

## *Why Parents Love Diving*

What are the benefits of having your children in a sport like diving? For all sports, the value of participation is dramatic. Countless studies draw a powerful link between participation in organized sports and success. Kids are more likely to finish school, go on to college, and to build beneficial social skills. According to these same studies they are less likely to get involved in undesirable activities. Organized sports programs such as McCormick Diving provide a safe place of encouragement, build self-esteem and teach critical social skills.

But a sport like diving has much more to offer. In some sports you can be a "natural." But diving favors the dedicated. Even highly talented divers have a difficult time if they practice intermittently. On the other hand, highly motivated athletes with a small amount of physical "talent" can become quite successful in diving. Again, the key is dedication. Many times we see young athletes who show very little promise for diving, but are absolutely fascinated by it. Perhaps it is the challenge, the feeling of accomplishment when they conquer their fears, or the sense that they belong to a special group - but they are HOOKED!

These kids stay with the sport for years, and every year they get better. Often they end up as successful NCAA divers, and some are even rewarded with athletic scholarships. But the real value of this perseverance is seen in the way the experience molds their character. Because whether you are the next US National Champion, or just hope to make the High School State Meet, **if you want to succeed in diving, you must face your fears.** This is as true for the Beginner as it is for the Olympic Champion. In diving, as in life, we must learn to manage fear in order to achieve anything worthwhile.

And when you see your child conquer a dive that has had her terrified for two weeks, and you watch the explosion of self confidence and accomplishment that follows, then you will know

first hand one of the great benefits of our sport. But they will need your help!

Most young children cannot see the long term benefits of our sport. The truth is that our society rarely encourages long term work for deeper rewards. Diving is not a sport of instant gratification, and your child may become frustrated - losing sight of the rewards due to the fear of an upcoming new skill.

By working together with the Coaching Staff, you can help your child through periods of frustration and anxiety by emphasizing the value of sacrifice, dedication and perseverance. Naturally, there will be days when a diver does not feel that the sacrifice is worth it. You as a parent must understand that the true reward will come when your child has pushed on through adversity, and has felt the rush of joy that comes only from accomplishing something truly difficult. Because most children are not accustomed to having to wait 6-8 months for gratification, they will need to work with the coaches to establish short term goals to keep them motivated. But hearing you affirm what the coaching staff is telling them at the pool can help. Specifically, that a goal is most satisfying when it is achieved after overcoming adversity.

We all must learn to conquer obstacles in our lives. Diving offers a safe and encouraging training ground for young people to face adversity and learn to overcome it. When your child experiences the satisfaction of realizing a lofty goal, he or she will be transformed. Limiting beliefs are shed, and a new concept of what is possible is born. With your support, McCormick Diving can be a strong positive force in your child's life, teaching principles of commitment, dedication and positive effort in the pursuit of a goal.

Congratulations on your first step into the world of Diving.