



Between the Lane Lines is our monthly conversation from the Brazadas coaching staff to our swim team families. We'll share more about what we're teaching, why we're teaching it, and the philosophy behind how we develop our swimmers. From training concepts and expectations to athlete development and coaching philosophy, our goal is to give families a better look at what happens on deck, and why we love the work we do with your swimmers.

The Head Coach's Corner

Erin Sanchez | Head Coach

Let's talk about something that I think deserves a little more attention in the swimming world... COLLEGE SWIMMING! One thing I absolutely love about this sport is that there truly is a place for just about every swimmer who wants to continue their journey beyond high school. And guess what? That doesn't have to mean Division II! There are so many wonderful opportunities through Division II, Division III, NAIA, junior colleges, and even collegiate club programs. Sometimes we get so caught up in the division attached to a school that we forget what really matters: finding the RIGHT fit for each athlete! Coming from someone who helped coach a high level- Division II team- College swimming isn't just about how fast you can go (although we definitely love a good PR!). It's about finding a place where you can grow as a student, an athlete, a teammate, and most importantly, as a person. There are incredibly talented swimmers, amazing coaches, and competitive programs at every level. And here's my favorite reminder: your swimming journey doesn't have to look like anyone else's to be successful!

Parents, this part is for you! When exploring college swimming, I encourage families to look at the WHOLE picture. Academics come first, always! Consider the financial commitment, academic scholarships, financial aid, location, campus environment, and what your swimmer actually wants out of their college experience. Athletic scholarships aren't the only way to make college affordable, and they certainly shouldn't be the entire plan. And swimmers, remember that college coaches are looking for more than just the numbers on a stopwatch. Your attitude, work ethic, academics, coachability, and ability to be a great teammate matter more than you might realize! Some swimmers develop early, some blossom later, and some haven't even scratched the surface of their potential by senior year. That's the beauty of this sport! As coaches, we're here to help our Brazadas families navigate these opportunities, ask the right questions, and find a path that makes sense for YOU. So dream big, keep working hard, and don't count yourself out just because your times don't match a Division I roster. There is so much more to college swimming than that, and your next chapter might be even better than you imagined!

Cheering you on,

Coach Erin ❤️🏊‍♀️

The Director's Desk

Craig Charlson | Aquatics Director

A Great Start to Year Two at Brazadas!

It's hard to believe we're already more than a month into our second year at Brazadas, and there's a lot to be excited about!

We kicked things off with our second annual Navy vs. White Brazadas Cup, with Team Navy taking home the win this year! Beyond the friendly competition, it was a great way to bring our swimmers and families together and start the season.

We're also seeing a big increase in the number of swimmers competing at meets, which is exactly what we want! Practices have been well attended, our swimmers are putting in the work, and we're seeing some great things happening in the water.

Another bright spot has been our inaugural Fall Swim League. It's been exciting to watch this new program take shape, and we're already seeing swimmers make the transition from Swim League into our year-round swim team. That's exactly the kind of pathway we hoped to create, giving more kids an opportunity to discover swimming and find their place at Brazadas.

A big shoutout to Head Coach Erin and our entire coaching staff for everything they've put into getting this season started. With new leadership, new programs, and plenty of moving pieces, they've done a great job building relationships with our swimmers and creating an environment where kids can learn, work hard, and enjoy being part of the team.

There's still plenty ahead of us, but as we begin Year Two, I'm encouraged by what we're building together. Thank you to our families for being part of it!

Now, speaking of our swimmers and their experiences in the sport, I wanted to share a little story from my own swimming days.

The Car Ride Home: Sometimes the Best Coaching Is No Coaching at All

Some of you might remember those old video cameras from back in the day. Not the little cameras we have on our phones today. I'm talking about those big camcorders you had to put on your shoulder, almost like you were filming the evening news.

Well, one Christmas, my dad got one. He was pretty excited about it, too.

And suddenly, he became the official videographer of my swimming career.

He filmed my races, which I thought was pretty cool. We could go back and watch them, see how I swam, and relive some of those moments. But then came the commentary. He wanted to talk about my races, what I could have done differently, what he noticed, and what I needed to work on.

Eventually, I remember having to tell him to stop.

Not because I didn't appreciate him being there. I did. And certainly not because he didn't care. He cared a great deal.

But swimming was my thing. I had coaches. I spent hours in the pool working on my strokes, turns, starts, and everything else. And sometimes, when I got home, I just wanted to be a kid and not talk about swimming anymore.

Looking back, I understand both sides a little better now. My dad was excited. He was involved. He wanted to help. Like so many parents, he was doing what he thought was best for me.

But what I really needed from him wasn't another coach. I needed my dad.

The Most Important Ten Minutes

Having spent much of my life around swimming, first as an athlete and later as a coach and director, I've seen the incredible impact parents have on their children's experiences in sports.

I've also seen how easy it is, with the best intentions, to turn every practice or meet into a performance review.

Think about the drive home after a swim meet. Your swimmer has probably been at the pool for hours. Maybe they swam a lifetime best. Maybe they missed a goal time. Maybe they had a fantastic race followed by one they'd rather forget.

By the time they get in the car, they're tired, hungry, and possibly still trying to make sense of their day.

And then comes the question: "What happened in that 100 freestyle?"

Sometimes that's the last thing they want to talk about.

There's actually research on parent-athlete conversations during the car ride home that reminds us how these interactions can shape a young athlete's experience in sports.

And there's a bigger reason this matters. An article published by the American Academy of Pediatrics discusses the often-cited estimate that 70% of young athletes leave organized sports before age 13. Pressure to succeed, burnout, and losing the enjoyment of sports are among the concerns.

That's a pretty staggering number when you think about it. We spend so much time helping our kids improve, but sometimes we forget one of the biggest reasons they started swimming in the first place. Because it was fun!

At Brazadas, we want our swimmers to work hard, set goals, and challenge themselves. But we also want them to love coming to the pool. Those things shouldn't be mutually exclusive.

Here are three things I'd encourage our Brazadas families to remember.

1. Give them a little space.

Not every race needs to be discussed immediately. Your swimmer might need time to process the day. Maybe they want to talk about it, and maybe they don't. Both are okay.

Sometimes the best thing you can do is ask where they want to eat.

2. Listen before offering advice.

Instead of immediately asking about their time, their turns, or why they breathed into the wall, try asking what they thought about their race. Or simply, "Did you have fun today?"

Let them lead the conversation. Research on parental involvement in youth sports reinforces the importance of athletes feeling understood and supported.

And remember, they already have coaches. Our coaches are watching their races, evaluating their progress, and helping them figure out what comes next.

3. Celebrate effort, growth, and the experience.

Swimming is a sport measured in hundredths of a second. It's easy to get caught up in times, places, qualifying standards, and personal bests.

But a swimmer can have a great race without going a best time. Maybe they improved their underwater kicks, held better technique, or showed the courage to race an event that scared them.

Those things matter, too.

Let Them Own Their Swimming

One of the things we want to build at Brazadas is ownership. We want our swimmers to take pride in their work, learn from setbacks, communicate with their coaches, and develop the confidence to handle challenges.

That's part of what we mean when we say we're building better swimmers and growing stronger people.

We want kids who love swimming, not just kids who are good at swimming.

I think back to my dad and that big video camera. I'm grateful he was there, that he cared enough to film my races, and that today I have those memories. But I'm also glad I eventually spoke up and told him what I needed.

So after your swimmer's next meet, maybe skip the race analysis. Tell them you loved watching them swim. Ask if they had fun. Or just enjoy the ride home together.

Because years from now, they might not remember their time in the 200 freestyle.

But they'll remember who was there cheering for them.

See you on deck,

Craig

Building the Foundation

Sam Ybarra | Head Age Group Coach

In this week's edition of "Between The Lane Lines," I wanted to use my soapbox to enlighten our readers on a story, a saying, and how that saying applies to Brazadas approaching the coming months of our season.

The story is one I heard as a boy from a friend of my grandfather's, Frank. Frank, a World War Two Veteran, was walking through the desolate wasteland in France for miles. With the men in his platoon starving and running out of food, he could see what looked like a massive abandoned dirt field in the distance. He could make out that it looked like plowed rows but couldn't see any crops.

As they made it to the field, one of the men in his platoon fell to his knees, exhausted, and said that there was no way he could continue on. Frank looked at him and said, "Buddy, don't fret. We are all walking on potatoes." (Potatoes grow underground, FYI.)

The idea that they found sustenance and a massive morale boost that propelled them to finish their march to the objective was profound. The saying stuck with Frank, and the story stuck with me.

I use the saying as a reference to be present. Even when things seem difficult, you could be walking on potatoes.

As Brazadas is approaching October, November, and December, and the sunlight dwindles, practices grow in intensity, and the weather gets colder, it's important to remember that we are all walking on potatoes.

We get to come to this beautiful facility, we get to train with our best friends, we get to swim outside year round, we get to go to meets to compete, we get to have an opportunity to get better every day.

It's never that we HAVE TO. Always that we GET TO.

We get the opportunity and are lucky with where and who we GET TO do it with. Always remember, we are walking on potatoes.

Coach Sam

CONTACT & RESOURCES

Brazadas Office at East Side Aquatic Center
(661) 456-8401 | swim@brazadas.org
Office Hours: Monday–Thursday, 1:00–5:00 PM

Head Coach — Erin Sanchez
erin@brazadas.org

Head Age Group Coach — Sam Ybarra
sam@brazadas.org

Aquatics Director — Craig Charlson
craig@brazadas.org

[TYR Team Store](#) | [Between the Lane Lines Archive](#) | [Swim Team Policies](#)

"Just Keep Swimming..."