



AT Pages/Team Links/Info.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Home/Front Page | Clinics/Lessons |
| About/Contact | College |
| Advertise | High School |
| AT Feature | REC |
| Classifieds | Record Setters |
| Submissions | USA |

Featured Athlete/Coach Archives

Note: All Archive Files are in PDF Format.



Previous Featured Articles for 2006

- [County Championships Part 2](#)
- [Aquanuts-Walk on the Wild Side](#)
- [Make a Difference for Dave Maddan](#)
- [County Championships Part 1](#)
- [WCSC Part 1](#)

**AT Feature:
Miramonte High School
Head Water Polo Coach, James Lathrop-**

by Gordon Johnson



"My challenges as a coach this year include trying to get a relatively young team to improve throughout the season and become comfortable playing well together." -- Miramonte High School Head Water Polo Coach, James Lathrop

Taking over the head coach position in sports is a challenge, but taking over a head coach position from a "legend" is one of the most difficult challenges a new coach can face. George Siefert, former 49ers head coach, took on one of the toughest jobs of all - taking over for Bill Walsh after the 49ers won a Super Bowl. And yet he went on to win the Super Bowl in his first season! High school sports, of course, are different, with changing squads each year as players go on to graduate. But, James Lathrop took on a big challenge when he accepted the head coaching position of the successful Miramonte Water Polo program from coaching legend Bill Brown. After all, Coach Brown has a pool complex named after him!

[WCSC Part 2](#)
[WCSC Part 3](#)
[Concord City Championships](#)
[VSA Championships Part B](#)
[VSA Championships Part A](#)
[Rec Championships 7/29 and 7/30](#)
[Far Western LC Championships](#)
[Terrapins Qualify 10 for Nationals](#)
[Mitchell and Mom Inspire Heim-Bowen](#)
[2004 Olympic Gold Medalist Brendan Hansen](#)
[2006 NCS Championships](#)
[2006 BCS Championships](#)

Previous Featured Articles for 2005

[2005 County Championship](#)
[Black Hawk Strikes Back at VSA Championship](#)
[Vista Diablo & Diablo Water Polo's Mason Kinnard](#)
[Gehringer Gators Go Gang Busters...](#)
[Michael Phelps at May's Stanford Grand Prix](#)
[NCS in Walnut Creek](#)
[De La Salle Invitational](#)
[College Park HS & Gehringer Gators](#)
[Cal-Stanford Men Part 3](#)
[Cal-Stanford Men Part 2](#)
[Cal-Stanford Men Part 1](#)
[Cal-Stanford Women Diving](#)
[Cal-Stanford Women, Part 2](#)
[Cal-Stanford Women, Part 1](#)
[Olympian, Michael Phelps](#)
[Olympian, Ian Crocker](#)

Previous Featured Articles for 2004

[Concord Pool Progress Photos](#)
[Forrest White](#)
[Olympic Diver Kimiko Soldati-Part 2](#)
[Olympic Diver Kimiko Soldati-Part 1](#)
[DVC Men's Water Polo](#)
[Aquatic Times Hosts Bottomline Aquatic Clinic](#)
[Pacific Masters 2004 SC Champs](#)

Coach Lathrop had one big advantage over George Siefert, though - Bill Brown stayed around to help. And, James and Bill, together with the rest of the assistant coaches and players went on to become the 2005 NCS champions!

Now in his second year, and after having lost some talented seniors to graduation, Coach Lathrop has settled in for the long haul. This year, Miramonte has a group of talented players, including three seniors who were all-league last year (Jackson Sharf, Max Parrague and Nick McGourty) and a great goalie and team leader, Miles Gilhuly. They started the season finishing third in their first tournament, going 4-1, and are gearing up to face Alhambra September 27.

Coaching water polo must seem as natural as breathing for Coach Lathrop, with his background in water polo - he was an All-American at Miramonte in 1994 and 1995 and went on to play for the powerful Cal Bears where he was team captain in 2000. He also coaches Lamorinda Water Polo.

Aquatic Times Online Magazine (ATOM) interviewed Coach Lathrop. We think after reading his answers you will find that he is a unique coach and is up to the challenge.

ATOM: What are your team goals for the year?

Coach Lathrop: As a coaching staff, we set goals of teaching the team certain techniques and improving as a team. The players set their own goals for the season which include playing well at the various tournaments and performing well during our DFAL league competition. The ultimate goal for the players would be to play well at the end of the season, which would give the team a chance to win the NCS title.

ATOM: What's your biggest challenge (as a coach or as a team) this year?

Coach Lathrop: My challenges as a coach this year include trying to get a relatively young team to improve throughout the season and become comfortable playing well together. This year, we have several sophomores on the varsity team which is somewhat rare for our program. So far, the upper classmen have done a great job of helping those players learn the Miramonte system and feel part of the team.

[Natalie Coughlin in at NorCal in WC Olympic Diver, Kimiko Hirai Soldati](#)
[Crow Canyon Coach Matt Struempf](#)
[Aquanut Show II](#)
[Aquanut Show I](#)
[County Championships II](#)
[County Championships I](#)
[VSA's Championchips](#)
[Caitlyn Gunn](#)
[Tri-Valley Master Water Polo Team](#)
[Forest Parks' Marco Brunamonti](#)
[Crow Canyon Coaches](#)
[WHO's Charlotte Brown](#)
[Antioch Delta Skimmer, Emily Gonzales](#)
[Bentley HS and WCAB Swimmer, Dash Rothberg](#)
[Lamorinda Water Polo Coach, Boyd LaChance](#)
[USA Swimmer, Jocelyn Phillips](#)
[Local Artist Suzy Wear](#)
[Coach Mike Bottom-Cal](#)
[Josh Scott-Syracuse University](#)
[Hannah Hair-Vista Diablo](#)
[Billy Hayes-De La Salle](#)
[Coach Mike Heaney-Walnut Creek Aquabears](#)
[Chris Danesi-Terrapins](#)
[McCall Dorr-Orinda Aquatics'](#)
[Kelly Koch-Diablo Valley College](#)
[Olympian Jeff Rouse](#)

Previous Featured Articles for 2003

[Coach Leonard Chaplin-DVC](#)
[Coach Brian Holm-Dewing Park](#)
[Coaches From Around the League 4](#)
[Coaches From Around the League 3](#)
[Coaches From Around the League 2](#)
[Coaches From Around the League 1](#)
[Coaches-Walnut Creek Championships](#)
[AT Features REC Assistant Coaches](#)
[Gehring Gators Coaching Staff](#)
[Kelly McCabe-Diablo Valley College](#)
[Katy Erhardt-Diablo Valley College](#)
[Blake Henderson](#)

ATOM: Do you have any interesting and/or inspirational stories to share (about you or your team)?

Coach Lathrop: One inspirational aspect of our team is that we do not cut any players. This usually means we carry a rather large roster. It is always rewarding, as a coach, to see the players who do not get to play much in the games, improve throughout the season and to make such a large contribution to the team without playing in the games... I cannot imagine what our team would be like without these players.

The other inspirational story would be Bill Brown. Bill is now coaching in his 40th season for Miramonte Water Polo. His accolades as a head coach are countless and he is still a huge part of what makes Miramonte water polo great. Even as an assistant, his ability to teach the game and his willingness to work with players at any ability level make him a great example for all coaches as well as a valuable part of the program.

ATOM: What are your thoughts about following in the footsteps of coaching legend, Bill Brown?

Coach Lathrop: I guess I got into this the previous question, but I cannot begin to explain what an honor it is to work with and follow Bill. He was my first swim coach at the age of 5 and has always been my mentor in the game of polo. He also has led me to become a teacher and now helps me as a friend. I have learned so much about coaching, teaching and life from Bill. We have a great working relationship, in which either of us feels comfortable assuming the role of the "head coach" at any time, with the ultimate goal of helping the team always in mind.

ATOM: What was one of your most memorable moments either as a player or coach?

Coach Lathrop: My most memorable moments are not really moments, but rather relationships. As a player and coach I have learned so many life lessons and met so many great people. My best friends are still the guys that I started playing water polo with when I was 14. My most memorable moments are usually not of games but of practices and interactions with players and coaches. I enjoy training and helping others to train, learn and improve.

Some memorable times in my career as a player and a coach would include:

- playing with my brother at Cal
- being brought up to the MHS varsity team when I was a sophomore

Sean Peneyra-Vista Diablo
Sam Craven-Vista Diablo
Jocelyn Chang
Ryan Wall
Dewing Park &un Girls
Jimmy Bailey-Diablo Valley College
Blake Henderson
Chelsea Allard
Suzanne Heim-Bowen
Dave Boatwright
Lauren Rogers

-going on my first traveling trip with the Cal team
-watching players who I coached play in college
-coaching the group at MHS now because I taught many of them
how to swim when they were 5 years old
-playing at the Big Splash (Cal vs. Stanford)

ATOM: What are the strengths of your team this year?

Coach Lathrop: I would have to start with our defense. We are anchored by a strong goalie and players who are able to defend the 2-meter man well. That, combined with smart defensive players on the perimeter, allow us to play several defenses.

ATOM: How do you motivate your team after winning NCS Championships in 2005?

Coach Lathrop: It is not that hard to motivate the team to want to win NCS again. They do all the motivating themselves. I think that each group of seniors wants to go out winning their last game and the only way to do that is to win NCS. The leadership on this team has been great so far this season and hopefully will continue throughout the season.

Is your team not being covered in AT??? Do you have a swimmer(s)/coach that you would like to be featured in AT? Then give us a call at 60 WATER.

Copyright © 2003-2006 Aquatic Times

[Back to Top](#)