

## **JAMES SWEENEY, HEAD COACH**

Coach James brings with him a wealth of swimming and coaching experience from being an All-American swimmer to coaching Olympic Medalists. Coach James is the Aquatics Directors and Head Swim Coach of the Gulliver Schools Team, the Gulliver Swim Club, and the Gulliver Masters Swim Club. Coach James began his coaching career at Bernal's Gator Swim Club under the mentoring of Olympic head coach Joe Bernal. He became an assistant coach at the University of Massachusetts while obtaining his Master's degree in Sport Management. He then went on to the University of Miami where he was an assistant coach before being promoted to head coach. During his tenure as head coach at the University of Miami, he also co-owned and operated a USS swim team named Cane Aquatics, a Master's swim team, a swim lesson program, and a summer sports camp. Subsequent to Miami, he moved back to the Boston area and got involved with a local YMCA in Andover prior to moving to Illinois. While in Illinois, he served as the CEO/Head Coach of the Naperville Swim Team and later assisted with the Academy Bullet Swim Team before moving back to Miami to work at Gulliver.

As Head Coach at Gulliver Schools, the team has enjoyed tremendous success. In his first season, the girl's varsity team finished 9<sup>th</sup> at the State Championships while the boys finished in 4<sup>th</sup>: the boy's highest finish in 20 years. Individually the boy's team broke several pool records at Ransom and had one high school state champion. The girl's team broke one school record and had one high school state champion who also broke a National USA Swimming record. This year the girl's team improved to 2<sup>nd</sup> place at Districts, while the boy's team won the District Championships.

While coaching with the Academy Bullets Swim Team, the team won the Illinois Age Group and Senior Championships in short course and in long course, while James's swimmers broke 10 team records.

As the CEO/Head Coach of the Naperville Swim Team, the team experienced its best success in years.

- Team Awarded Silver Medal Status through USA Swimming's 2007 National Club Excellence Program.
- Member of the Illinois Swimming Age Group Committee
- Produced 5 Senior National Qualifiers, 2 US Open Qualifiers with 1 Finalist
- 4 Junior National Qualifiers, 9 NCSA Junior National Qualifiers with 1 Finalist
- 3 National Age Group USA Top 16 Swims
- 30 Sectional Finalists, 78 JO Finalists with 8 Champions
- 7 Team Illinois Swimmers with 23 Finalists and 4 Champions
- 59 New Team Records, 73 Illinois Top Ten Times
- 2 High School State Champions
- One swimmer selected for the USA Swimming Zone Select Camp

During his tenure at the Andover/North Andover YMCA as the Director of Competitive Swimming, he was the Head Swim Coach of the ANA Hurricanes Swim Team, and also

directed the Masters and Synchronized swimming teams. In taking over the swim team, he brought immediate excellence to the program in placing 2<sup>nd</sup> at both the short course and long course New England Age Group Championships, the teams highest placing in history. His swimmers also reached the following heights:

- 5 National Top 16 swimmers, including two ranked in the top 3 in the U.S.
- 4 Sectional Finalists
- 6 New England Age Group High Point Champions, 30 Individual Event Champions, 78 Finalists
- 2 Swimmers selected for the USA Swimming Zone Select Camp
- 2 Zone Champions and 11 Zone Finalists
- 2 Massachusetts State High School Champions
- 29 YMCA National Qualifiers
- 12 Outstanding New England swimmers, and 44 Top Ten New England swimmers

He was at the University of Miami for a total of nine years as both an assistant coach for four years and head coach for five years. During his tenure as the head coach, his team's experienced great success in the pool and in the classroom. His swimmers achieved the following:

- 4 Olympians who achieved 1 Gold Medal and 1 Bronze Medal
- 2 National Champions and 2 National Record Holders- Canada and the Virgin Islands
- 8 NCAA All Americans
- The women's team finished top 20 at the NCAA Championships 4 out of 5 years
- 1 Big East Swimmer of the Year, 13 Big East Champions, 5 Big East Records
- Women's team broke 8 out of 14 individual and 4 out of 5 relay school records
- In combined NCAA and CSCAA GPA Rankings in 2002, the women's team ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, the men 3<sup>rd</sup>, and combined 1<sup>st</sup> in the country
- Women's team GPA of 3.43 was a school record, Men's team GPA of 3.21 was 7<sup>th</sup> best ever

His USA swimming team also produced several Sectional, Junior National, US Open and Senior National Qualifiers, and also served as the Director of the Parent Booster Club.

As an assistant coach at the University of Miami, James's swimmers achieved the following:

- 5 Olympians who achieved 2 Bronze Medals
- 1 European National Champion
- 1995 Big East Men's Team Champions
- 7 NCAA All-Americans
- 32 Big East Champions

At the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, he assisted both the men's and women's programs. The men's teams were twice New England Team Champions.

As a swimmer, James achieved great success both during high school for Olympic swim coach Joe Bernal and the Bernal's Gator Swim Club, and for Olympic swim coach James "Doc" Councilman at Indiana University. During high school while swimming for Bernal's Gator Swim Club, he was a U.S. Olympic Festival Champion, Junior National Champion and Rookie of the Meet at Senior National Championships. The Bernal's Gator Swim Club won Junior Nationals three seasons in a row with James as a very important team member. He participated in the 1988 Olympic Team Swimming Trials and qualified for the 1992 Olympic Trials. James also broke 4 New England 18 & Under swimming records.

At Indiana University, he was a 4-time NCAA All-American, and a 3-time Big Ten Champion. He is the former school record holder for the 1000 free, 1650 free, and 800 free relay, and had broken pool records at Indiana University, the University of Michigan, and at the University of Illinois. He began learning the science of swimming from the legendary "Doc" Councilman, the coach of Mark Spitz among other greats. James's butterfly stroke is illustrated in "Doc's" book the New Science of Swimming. James was Doc's final Big Ten Champion and NCAA All-American in his illustrious coaching career at IU.

"As the Aquatics Director and Head Swim Coach at Gulliver, I am truly thrilled about the opportunity and of the potential of the aquatic programs at Gulliver. With the tremendous support from our Head of School John Krutulis, the administration, the athletic department, the staff, students and parents, it is a very exciting time with the new Olympic pool. I have very high expectations of the aquatic programs and I am eager to continue and improve upon the tradition of excellence in being one of the top high school teams in the state, and developing a national level swim club and masters swim club."

James received his B.A. at Indiana University in history, and a M.S. in Sport Management at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He is married to the former Michelle Bernal who was also a past national level swimmer and national level coach. They have a son named Broden.