

## BOY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

Of course in winter the temperatures drop and from time to time a winter cold front plunges our temps quite low. The question comes up as to how cold can it be while we train on the outside. First, USA Swimming does not have any rules or guidelines on this topic. They do have rules for the water temperature for competition, but neither water nor air temp requirements for training. Second, we enjoy a relatively temperate climate year round, many areas of this state and country train outdoors in much colder weather on a consistent basis. Programs in Jacksonville train outdoors and regularly are treated to temperatures under thirty degrees. In northern California the vast majority of pools are outdoors and yet their temps also plunge regularly, especially in areas like Sacramento. It is basically an everyday occurrence to have temps in the low twenty's for an AM practice.

When I coached here in Sarasota during my first tenure [1985 – 1990] I created the guideline that we would have practice until the temperatures hit thirty two [32] degrees or colder. If it was thirty three [33] degrees we had practice. I used the same rule of thumb during my nine years in Santa Barbara. During that first tenure I remember needing to cancel once, while hitting the thirty three mark maybe twice. What is magical about 32 degrees, except for it being the freezing point, absolutely nothing. As stated above, many teams around the country train successfully in temperatures in the 20's without any ill effects or any greater percentage of illnesses than those teams that do not. We have one swim parent with our club who trained outdoors in Atlanta in the first year of SwimAtlanta's existence, they trained outdoors year round that year. But they persevered and they and the program definitely became stronger for it.

Practice on Friday, January 16 was canceled because there was talk of the temps going below thirty degrees, in actuality it did not go below forty. Many swimmers and parents thought that would be the case again on Wednesday, January 21, and again the temperature at the start of practice was over forty degrees. There are some individuals who believe forty is too cold, others even believe fifty and warmer temps are still too cold. There is no way to get any type of consensus. So we will continue with what has been successful in the past and use the temperature of thirty two [32] degrees as the cut off point. If it is at or below for Sarasota [not Venice, Nokomis, LWR, etc.], at 4:30 am according to channel 31 [weather channel] then practice is canceled that morning. However, at times like winter break, when we get to train in the later morning hours it will be taken on an situational basis. This guideline for morning practice is for Senior and Junior groups during the school year.

Coach Klein