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The Relevance of Obtaining Performance at the Age of 6-7 Years at the Expense to Maximize the Potential at Junior Swimming

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The Relevance of Obtaining Performance at the Age of 6-7 Years at the Expense to Maximize the Potential at Junior Swimming

Amelia Elena STAN¹

Abstract

There is a tendency in our time to believe that the involvement of the child from early age in specialized training methods for competitions is suitable for swimmers, while their level of prediction is weak. For this reason, we try statistical reasoning and logic recurring resulting therefrom. If the values designation and significance correlation allows a close link between control trials: the number of sportsmen and sportswomen and times obtained in tops the leaderboard at the municipal level at the age of 6-7 years on contest and evolution and results to junior level I. The results obtained from control trials were determined to what extent the level of preparedness in children is relevant in predicting a diagnostic result in competitive level or training to junior. By studying the evolution of the road map until junior level is found that printing a rapid pace in the preparation for the results in addition of lost satisfaction athlete to lower competition time before the age junior and actual loss of energy resources for improving sports performance in competition. In management training to high performance and eliminating inadequate general physical training and waiving specific means unconnected with the age would lead to energy savings for recovery, and certainly improve athletic performance in future competitions. Another argument is economic reasons: these emphasize the fact that what should be confined to the sports ground until the pubertal selection for high performance swimming is actually promoting sports clubs and particularly private clubs. The state established clubs still maintain a certain level of moral discipline of preparing children in the sport.

Keywords: *swimming, correlation, prediction, technical training, performance.*

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1. Introduction

There is a tendency in our time to believe that the involvement of the child from early age in specialized training methods for competitions is suitable for swimmers, while their level of prediction is weak. For this reason, we try statistical reasoning and logic recurring resulting therefrom. If the values designation and significance correlation allows a close link between control trials: the number of sportsmen and sportswomen and times obtained in tops the leaderboard at the municipal level at the age of 6-7 years on contest and evolution and results to junior level I. The results obtained from control trials were determined to what extent the level of preparedness in children is relevant in predicting a diagnostic result in competitive level or training to junior.

It should be taken into account that „trends and methodological guidelines are the result of evolution theory and practice field” [4], that „the process of directing selection has a continuous character, representing an essential factor of performance, permanently correlated with other types of criteria assembled in a system that our sport theory and practice has created and successfully applied” [8].

„Practicing sports for obtaining performance is increasing in the sphere of interest, in one form or another because it has the most impetuous development in the last decades and has become appreciated as the social phenomenon of the highest rank” [9], reason for which parents are trying to discover in their children, the potential stars of swimming, without taking into account that „the role of technical training is very high and is in close interdependence with the other components; ... a good technical training, based on good physical training but in the absence of adequate psychological training, has the effect of modest performance” [6].

Age categories: Children - 10 - 11 years M and W, Cadets - 12, 13, 14 years M and 12 - 13 years W, Juniors - 15 - 16 years M, 14 - 15 years M, Youth - 17 - 18 years M and 16 - 17 years W and Seniors - 19 years and over M and 18 and over W.

The training of 6, 7, 8 and 9-year-old athletes has reached the same amount of time and intensity as the Juniors and even the Youth. Training in swimming at any stage of the training process at 6, 7, 8 or 9 is similar to that of the older ages. The training program takes place 5-6 days a week, with 2,30-4 hours of water training every day, plus 90-120 minutes of physical training on land 3 to 5 days a week.

2. Problem Statement

In our country, the idea of sports performance starts at the age of 6 years and the swimming programs are created according to the expectations of the parents, eager for immediate, spectacular results.

In the United States, for example, „By the time swimmers are 8 to 10 years old, they are ready to begin to consider the mental side of peak performance” [6: p. 43]. „A swimmer's ability to work can rise to world-class levels as early as ages 11 to 12 in women and 14 to 16 in men.” [6: p. 44].

3. Research Questions/Aims of the research

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that the current trend, at least in the capital of the country (Bucharest), in the training for optimal performance in swimming at young ages (6, 7, 8, 9, 10 years) results in loss of the athlete's satisfaction after reducing contest times before the juniors are arriving at Junior age. Besides that they lose also the actual all of energy resources needed to improve sports performance in competition before Junior age.

Using the observation method, we studied the results presented on the competition charts for swimming in 2016. From here, we extracted data that exemplify the situation of swimming as a competitive sport in the capital of our country.

By the graphic method we have developed graphs that highlight the number of swimmers per category of age from children to seniors level.

4. Research Methods

The study was conducted on the basis of the study of the starting lists submitted by the Municipality Natation Association of Bucharest (www.amnb.ro/competitii) of the competitions held in 2016. We also analyzed the structure of the swimming training at the age of 6-10 years.

5. Findings

- Times obtained in competitions at the age of 6 are very low compared to those of the Seniors.
- The training program is very large for ages 6, 7, 8, 9:
 - at Aqua Team sports clubs, Attack Team, Aqua Swim, Aqua Life Swim, Dinamo Bucharest etc. daily exercise training is between 150-240

minutes, Monday to Friday (some training clubs and Saturdays), plus 60-90 minutes of physical training.

- There is a visible difference between the number of children who start swimming at the age of 6 and the number of swimmers reaching Seniors age category. This aspect is natural, not all children have the ability to get the results of the selection. But how many children could do it if they do not reach a saturation level until the age at which they really need to start preparing for great performance.

- As shown in Chart 1, starting with the Juniors age category, the swimmers begin to disappear. There are no athletes in the age categories Youth and Seniors, which is why the competitions take place on 4 age categories: cadets, juniors, youth and seniors.

1. The Prichindel Cup Children 6 – 7 years (14 – 15.05.2016).

No.	Course	Age	Sex	No. swimmers	First time
1.	50 Freestyle	6	M	46	00:45:82
2.	50 Freestyle	7	M	70	00:38:20
3.	50 Freestyle	6	W	41	00:40:80
4.	50 Freestyle	7	W	50	00:42:30
5.	50 Breaststroke	6	M	38	00:59:02
6.	50 Breaststroke	7	M	57	00:50:15
7.	50 Breaststroke	6	W	32	01:01:34
8.	50 Breaststroke	7	W	41	00:55:80
9.	50 Backstroke	6	W	40	00:48:52
10.	50 Backstroke	7	W	50	00:46:71
11.	50 Backstroke	6	M	44	00:51:40
12.	50 Backstroke	7	M	68	00:46:80
13.	50 Butterfly	7	W	33	00:46:06
14.	50 Butterfly	7	M	49	00:48:80

2. Winter Children's Cup 7-8-9 Years (17 - 18. 12. 2016)

No.	Course	Age	Sex	No. swimmers	First time
1.	50 Freestyle	7	M	72	00:36:16
2.	50 Freestyle	8	M	108	00:32:35
3.	50 Freestyle	9	M	100	00:31:06
4.	50 Freestyle	7	W	46	00:36:71
5.	50 Freestyle	8	W	67	00:32:99
6.	50 Freestyle	9	W	86	00:32:90

7.	50 Breaststroke	7	M	63	00:47:59
8.	50 Breaststroke	8	M	102	00:45:01
9.	50 Breaststroke	9	M	94	00:36:16
10.	50 Breaststroke	7	W	37	00:43:09
11.	50 Breaststroke	8	W	63	00:47:03
12.	50 Breaststroke	9	W	82	00:43:64
13.	50 Backstroke	7	W	46	00:44:23
14.	50 Backstroke	8	W	67	00:39:61
15.	50 Backstroke	9	W	83	00:38:86
16.	50 Backstroke	7	M	73	00:42:05
17.	50 Backstroke	8	M	105	00:37:62
18.	50 Backstroke	9	M	97	00:36:38
19.	50 Butterfly	7	W	33	00:42:82
20.	50 Butterfly	8	W	53	00:36:19
21.	50 Butterfly	9	W	78	00:36:95
22.	50 Butterfly	7	M	57	00:41:52
23.	50 Butterfly	8	M	88	00:36:50
24.	50 Butterfly	9	M	87	00:34:75

3. Municipal Children's Championships 10 - 11 years (4 - 5 June 2016)

No.	Course	Age	Sex	No. swimmers	First time
1.	50 Freestyle	10	M	81	00:31:37
2.	50 Freestyle	11	M	75	00:29:87
3.	50 Freestyle	10	W	62	00:32:09
4.	50 Freestyle	11	W	48	00:31:68
5.	50 Breaststroke	10	M	61	00:40:44
6.	50 Backstroke	11	M	47	00:39:41
7.	50 Backstroke	10	W	43	00:42:35
8.	50 Backstroke	11	W	31	00:40:81
9.	50 Backstroke	10	W	34	00:36:03
10.	50 Backstroke	11	W	28	00:36:57
11.	50 Backstroke	10	M	43	00:36:59
12.	50 Backstroke	11	M	44	00:34:48
13.	50 Butterfly	10	W	34	00:34:43
14.	50 Butterfly	11	W	28	00:34:47
15.	50 Butterfly	10	M	48	00:33:99
16.	50 Butterfly	11	M	65	00:32:79

4. Municipal Cadets Championship - 12, 13, 14 years M and 12 - 13 years W (25 - 26.06.2016)

No	Course	Age	Sex	No. swimmers	First time
1.	50 Butterfly	12	W	13	00:31:00
2.	50 Butterfly	12	M	21	00:30:47
3.	100 Breaststroke	12	M	25	01:20:87
4.	100 Breaststroke	13	M	10	01:12:59
5.	100 Breaststroke	14	M	18	01:11:21
6.	100 Breaststroke	12	W	19	01:20:23
7.	100 Breaststroke	13	W	12	01:24:36
8.	100 Butterfly	12	M	19	01:06:39
9.	100 Butterfly	13	M	14	01:03:06
10.	100 Butterfly	14	M	15	01:01:66
11.	100 Butterfly	12	W	7	01:10:36
12.	100 Butterfly	13	W	6	01:13:46
13.	100 Freestyle	12	W	20	01:07:03
14.	100 Freestyle	13	W	17	01:03:90
15.	100 Freestyle	12	M	30	01:03:62
16.	100 Freestyle	13	M	29	00:58:47
17.	100 Freestyle	14	M	22	00:56:83
18.	100 Backstroke	12	W	9	01:13:50
19.	100 Backstroke	13	W	11	01:13:17
20.	100 Backstroke	12	M	11	01:08:77
21.	100 Backstroke	13	M	19	01:08:02
22.	100 Backstroke	14	M	18	01:02:40

5. AMNB OPEN Cup - Cadets, Junior, Youth and Seniors (25 - 26.10.2016)

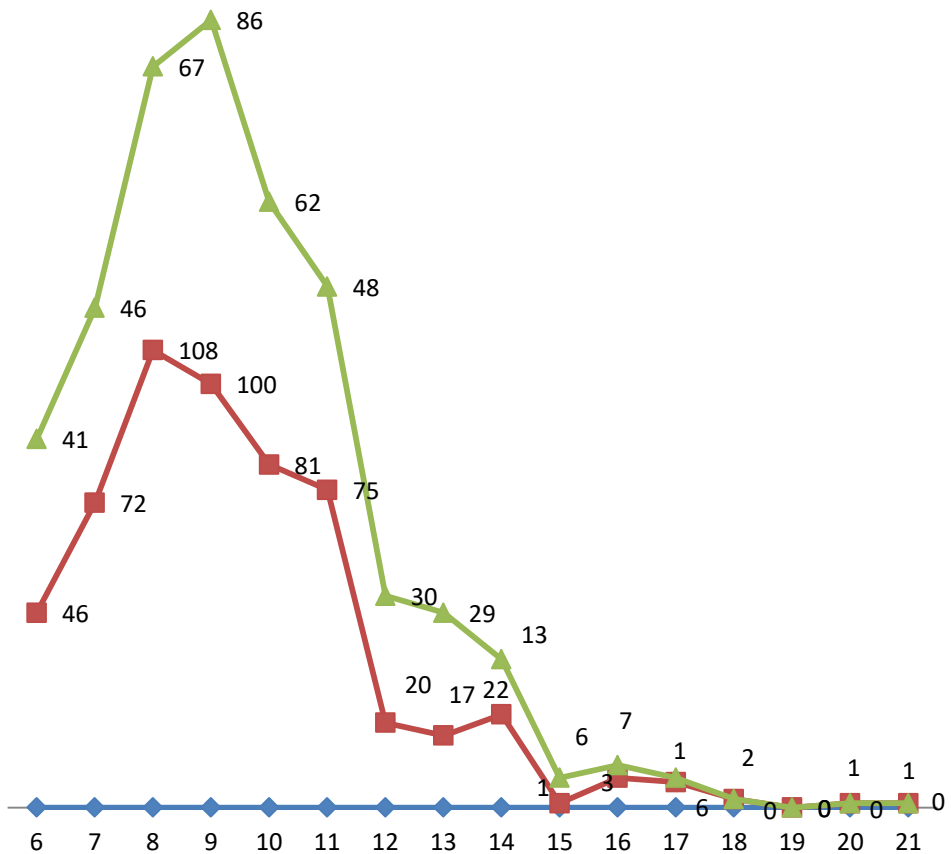
No	Course	Age	Sex	Number of swimmers	First time
1.	50 Freestyle	12 – 19 and over	M	101	00:24:64
2.	50 Freestyle	12 – 18 and over	W	63	00:27:74

At this competition 4 age of categories ranging from 12 to over 18 at Women and 19 at Men were attended. This results in an age difference between participants of at least 6 years at W and 7 years at M.

In the following we will represent in the graphical method, the values we obtained by comparing the number of athletes by age category.

Chart 1
50 m Freestyle M and W

50 m Freestyle



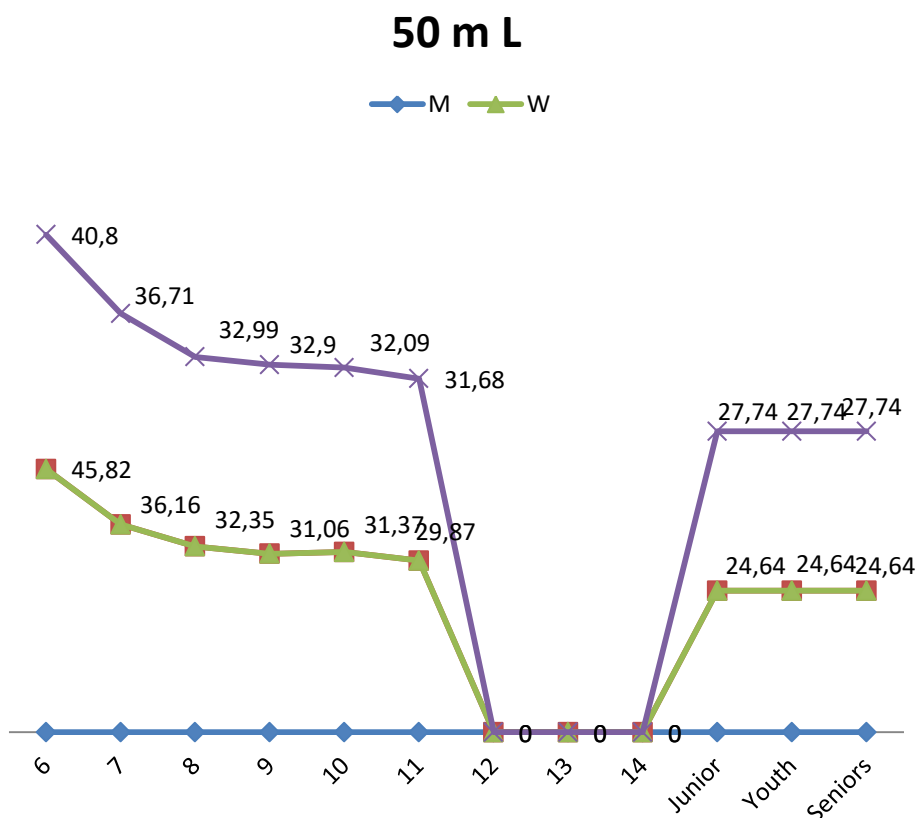
On the horizontal scale we presented the age from 6 to 21 years. Because the 50m Freestyle it wasn't in the cadets category, we have noticed the number of swimmers from the 100 m Freestyle.

Year of birth	Age	Number of swimmers	
		W	M
2002	14	11	22

2001	15	6	1
2000	16	3	7
1999	17	1	6
1998	18	0	2
1997	19	0	0
1996	20	0	1
1995	21	0	1

Next we represented the graphical method, the times the swimmers obtained by comparing them by age categories and strokes.

Chart 2
50 m Freestyle M and W



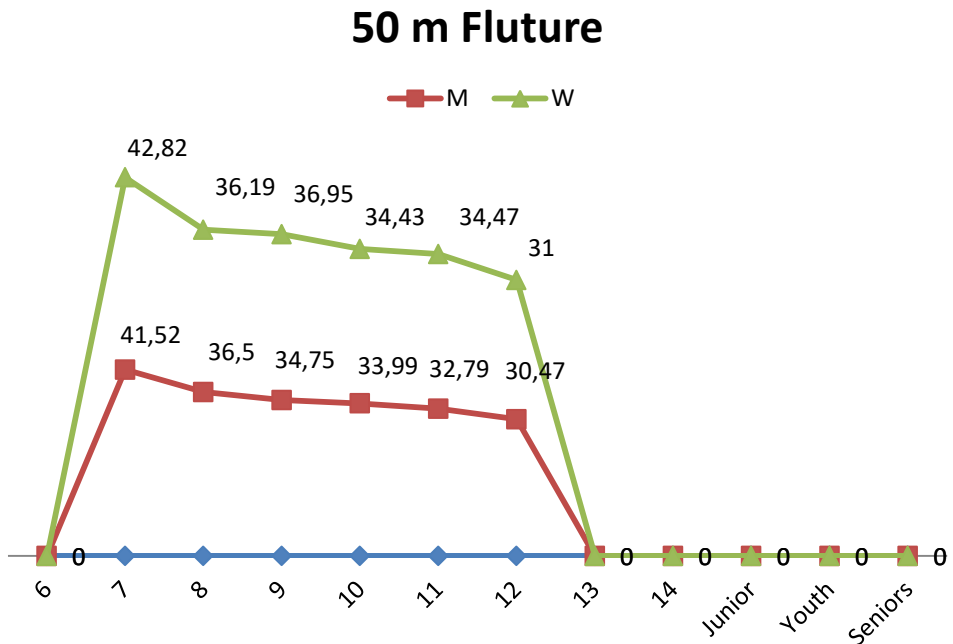
On the horizontal scale we presented the age from 6 to Junior (15 - 16 years M, 14 - 15 years M), Youth (17 - 18 years M and 16 - 17 years W) and Seniors (19 years and over M and 18 and over W).

We highlighted the results in the 50m freestyle M and W from the age of 6 to the seniors.

At 6 years in M, the time obtained was 45.82 seconds, at 7 years 36.16 seconds, at 8 years 32.35 seconds, at 9 years 31.06 seconds, at 10 years 29.87 seconds, at 11 years 29.87 seconds, then this stroke was not included to competitions at cadets category (12, 13, 14 years M and 12-13 years W). Given that the competitions for Youth, Junior and Seniors are running at the same time, the time was 24.64 sec (of a swimmer born 1995, so 21 years).

At 6 years in Women, the time obtained was 40.8 seconds, 7 years 36.71 seconds, 8 years 32.99 seconds, 9 years 32.9 seconds, 10 years 32.09 seconds, 11 years 31.68. This stroke was not included in competitions at cadets (12, 13, 14 years M and 12 - 13 years W). Given that the Youth, Junior and Seniors competitions are running at the same time, the first time was 27.74 seconds (of a woman swimmer born in 2002, so, 14 years).

Chart 3
50 m Butterfly M and W



In the Cadets, Juniors, Jouth and Seniors the 50 m Butterfly W and M was not included in the competition.

6. Discussions

Unlike other countries, such as the United States, where „coaches educate athletes and parents on the need for an ever-increasing commitment to training and competition in order to be optimally successful in the sport” [5: p. 47], the coach in our country respects the parent's desire to achieve high-performance results at very low ages, at 6, 7, 8, 9 years at all costs.

Who do we blame for exhaustive training at the age of 6, 7, 8 and 9? Coach? Or the parent? Or both of them? Why swimming has become a business? Why people are not thinking of swimming any more like a sport for health, that everyone should enjoy and not to obtain the best result, the best time on the scoring table as possible at the smallest possible age?

What is it to be gained, apart from flattering the pride of the parent or coach, that they have a child with a lot of exaggerated times at that biological age?

How can we be aware of the world that performance swimming, training for swimming does not start at 6 or 7 years of age?

„The sporting activity, , adds to the motor learning some special qualitative parameters, determined by the existence of the acute competitive situation, by the fact the individual acts in „limit” conditions of physical and psychical stress” [7]. If, from the early age, we raise the bar to the level of training of the juniors, the frustration of the parents, but most importantly, the disappointment of the young swimmers, the potential peaks of the missed swimming, will be enormous. A mystery will remain for the children. Why I was a champion when I was little boy or girl and now, when I'm older, I do not have the same results. Who can explain why? Who will make it clear that training for World Championships or the Olympics does not begin at age 6? Who will explain to them that the responsibility lies both with the parent, but especially with the coach.

„Psychological training both in training and in competitions, with a sustained motivation and will in which perseverance, patience, physical resistance to pain, renunciation” [2] are the characteristics of the winner. But whoever mentally supports the one who, at the age of 14 to 15, maybe even earlier it is done with swimming. And it is not from his fault. It is not his fault that the training was not appropriate for biological age from the beginning of his sport activity.

Any training process in any sport is based on a forecast. „In any forecast, there is also a risk factor that can influence negatively, such as: unforeseen atmospheric conditions, inappropriate nutrition, inappropriate medication, unforeseen accidents, entry or exit too early in sports form” [1].

But who prepares young swimmers is predicting that the competitive life of a 6, 7, 8 or 9 year old child will end even before it really has begun?

„Science of sport is multidisciplinary, being a border between biological and social sciences; it shows the close relationship between the fields of anatomy, biology, physiology, anthropology, sociology” [10]. These aspects seem to no longer be taken into account in the practice of competitive swimming in Bucharest. „ Sport has become a complex set of competing initiatives during the biggest consumers of funds, continuing to constantly seek new opportunities that it will safeguard the success of the millennium” [3].

The chances of success of Romanian swimmers are canceled just before they start the swimming training. Only by simply the fact that the coaches are not sufficiently stimulated financially to do their job with dedication and morality, above all, has the effect of failing the visibility of Romanian swimmers in the world.

Attracting the attention of international forums to this phenomenon will surely have no echoes. What we can do is find and lay down on paper, hoping that eventually something will change; in the best interests of our future international medalists.

7. Conclusions

By studying the evolution of the journey to junior level, it is noted that the pace of the training is being imprinted as very, very fast. In managing high-performance training and eliminating inappropriate means of general physical training and giving up specific means without any link to the age level would lead to energy savings in favor of recovery and certainly improve sports performance in competitions future.

Another argument, economic reasons, highlights the fact that what should be limited to mass sports up to the level of puberty selection for high performance swimming is actually the promotion of sports clubs and especially of private ones. In state-owned clubs there is still a certain level of moral discipline in preparing children for this sport.

Swimming is paid. The parent gives the money for the performer and looks for results. Immediate results. Those who are in charge of private swimming clubs are not interested in the moral aspect of preparing these children. They want to produce money. They do not want to produce performance, they want to squeeze money from naive parents or complexes of their own mistakes or failures, who do not know that high performance swimming is not at the age of 6 to 10 years. After the age of 10, 11 years

begins the actual training, only then it has to set the goals for swimming and life.

How can we change the perception of sporting performance and demand results?

Why at ministry level, in this case at the ministry of sports, performance is required, but does not evaluate the way up to the level of seniors?

Is anyone in the ministry of sport interested in how do we make swimmers? Results are required. Only at seniors level. It is not at interest how we get at seniors level. The ministry only wonders why we do not have seniors swimmers.

Through this paper I wanted, as shown in the graphs, to highlight the situation of swimming at the level of performance at local area.

With what we are starting, how many young swimmers we are going to dream of a world or Olympic champion and how many really get where they want.

In conclusion: Certainly, if the training evolves in the current rhythm, among the small swimmers, no one will even reach the seniors; without thinking about international participation.

Being directly involved in this subject as a former swimmer, as a trainer, as a teacher and as a mother I noticed these anomalies in the process of „training” the children in this wonderful sport.

My opinion is that if we do not change anything in this sport education system we will lose a lot of talent. Talented people who, misguided, will be lost on the road to great performance. And this will be done without them knowing why, neither their parents nor those responsible at higher level why our children stop halfway. They began swimming with the hundreds to 6-9 years of age, as in the age of youth to stay a few and again in seniors, as seen from the charts, will be only a swimmer or none after the age of 16 years in this sports performance.

Perhaps internationally, it is not relevant that we no longer have and will not have swimmers anymore. Because they just no need to compete with Romania. But we do not care?!

8. Acknowledgements:

I declare on my own responsibility that the subjects in this research were informed of their voluntary participation, they understood the information received and the possibility to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative consequences on them. This paper complies

with the ethical standards, and the research participants gave their consent to participate in this project.

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