

SKWIM Joins Lifeguards & Coaches in Global Outreach



Not only is SKWIM helping local pools and beachfronts by offering community gameplay, this growing water-disk sport is restoring excitement and vigor among lifesavers and coaches who are playing to improve safety, teamwork, fitness and fun in the water!



'Goal action' in a school P.E. game of SKWIM, at Corona Del Mar Middle and High School in Newport Beach CA USA

SKWIM International founder, youth coach and lifeguard Kevin McCarthy, says SKWIM is ideal for guards and swim coaches, because the game blends swimming with dynamics from surfing and water rescue. Teammates must simultaneously track players and the hydroplaning disk, while executing plays and responding to constant change in the water.



Where ancient disk sports began; SKWIM Hellas players enjoy long summers and mild winters in Chalcis, Greece

SKWIM is faster, yet easier to play than other water sports, therefore is attracting people from all walks of life. The game is adding to the foundational ‘pool’ of new swimmers, therefore qualifying more youth for entry to what Coach Kevin calls - the Olympic Aquatic Sports Group (those played internationally and in the Olympics). Aquatics sports have not kept pace with the growth of land-based sports. McCarthy attributes the historically slow growth of aquatics to the challenge of designing safer and easier game play for the liquid medium.



SKWIM Programming is growing in Southern California, where the game was first conceived 30 years ago.

Entry to Olympic water sports has traditionally been a steep and narrow path because the prerequisite has been swim racing, and relative to the global sports market, very few kids reach that level of proficiency. “SKWIM begins in shallow water and is played with swim fins in deep water, so entry to team water play is much easier and safer for the beginning swimmer and the general public,” reasons McCarthy, “therefore the path to community aquatic sports participation and competition is now significantly broadened.”



“SKWIM brings the ‘popular-game’ recipe to aquatics, with fresh ingredients and direction.”



Lower left, a blue SKWIM Fin takes up a seat in a capacity crowd to see this SKWIM P.E. tournament in California

Mark Rauterkus, head coach of Carnegie Mellon University Women's Water Polo Team, and organizer of Pittsburgh Schools 'Summer Dreamers' water sports camp that reaches more than 200 inter-city participants states, "SKWIM in Pittsburgh is a fantastic team game that introduces rules, terms and concepts that are new, yet simple for the kids to follow. Lessons in sportsmanship, teamwork, fair play and swimming stamina are central to our SKWIM play."



"Kids like to compete, yet boys and girls, fast and slow, can all find roles within their teams and in this game."

SKWIM is friendly to the kids and to the others at the pool too." Mark continues, "The kids like to compete, yet boys and girls, fast and slow, can all find roles within their teams and in this game. We see the kids developing new friendships, new relationships, and then being rewarded through their success with SKWIM".

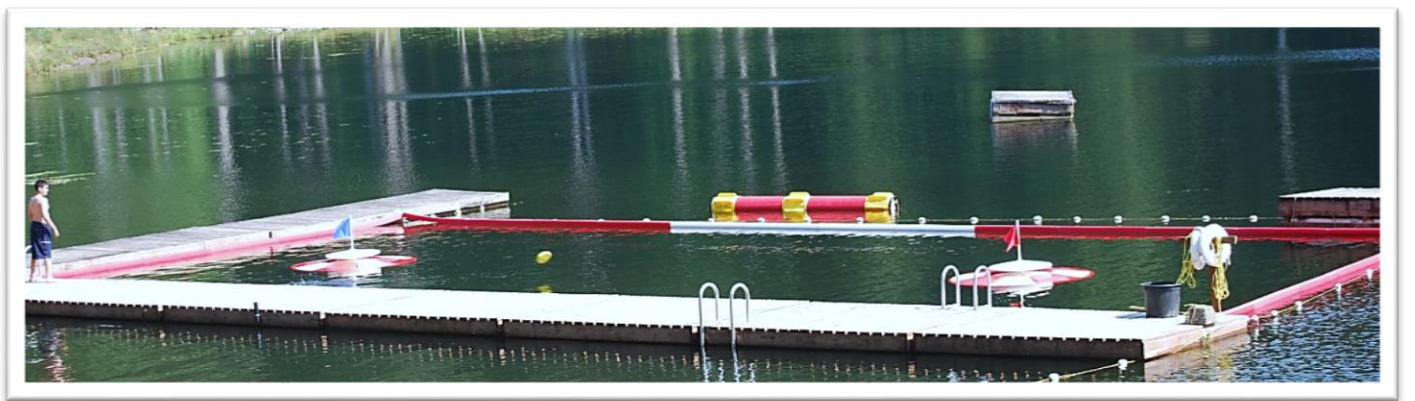
SKWIM uses a tried and true recipe for success. "The top-10 sports in the world today are all 'interactive games'; easy to learn and fun to play. Sporting games are a microcosm of life and tell an interpersonal story, therefore people become engaged, provided there is immediate and lasting returns. The most popular games are 'lifetime games', learned in childhood, played through adulthood, and therefore build tradition," adds

McCarthy; “SKWIM brings the ‘popular-game’ recipe to aquatics, with fresh ingredients and direction. Every great game has three fundamental ingredients; a specialized implement (ball), unique scoring goal, and performance footwear. For this game we wanted an implement that would glide on the water; be lighter, faster, yet softer for added safety.” The SKWIM Disk, the result of years in design and material testing, can amaze onlookers in a game of catch, but truly captivates a crowd in team competition. The disk can quickly cover 40 meters on the water, made to go straight, to curve, or just plop.



Miami Florida USA, just north of Key Biscayne, an open-water SKWIM System awaits summer camp action.

Suspended between air and water, gravity and buoyancy, the SKWIM goals may be the most unique in all of sports. The large life-ring-shaped platforms are positioned away from the end wall, and steadied with a single plastic chain and weight below. Scoring can occur anywhere around the goal, front, side or behind, prompting a more creative offense and more fluid defense. Says Coach Kevin, “scoring is as big as your imagination!”



Afternoon glass for SKWIM on an emerald pond; Boy Scouts of America, Camp Pigott’s Hughes Lake, Snohomish Washington USA



Play intensifies on one side of the goal leaving a lone blue-team player wide open and waiting, in school P.E. action; So Cal USA

In an instant, a player can score from any distance or angle, so the game requires heightened awareness in the water, increased skill, movement and flow. Played at the air-water interface, the disk must touch water between offensive players and before a score. There are one, two and three point shots in SKWIM, depending on the distance of the score. SKWIM is one of very few games whereby a goal-to-goal score is not only probable but likely in any given game.



School students on field trip gain open-water SKWIM instruction on Lake Hannan at CYO Camp Hamilton, Monroe WA USA

But McCarthy points to the specialized swim fins as the most critical ingredient. “Every great game is enhanced by good footwear, and SKWIM is no exception. SKWIM fins not only improve confidence and safety, they enable beginning and average swimmers, for the first time, to engage in a competitive water sports game. Unlike sports that might require elite speed and power, SKWIM emphasizes finesse, teamwork and playmaking. “The SKWIM fins really make the difference in getting the general public in the water playing,” McCarthy smiles. Though small and soft, the elliptical fin shape works for all strokes and provides power where you need it most, with a 25% performance advantage in speed, maneuverability and safety, he claims.

“Ocean Lifeguards, Coastguard Rescue Swimmers and Navy Seals all use swim fins to enhance performance. SKWIM players are in good company with swim fins, and they are safer too, especially in open-water.”



SKWIM Fins are like aquatic propellers for kids, like ice skates or soccer shoes, they enhance speed and maneuverability.

SKWIM International is making special efforts to promote lifeguard competition, because the SKWIM mission is to, get more youth and adults swimming with fins, provide a game that quickly improves water skills and thus, save lives. McCarthy states, “Water safety is at the heart of our mission. With 3500 lives lost each year in the USA and roughly 500,000 globally, we need to make learning to swim more inviting, more engaging and an international team effort. SKWIM is a fin-swimming game and educates the public on the significant safety advantage and enjoyment in using fins in open-water. Currently, most all open-water rescues are of bathers not wearing swim fins”, McCarthy claims. “Without swim fins, most of us are at the mercy of currents and rip tides. Ocean guards, Seals, CGRS’s, bodysurfers, snorkelers and divers know, but everyone needs to know!”



SKWIM Fins aglow, Boy Scouts find open-water SKWIM adventure in the pristine waters of Camp Pigott’s Hughes Lake; WA USA

International SKWIM Certification (ISC) includes open-water safety standards for tracking each player’s progress. Players obtaining ISC Level – 4, qualify to play open-water SKWIM. ISC Level - 5 SKWIM Masters (16 and up) are our lifesavers, coaches and officials, and take the game with them to college and beyond.



Child's play! "SKWIM is great for kids just learning to swim because it give them purpose beyond the swimming."

Unlike some water sports, SKWIM is coached from the water, at all levels. "We clinic coaches to teach SKWIM by example and to mentor players from their level! All SKWIM programs have certified coaches in the water and separate lifeguards on deck, because safety is rule one. SKWIM is great for beginners! As Coach Rauterkus points out, "We play a lot of SKWIM in the shallow end of the pool, even on our first day of camp. The entry to the game is nearly immediate. Everyone plays. Everyone can come to understand the rules and contribute. Passing is easy. It isn't always accurate or ideal at the beginning, but it is still empowering for the new players."

SKWIM International is launching a unique water safety campaign for 2016, entitled *Dare to C.A.R.E.!* "About half of us (world population) can swim and half of us can't. C.A.R.E. is our acronym for Critical Aquatic Response Education. In SKWIM we teach that open water safety starts with authentic care and concern for others. Globally, about half of us have a precious lifesaving gift to share with those that have not.



The SKWIM coach (often a guardian or parent) teaches and mentors from the water, right at the kid's level.

Our “ice bucket” challenge to all swimmers for 2016 is to have the care, courage and commitment to help just one other deserving human being to swim, by way of personal instruction or by sponsorship! You can do it! And SKWIM is a great way to learn! So bring a non-swimming friend to a ‘Skwimming pool’ and just watch what happens!” exclaims McCarthy. SKWIM is often played ‘family style’ in variable depth pools, allowing players of all abilities and ages to engage and have fun. Many players become quite skilled in the game while still learning to swim. They contribute to a team effort and feel valued, which keeps them coming back.



SKWIM Founder and Lifeguard Kevin McCarthy postgame with YMCA Lifeguard staff in Jacksonville Florida USA

Lifeguards now own an international sports game that keeps them in top shape, and provides valuable team-building skills, for themselves and the entire community. The outer SKWIM goal ramp resembles a large red and white ‘Life-Ring’, signifying both the trademark and mission of the game. Rescuers need more help in saving lives, and the public deserves water safety education. More guards are recognizing SKWIM as a lifesaving partner and a helping-hand in water safety. To find out more about SKWIM and ISC programming go to — www.skwiminternational.org or contact kevin@skwim.net



