

## Sports Publications

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# Parent's Guide

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## Swimming World and Junior Swimmer, Oct 2001 by Thompson, Bill

In Review

"The Parent's Guide to the Proper Psychological Care and Feeding of the Competitive Swimmer" By Dr. Keith Bell 2001

Published and distributed by Keel Publications, P.O. Box 160155, Austin, TX 78716  
(512-327-1280, [www.swimdoc.com](http://www.swimdoc.com))

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Does your swim team offer a parent handbook? Do you need guidance for new, well-intentioned parents and coaches? Check out "The Parent's Guide to the Proper Psychological Care and Feeding of the Competitive Swimmer." Don't let the title scare you; the book is a quick read with 80 pages of important, useful information.

The paperback edition contains large print with paragraphs of three to six sentences. At the beginning of most chapters, the key points are listed, followed by sub-headings. Each paragraph contains a detailed explanation in easy-to-understand terms.

Dr. Bell's style of writing is easy to read. It took just a little more than an hour to finish reading the book. The book is divided into five parts with 12 chapters:

Part I. The Benefits

Chapter 1. Competitive Swimming: The Best Choice

Chapter 2. The Lessons

Chapter 3. The Virtues Part II. The Team

Chapter 4. Selecting the Best Swimming Team for Your Child

Part III. Coach, Parent and Swimmer

Chapter 5. The Coach's Role

Chapter 6. The Parent's Role

Chapter 7. The Parent's Role in Helping to Create and Maintain a Positive Environment

Chapter 8. Your Bargain with Your Swimmer

Chapter 9. Your Swimmer's Role

Part IV. What to Expect

Chapter 10. The Natural Flow

Chapter 11. The Psychological Challenges

Part V. The Myths

Chapter 12. Don't Pave the Road with Good Intentions

An appendix is also included, entitled, "Ten Rules by which to Parent Your Swimmer."

The title of the book caught my eye because of several attempts on my own to begin creating a comprehensive handbook for new member parents. "The Parent's Guide" has done the job for me. I scrutinized every paragraph and chapter, looking for something with which to disagree. The information and suggestions contained will make better swim parents and better swim coaches.

The book begins with a celebration of the many benefits of competitive swimming for all children and adults. Dr. Bell repeatedly hits the mark, illustrating how swimming builds physical, psychological, emotional and even spiritual strength. Readers will be guided to appreciate "playing the game" with winning as the objective. Have fun while striving for excellence.

Parents and coaches who want to maximize the time, effort and cost of swimming will start off on "the right foot" by reading "The Parent's Guide." Support for the team and coach, sportsmanship and good communication skills are critical ingredients for a successful career in swimming. Real situations are described to help readers avoid sending mixed messages. Rules for positive behavior and choosing the right team are expertly explained with good humor.

Some adults need to "hear it from an expert" other than the coach. "The Parent's Guide to the Proper Psychological Care and Feeding of the Competitive Swimmer" will answer the call.

Goodbye anonymity. Hello fame. Her status as one of America's elite

individual medley performers firmly cemented, Maggie Bowen wasn't satisfied. So what if she was nationally acclaimed? Wasn't international glory even greater? Bowen knew the answer. It was a resounding "YES," in capital letters.

And so, the Auburn University sensation from Jackson, Miss. went to work with a plan for worldwide recognition tucked in her back pocket. Follow the blueprint and, sooner or later, Bowen would find herself standing atop swimming's highest podium. She would be a world champion.

Today, Bowen owns that title.

It's been a little more than two months since Bowen blasted the field in the 200 individual medley at the 9th FINA World Championships in Fukuoka, Japan. But every day, Bowen treasures her new station in the swimming world, the occasional autograph session in her hometown and, of course, the elevated expectations that accompany a world championship.

Maggie Bowen left for the Land of the Rising Sun as an aspiring athlete. She returned to the United States as a Rising Star.

Her tale is a special one:

#### Worldwide Wonder

When the plane carrying the members of the U.S. World Championship team landed in Fukuoka, Japan, Maggie Bowen deplaned as a longshot for global fame. Not only was she far from a leading candidate to win a world title, she was not even the mostballyhooed individual medley performer on the American team. That honor went to Kaitlin Sandeno.

But following Day One of the championships, Bowen quickly found her confidence surging and her standing as one of the premier individual medley performers in the world rapidly improving.

Following a solid qualifying mark in the morning prelims, Bowen produced a 4:39.06 effort in the final of the 400 meter IM to grab the silver medal behind Olympic champion Yana Klochkova of Ukraine. The finish not only met Bowen's goal of capturing a medal at Worlds, but it also fueled her confidence for later in the week.