

AFTERTHOUGHTS

As the sun sets outside on Saturday the 8th of May, 2016, the evening games are just about complete. Many of the staff have adjourned for a well deserved break. Me on the other hand, still in the classroom, picking up the last few items and packing the last few boxes for departure; while Rodney is still uploading game footage to USB Drives for the officials.

The completion of the 2016 District Select Camp (DSC) is slowly approaching and without warning a strange feeling overwhelmed me and once again, I became nostalgic as I have so many times before when a camp is about to end. I sat down in my chair, looked around the room and the calm air in the room was suddenly filled with the spirits of the staff and participants. I could see and hear them laughing and carrying on as though the room was full.

This year's camp was held in Indian Trail, North Carolina from Wednesday May 4th to Sunday May 8th. Some members of the staff arrived on Tuesday the 3rd to complete the set-up for the camp. In alphabetical order, the staff included: Rodney Bryant (VA), Camp Director: Michael Catalano (FL), Susan Collins (NC), Michael Ciesliga (TN), RIC: Jim Dewhirst (TN), Cameron Gentile (NC), Eric Gibson (FL), Richard Gioia (FL), Ron Johnson (NC), Bill Lyons (VA) and Joel Webster (NC).

The 2016 participants included, in alphabetical order: Thayer Alley (FL), William Anderson (GA), David Benmocha (FL), Anthony DiNova (FL), Jacob Goldsmith (FL), Richard Greene (VA), Erika Greenen (TN), Brian Hayes (VA), Thomas Josephson (NC), James Karigan (AL), Kevin Kelly (GA), Samantha Kline (FL), Lyle Lance (NC), Brent Lyon (TN), Michael Piatek (FL), Jason Rodriguez (MD), Michael Shapiro (MD), and William Walworth (GA).



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The days were long, starting at the break of dawn and finishing well into the dark evening. Some days lasted 15 hours with little down time. Many of the campers voiced that the camp could have been extended an additional day.

It was apparent that this year's camp produced a tempo that far-exceeded the expectations of those in attendance. This year's camp was a tremendous success and has far surpassed all of my expectations; and as each year passes, new challenges surface. The staff of DSC deserves sole credit for this success as they skated, spoke and led the participants to yet another unforgettable experience. As I look back at past camps, I can still envision some of the errors.

This year's camp has conquered and eliminated those errors and although this camp is no longer in its infancy stages, the learning curve is still being addressed. Thank you to Camp Captain, Brian Hayes for opening our eyes to a well needed adjustment for future camps. Brian Hayes was selected on the first day to be the captain of the participants. It is the captain's responsibility to ensure that the campers were on time for class and ice sessions, to have the proper schedule, and any other reasonable request by staff...and Brian took this position seriously...Brian's past military experience made him the perfect choice to herd up the bunch, be a conduit for the staff, provide mature advice, guidance and be a positive role model to the younger officials. It is these characteristics and demeanor that landed Brian the "Michael Frank Staff's Choice Award" this year...Congratulations once again Brian.

Other award winners included: Michael Piatek for receiving the "Top Fitness Award" and Erika Greenen for receiving both the "Top Academic Award" and "Camper's Choice Award." The "Camper's Choice Award" is a confidential vote from the participants for the camp participant they believe signifies the one official that stands out, the official that always give 100%, the official that has a humble and great attitude on and off the ice.

In addition, this year, one of the fitness tests conducted at the camp is a plank. The camp record prior to this year was 5 minutes and 3 seconds. Miss Greenen also broke this record holding a plank for a massive 6 minutes and 16 seconds!!! That will be hard to break!!!

I would like to reiterate what staff member Cameron Gentile mentioned in his closing statement...thank your families, spouses, significant others, and do something nice for them. Whether you realize it or not, they have an enormous amount of patience in what you consider participating in something you love. We all dedicate so much time to a program which provides the only reward of personal satisfaction.

Anyone can learn to develop a more positive, productive outlook on life. It's often just a matter of habit. Here are some strategies that can change negative attitudes into positive habits:

- Spend time with people who make you feel good. Then emulate them. People who can only see negatives tend to make more negatives happen. If you want to have a positive life experience, step out of your gloomy social circle and into the light. Friendship should be fun. If it doesn't make you happy, it's not working.
- Focus your life so that you're doing things that you like. Start taking steps to make your career fulfilling and enjoyable. Make time for your favorite activities and hobbies. Cut back on things that you do for negative reasons such as guilt or fear.
- Be good to your body. If you exercise and eat right, you will naturally feel better and more positive. That's because you will have more physical energy, and because doing something good for yourself creates positive internal dialogue – as in: “you look great!”

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- See the positive side of mistakes. Don't beat yourself up when you make a wrong move. Look for ways to learn from mistakes. Taking chances and learning from them makes you feel more in control of your life, mistakes and all.
- Goals are for greatness. Write a plan for yourself. Include short, medium, and long-term goals – from how you're going to get the ball rolling tomorrow, to where you want to be in ten years.
- Take the time. **Understand that achievement takes time.** Experts estimate that, on average, it takes about ten years to fulfill your potential in any given field. Learn to enjoy the process as well as the results.

I sincerely hope that all who read the above will take at least one portion and apply it to your everyday life. As we also told those in attendance at the camp, take portions of the instruction that you feel you need to work on and go forth and apply yourself to what you know you can do.

“imagine what you would attempt, if you knew you could not fail!”

One of the statements that was placed into my head during one of my first seminars in New York was that some of our best friends will evolve from being part of this program. It has proved to be one of the truest statements I ever heard as some of the closest friends I have developed are in the Officiating Program. I want each of you to know that it was been my pleasure meeting you and for those of you that have not already connected with me via social media, I am only a few clicks away.

On behalf of Jim Dewhirst, the Southeast District Referee-In-Chief, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the entire staff of the 2016 DSC. Your dedication to the program, to preparing and delivering instruction above and beyond the norm is an example of your love for the game. Believe it or not, it's the little things like this that mean a lot to people. THANK YOU ALL for your support. A special thank you to Mike Mulhall and his staff at Extreme Ice Center for the unending support during our training.

With that in mind, I will leave you with this...for those of you with unanswered dreams, set some guidelines and go out and achieve your goals. The road to success starts with the very first step. I wish you all the best of luck and hope to hear from each of you in the future and learn about your accomplishments.

Finally, I ask the 2016 attendees to please tell officials around you of the incredible experience at the DSC. The 2017 DSC will be posted sometime in the fall of this year.

All the best...

Michael Catalano
DSC Director

