



SWIM CHAMPIONS' FITTER & FASTER TOUR:  
Q&A WITH DAVE DURDEN  
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**ONE OF YOUR MENTORS IS DAVE MARSH. WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE LEADERSHIP LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED FROM HIM OVER THE YEARS?**

One of the most important leadership aspects I learned from David is having a great staff make great decisions, and promoting their autonomy within the team culture. Another important quality that I learned from David is allowing the team to see how important family is to him. It is important for young men to see and be a part of your family. David served as a living example of how to be a good husband and good father.

**HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU STARTED TO SWIM, AND DID YOU PLAY OTHER SPORTS?**

I started swimming competitively in our neighborhood summer league at the age of 5. I played every sport imaginable—and even some sports that were more backyard games such as stickball. I did not really have a focus on swimming until my junior year of high school.

**DO YOU ENJOY THE RECRUITING PROCESS?**

What I enjoy most about the recruiting process is having the opportunity to meet such great people. Everyone who moves through the recruiting process has a great story behind their swimming and a unique perspective that brought them to this point in their athletic career. It is wonderful to hear those stories. From a coaching perspective, I have learned more as a coach in being on the pool decks of club coaches when evaluating their athletes than I have learned any place else. It is my coaching education to watch and listen to the coaches of these great athletes.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK COLLEGE PROGRAMS CAN DO TO MAINTAIN THEIR SWIM TEAMS?**

Nort (Thornton) and our former longtime water polo coach Pete Cutino sought out former aquatic athletes to develop our aquatic endowment 20-plus years ago. We have an endowment that supports our four aquatic sports (men's and

women's swimming and diving plus water polo). With Nort's and Pete's foresight—and the generosity of our aquatic community—we are able to maintain a world-class level within our aquatic sports. Therefore, my advice is simple: start an endowment. Don't just talk about it...do it!

**TOM SHIELDS SWIMMING BACKSTROKE AT NCAAs WAS A SURPRISE FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE! TELL US ABOUT THAT.**

We believed Tom's best three individual events were the 200 free, 100 fly and 200 fly. We asked Tom last year to do the impossible of doubling the 200 free and 100 fly. So, as we moved into this year, we felt that Tom's 100 fly would be better than his 200 free individually. We spent most of the fall and into January experimenting with the 200 IM, and by the time we arrived at Pac-10s, we felt that Tom could race among the best in the 100 back. He got better every time he raced it, and that is a race in the short course yards format where he will be better for years to come.