a true swimming genius – Gennadi Touretski. I have written it from the perspective of my own direct experiences with Gennadi and have not commented on his many achievements before 1993 or his life after our last direct contact. I would not pretend to know him well but the time I did spend with him was rewarding and inspiring. There are a lot of “myths” about his coaching, particularly surrounding his work with the great Alex Popov so I have concentrated on only what I saw in person with my own eyes and on the discussions I had with him over an extended period of time. The focus of this paper is very much on his philosophies, his influence on the sport and his unique approach to coaching the sport of swimming. (NB: “NB xzxxz – Ed” notes are penned by Swimming World Editor Craig Lord)

Gennadi Touretski Background – Why Recruit a Russian?

In 1992, Don Talbot, the head coach of Australian Swimming, had, by his own high standards, a poor Olympics.

In private discussions, in meetings with Australia's high performance swimming coaching community and even in the media, Talbot admitted to asking himself some hard questions about the nation's approach to coaching swimmers capable of winning Olympic medals.

In one telling interview, Talbot reported publicly that for Australia to return to its position as a leading swimming nation and a reasserting its heritage as a dominant force at international level, it would be necessary for us to improve our capability in the area of sprinting.



Talbot said publicly that the nation needed to learn how other countries were coaching speed and that as most competitive swimming events at the Olympic Games and World Championships were 200 metres in length or less, our future success as a swimming nation would be dependent on us learning how to coach world-class sprinters.

Not long after, Talbot announced that in a major coup, he'd recruited the Russian coach of the Barcelona Olympic 50- and 100-metre champion Alex Popov: Gennadi Touretski.

First Impressions

My first experience with Gennadi was over a coffee at a small café near the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in Canberra. His English was apparently limited and he seemed tired, bored and uninterested in the discussions. He would occasionally offer up an idea or an anecdote to the conversation with the help of an interpreter but he appeared to be naturally shy, guarded and perhaps even a little suspicious.

On reflection after the meeting when I was asked, "What did you think of Gennadi Touretski?", I remember thinking and saying, "Not much. He might find it difficult here."

I was wrong.

The Moment That Changed Everything

The Australian Institute of Sport (A.I.S.) in the 1990s was a national focal point for coach education, training and development. It was common for sporting organizations to conduct national coach education conferences, workshops and seminars at the AIS and it was at one such coach education event in 1993 that Gennadi challenged – and to those who were listening with an open mind – changed the course of sprint swimming in Australia.



Gennadi Touretski and Alex Popov

With all the customary subtlety of a sledgehammer and through the use of a translator – (to this day I can't figure out how the person hired made it out of that room alive), Gennadi said (quotes taken directly from my contemporary notes of that meeting):

"I have long respected the swimmers and coaches of Australia and we (Russia) have studied your coaching methods in detail. However, I do not understand why you do so much training at threshold pace. It does not make sense to spend weeks and months training at such high intensities and not seeming to focus on the development of speed until late in your training cycle."



**YOU CAN
REPLACE THE
WORD
SWIMMING BY
"THROWING" !**

There were some murmurs and seat shifting in the audience.

That was just the warm-up! This from Gennadi Touretski went down like a bomb:



"Speed is the most precious thing in swimming. It is what it is all about. I do not understand why you would spend weeks and months not training speed, then hoping it will come back when you taper and race. I believe you must always be within one second of your personal best time at all times of the year. That you must train for speed all year round. That your sprinters must sprint often and race regularly throughout the year."

Now, you need to understand the context of that comment.

The Australian “method” for more than 30 years had always been to work hard developing an aerobic base for 10, 12, 16 weeks or even longer, then to significantly reduce training volume close to the competition.

This philosophy had grown from the work of **Forbes Carlile’s** “Speed Through Endurance” approach which had in turn been the basis for the coaching success of some of the nation’s greatest coaches, including **Bill Sweetenham, Laurie Lawrence, Joe King, Ken Wood** and even **Don Talbot** himself.

Australian coaches were known for their commitment and dedication to hard work and Australia’s international success in the 70s, 80s and 90s came from coaching programs which for the most part subscribed to the high work-ethic philosophy.



Now here was some Russian coach who could barely speak English standing there saying basically “You’ve got it wrong” to a room full of Australian coaches who believed in an ostensibly opposite coaching philosophy (NB – and had enjoyed a lot of combined success on the basis of their approach, while Touretski was talking at a time when Popov was his one big success – Ed).

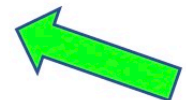
I remember sitting there feeling stunned, amazed and inspired. Who was this guy?

Re-Thinking the Coaching of Speed in Swimming

Forbes Carlile was a giant in the sport of swimming: a man of incredible intellect and insight and an individual whose influence on the sport here in Australia and around the world was – and still is considerable.

One of Forbes’ landmark works was his “Speed Through Endurance” philosophy which was in short:

- To swim fast, the swimmer must be efficient (i.e. physiologically and biomechanically);
- To be efficient, you need to repeat things many times;



- To swim fast, the swimmer must be efficient (i.e. physiologically and biomechanically);
- To be efficient, you need to repeat things many times;
- Therefore, the more you swim, the more efficient you become (i.e. as in physiological and biomechanical efficiency) and ...
- The faster you can swim!

This Speed through Endurance philosophy was at the very heart of swimming coaching planning and periodization in Australia for half a century such was the influence of Carlile.

However, coaches from other nations not in Carlile's considerable intellectual shadow, had come to see speed and speed development from a broad range of different perspectives.



Gennadi was one such coach.

I could talk about Gennadi and speed at length but here are some of his most important principles:

- Speed is the most important thing in swimming. It's what we train for. Everything is about speed;
- Tension is the enemy of speed;
- The faster you want to go – the more relaxed you need to be. Swimmers must learn to remain relaxed as speed increases – Relaxation and Speed are directly connected;
- Do not assume speed will return once it is lost. For that reason, include speed training throughout the year – at all times of the training program.



VERY LIKELY TO BE THE SAME FOR THROWS

Carlile was an outstanding coach, thinker and philosopher. Gennadi was – in his own way – a genius.

I was fortunate to know them both and to have had the opportunity to spend many hours discussing swimming philosophies with each of these remarkable swimming gurus.

In what Gennadi Touretski would call a "technique session", he would walk with the swimmers... usually
throughout the session, ask them to swim initially at a slow speed, then... use speed
until he would notice a technique inefficiency. He would...
happening with them and then re-co...

At the time... drills, a
series... training
of Ale...

The fu...
demon...

The CO...
As Gennadi...
more or les...

- Large... training;
- Two -... "heart-rate" sets each week;
- Sprinti... speed development training relatively close to the targeted competition;
- Taper, rest, race.
- Recover - and repeat the above.

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