

Coach Rocco Meiring



Coach Rocco is a South African, where he started his coaching career while still at University, in 1988. He studied psychology at the University of Pretoria (TUKS) and continued in sports management and coaching, in the sports office of the SA Navy, during his national military service.

After completion of his military service in 1992, Coach Rocco worked full time in club coaching in Pretoria (South Africa's capital city) where he developed swimmers and coaches from stroke teaching to senior national level. During this time he specialized in identifying new talent and developing the talent through the different stages of the swimming performance pathway...among others, World record holder Cameron van den Burgh started as a young swimmer with coach Rocco, until the coach took up the position of National Coaching director for the National Swimming federation end of 1997.

Swimming South Africa created the position of National Coaching Director in 1997 to improve the standard of South African swimming as well as coaching. The aim of Coach Rocco's appointment as Swim SA's Coaching director was for South Africa to locally produce internationally competitive swimmers, world class coaches and to develop the untapped talent of the previously disadvantaged communities so that South African teams reflected the make up of the population. The first successes were at the Sydney 2000 Olympics where Terence Parkin won a silver medal and the SA swimmers that lived and trained locally performed exceptionally well. This was followed by an exceptional 2002 Commonwealth Games and the World record & medals at the 2004 Athens Olympics, the first locally produced National training centre swimmers that made finals at the 2005 World Champs and the record medal count at the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

Some of the successful South African coaches that produced world class swimmers, and were developed in the national coaching development programme are, among others:

Gaham Hill (now SA head coach & coach of Terence Parkin, Chad le Clos, Miles Brown),
Karoly von Toros (coach of Sarah Poewe, Sebastian Rossouw, Algerian Head coach, Hungarian Youth Coach), Igor Omeltchenko (coach of Suzaan van Biljon, LM Retief, now head coach at TUKS),
Craig Jackson (now Australian Coach of the year & coach of 400m Free World junior champion)
In July 2003, Coach Rocco established the first National Training Centre in South Africa, at the University of Pretoria's High Performance Centre & newly opened High school for Sport. Swimmers from all over South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa flocked to the National Training Centre to the extent that additional coaches had to be appointed. The attraction was the specialized programmes with intensive sport scientific support as well as the controlled environment that the University and sportschool provided.

The University's high performance centre offered him the position of Academies Director in 2006 and an agreement was reached between Swimming SA and the University that coach Rocco would continue to manage the National training centre in addition to taking up the new position. Coach Rocco resigned from Swimming SA in 2006 to take up the academies position full time.

Coach Rocco continued to coach developmental squads throughout his professional career before and after work. In October 2012, coach Rocco was appointed as University sports manager for all the Aquatic programmes as well as Triathlon. The University programme is consistently ranked top in the country and has produced swimmers on the SA Olympic team since Coach Rocco re-opened the club in October 1999. This is the club of choice for Roland Schoeman and his training base when he is in South Africa.

Coach Rocco has served on numerous bodies and committees throughout his career...his most recent was being elected to the executive of Swimming SA, requested to chair the SA Universities Swimming committee and serving a term on the executive of the South African Swimming Coaches association.

He will be arriving in BC coming a job where he;

1. personally coached stroke development squads, SA junior and senior national team level swimmers, on a daily basis
2. Developed & headed up all the University's Aquatic & Triathlon clubs
3. Personally coached the swimming for the international level Triathletes up to World champs podium level, on a daily basis
4. Lectured the human movement science & sports science students in "swimming and coaching swimming" as practical subject.
5. Presented the ASCA Level 1, 2, 3 courses on behalf of ASCA & TUKS to SA & African coaches
6. Presented the Fina coaching courses in sub-Saharan Africa