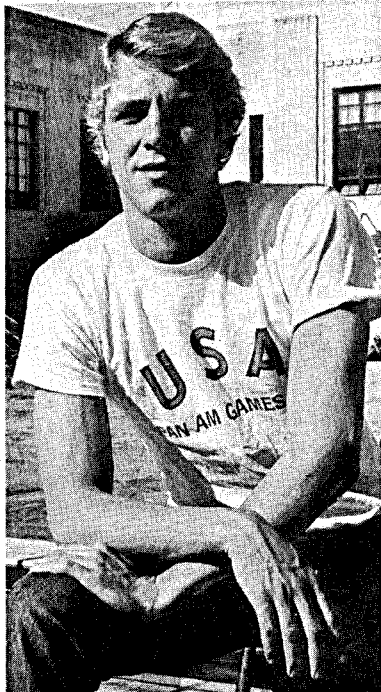


## HOW THEY TRAIN

# Peter Rocca

By Nort Thornton  
Swimming Coach  
Cal-Berkeley  
and Concord Swim Club



Peter Rocca is a 19-year-old sophomore at the University of California (Berkeley). He started swimming at the age of seven with a recreation program at Meadow Pools in Orinda, California. At eight, he joined the Aqua Bear Swim Club, also in Orinda, and trained under the watchful eye of Coach Ron Richison. Peter trained with the Aqua Bears for the next ten years.

Coach Richison has developed many national level swimmers, the most famous one probably being Karen Moe (now Karen Thornton). Karen was swimming world records in butterfly for Ron at the time Peter was developing. Obviously Coach Richison, now retired from AAU coaching, deserves most of the credit for developing Peter's fine techniques and talents.

During Peter's high school career at Campolindo High School in Moraga, California, also coached by Ron Richison, he averaged daily workout yardages of 8,000 yards his freshman year and gradually increased this to 12,000 yards as a senior. During this time he rarely used dry land exercise and it was obvious to me that even though he had shown great speed, he still lacked endurance and upper body strength.

Having Peter decide to enroll at Cal was a real boost to our new program here at Berkeley. Not only is he a talented swimmer, but he is a fine young man and a real leader. Once Peter was here on campus, we discussed what I felt it would take to put Peter on the U.S. Olympic team at Montreal. We set out on a program of dry land weight training and overdistance swimming with emphasis on stroke technique.

Peter's maximum yardage here at Cal

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### **...program of dryland weight training...**

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last year was during a short period in December where we averaged 20,000 yards a day in two workouts of two-and-a-half hours each. Then as classwork increased and our college dual meet season approached, we went to a three-day cycle for our training. This cycle included quantity work on Mondays, stroke work on Tuesdays and some sort of quality work on Wednesday, with a repeat of the cycle on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Our average yardage was 16,000 to 18,000 yards on Monday and Thursday, 12,000 to 16,000 yards on Tuesday and Friday and 10,000 to 15,000 yards on Wednesday and Saturday. We

went 11 sessions a week, two workouts a day on Monday through Friday with a single session on Saturday morning and total rest on Sunday.

After the short course season concluded with the indoor Nationals at Long Beach, Rocca took a few days off and then resumed training in preparation for the Olympic Trials. We felt that there was not enough time to return to heavy overdistance training at this point, so we had

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***"We stayed right on the same cycle, the only exception being a slight increase of yardage on the quantity days."***

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to work off the yardage base that Peter had accumulated earlier this winter. We stayed right on the same cycle, the only exception being a slight increase of yardage on the quantity days.

Rocca remained in school during the spring quarter and took a light load of classes. I felt this was very beneficial because it kept Peter's mind off the Trials. It wasn't until after final exams, the week before the Trials, and when we were actually in Long Beach, that Peter really began to feel the pressure. All along I had tried to assume a low profile regarding the Trials because I felt this would be to his advantage. Peter was still rather new to placing in finals at the national level, and I wasn't too sure he pictured himself as being successful at this high level.

There was never any question in my mind as to his ability, but I didn't want to build up any unnecessary pressures for him to have to cope with. Because of the regular school life at Cal, Rocca was able to stay very loose and relaxed during our preparation period, and this was a very positive part of our preparation.

I felt that we pretty well accomplished our goals. Peter gained the endurance and confidence he needed to swim 200's and finish strong on 100's. He also gained upper body strength which I felt increased his sprinting ability. We used a high speed isokinetic swim bench for much of Rocca's dry land training and we feel this gave him a great increase in quickness. I really feel the Olympics fell a year or two too soon for Peter—that is to say he hasn't reached his full strength or endurance potential (I am afraid this is not really good news for his competition).

Rocca also is an accomplished water polo player and has spent September through November playing polo every year since his freshman year of high school, with the exception of the fall of 1975 when he elected to stay out of school to concentrate on competing in the Pan American Games.

# ROCCA'S TYPICAL WORKOUTS

## Monday

AM (33 1/3 yd pool)

Swim 500, kick 500, pull 500

Swim 2 x 2,000 descending 1-2 and negative split (60 seconds rest)

Pull 2 x 5 x 133 1/3 (on 2 minutes) descending 1-5

Swim 4 x 500 (3 broken at 66y 2/3 yards with 5 seconds rest and the last one broken at 33 1/2 yards with 10 seconds rest)

Loosen down 200 yards

**Total = 9,000 yards**

PM (25 yd pool)

Warm-up 1 x 500 swim, 1 x 1000 kick (negative split), 4 x 400 pull (on the 5 1/2 minutes)

Swim 3 x 4 x 200—First set broken at 100's with 10 seconds rest (on the 3 minutes); second set broken at the 100's with 5 seconds rest (on the 1 minute and 50 seconds); third set straight swim (on the 2 minutes and 40 seconds)

Swim 3 x 5 x 100—first set on the 1 minute and 20 seconds, second set on the 1 minute and 15 seconds, third set on the 1 minute and 10 seconds

**Total = 9,000 yards**

**Day's total = 18,000 yards**

## Tuesday

AM (33 1/3 yard pool)

Swim and kick an 800 IM in reverse order, 500 yds of stroke work for each of fly, back, breast and free;

Swim 6 x 400 IM on the 6 minutes;

Swim 2 x 20 x 20 on the 20 seconds;

Turns, loosen down 200 yds

**Total = 8,500 yards**

PM (25 yd pool)

Swim 1 x 2000 (negative split), kick 4 x 100 (with 10 seconds rest) for each of fly, back breast and free, and pull 8 x 50 (with 10 seconds rest) for each of fly, back, breast and free;

Swim 4 x 100 of maximum distance per stroke work of each fly, back, breast and free;

Turns, loosen down 200 yds

**Total = 7,000 yards**

**Day's total = 13,500 yards**

Wednesday

AM (33 1/3 yd pool)

Swim 10 x 1 easy/2 hard, hypoxic kicking 15 x 1 easy (breathing 12) and 1 hard breathing 24), pull 5 x 400 with 30 seconds rest;

Swim 4 x 1000 descending 1-4 with 60 seconds rest (#1 straight swim, #2 broken at 200's with 10 seconds rest, #3 broken at 100's with 10 seconds rest, #4 broken at 66 2/3's with ten seconds rest);

Loosen down 200 yds

PM (25 yd pool)

Swim 1 negative split 1500 (descending by 500's), kick 1 x 400, and 6 x 100 on the 2 minutes, hypoxic pulling 1 x 400, and 12 x 50 on the 1 minute;

Swim 10 x 300 on the 4 1/2 minutes (200 timed & 50 easy & 50 easy);

Loosen down

**Total = 6,500 yards**

**Day's total = 15,000 yards**

### PROGRESSION OF TIMES

1972—100 yard freestyle, 50.3; 200 yard freestyle, 1:51.0

1973—100 yard backstroke, 55.3; 200 yard IM, 1:59.7

1974—100 yard backstroke, 51.6 (high school national record); 200 yard freestyle, 1:40.6

1975—100 yard backstroke, 51.3; 200 yard IM, 1:54.5

1976 at Cal—100 yard back, 49.9; 200 yard back, 1:48.9

Relays—100 yard freestyle, 44.9; 200 yard freestyle, 1:39.8



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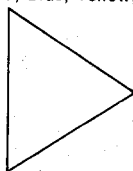
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