

Coach Paul Blair Honored

Coach Paul Blair of Little Rock, Ark., was honored by the International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) in May and will celebrate his 25th year of coaching the Arkansas Dolphins Swim Team at a blowout party on June 26.

ISHOF bestowed its Yutaka Terao Award on Coach Blair for "holding in high esteem the values of character in family, sport and business and personal commitment to athletes, friends, coaches and the sport of swimming."

As owner and coach of the Arkansas Dolphins, Blair has been an inspiration to thousands of kids. He demands discipline, hard work and dedication from his swimmers; and returns love, spirit and 100 percent effort to them.

His team won the men's national championship in 1989, and it has been Arkansas age group champions for most of the past 25 years. Blair has helped his swimmers become U.S. national champions, Olympic Trials qualifiers and national age group record holders, and they have won medals at the Olympics, World Champs and Pan Ams.

Recently, Coach Blair has been fighting cancer, a battle in which he continually has stayed one step ahead.

For information on the 25th anniversary celebration, visit www.arkansas-dolphins.org and click on "25th Year Celebration," or e-mail Coach Blair at LRockSwim@aol.com.



Paul Blair

People

Back on the Blocks. Ian Thorpe, world record holder and defending Olympic champion in the 400 meter freestyle, will swim his signature event in Athens this summer at the 2004

Olympic Games. Thorpe, who was disqualified in the 400 at the Aussie Olympic Trials in March for a false start, was given a second chance when Craig Stevens—the No. 2 qualifier to Grant Hackett—relinquished his position. Upon Stevens' announcement, Australian Swimming asked Thorpe (who was already a member of the Australian Olympic team, having qualified in the 100 and 200 free) if he would fill in. Stevens will still compete in his best event, the 1500, as well as the 4 x 200 free relay.

Signed. University of Texas superstars Aaron Peirsol and Brendan Hansen, and Stanford world record holder Tara Kirk have all hired sports agent Evan Morgenstein, head of PMG, to represent them. Texas' Ian Crocker inked a contract with Peter Carlisle of Octagon.

Suited. University of California senior Natalie Coughlin and cross-Bay rival Kirk have both signed lucrative deals with Speedo. Hansen and Peirsol have signed with NIKE.

Model Swimmer. Amanda is hot! Amanda Beard continues to attract the attention of magazine editors, as she has successfully added a modeling component to her flourishing swimming

