

COOL'S PARENT-SWIMMER-COACH RELATIONSHIPS

To have a successful program there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your child makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section carefully as you join the COOL Waves Swim Team.

Parent Guidelines:

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a person loses some of his ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective.

- Each individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to various methods of presenting skills. The slower learner obviously takes more time to learn, and this requires more patience on the part of the parents and coaches, who must remember that his/her ultimate swimming potential may be as great or greater than that of a faster learner.
- When an athlete first comes out for the team and starts practicing, it is possible for him/her to worsen rather than improve. In the case of team members in the Ripples group, this is likely due to the emphasis placed on stroke technique. It takes a great deal of the swimmer's attention to master these skills. This new set of habits is the basis for later improvement. As training proceeds in the Riptides and Tidal Waves groups, additional stress is placed upon the muscles. The muscles will at first break down under the demand of additional work and this can explain an initial lack of improvement. As the need for improvement is realized, the muscles will gradually strengthen and the athlete's performance will improve.
- Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmer's career. Plateaus can be both in competition and in training. A plateau signifies the swimmer has mastered lower-order skills, but they are not yet sufficiently automatic to leave the attention free to attack newer, higher-order skills. It is important to explain to the athlete that plateaus occur in all fields of learning. The more successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance and approach their personal potential.
- 10 and unders are the most inconsistent swimmers. This can be frustrating for the parents, coaches, and swimmers alike! We must be patient and permit these children to learn to love the sport.
- It is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parents' job to supply love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the young athletes feel good about themselves.

- Parents' attitudes and behaviors often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your swimmer to practices, meets, meetings, and etc – don't look at these functions as chores.
- If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, contact the coach. Criticizing the coach in front of the swimmers undermines the coaches' authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.
- No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team, or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coach, and handled by the coach.
- Be sure that your children swim because **they** want to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful athletes.
- The communication between the coach and the swimmer is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice and at meets. It is imperative that the coaches have the swimmer's full attention at these times. Parents are not permitted to work with their own swimmers during regular practice sessions.

Remember, particularly in the case of younger swimmers, that attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook of the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can "win" or succeed all the time – there will always be some disappointments. Each swimmer can gain from his/her experience whether or not he/she ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better the next time. The secret is not to produce great swimmers but rather to produce great young people who swim.

Swimmer's Role:

Swimmers are asked to bring with them a good attitude along with their swim equipment. Please be on time for practice. Swimmers are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior and should remember we are guests at the pool facility. When at practice remember you are there to work and not play. Any disruptive behavior may be cause for removal from practice and the pool area. Please respect fellow swimmers on the deck and in the water!

Coaches' Responsibilities:

The coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. COOL's coaching staff is dedicated to provide a program for swimmers that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve one's self – "to be the best you can be." Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition. The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the program.

- The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, they will be placed in a more challenging training group by their coach.

- Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the COOL coaching staff. Each group's practice is based on sound scientific principles and geared to the goals of that group.
- At meets, the coaches will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. The building of a relay team is the responsibility of the coaching staff.

COMPETITIVE STROKES

The four competitive strokes are (1) freestyle (2) backstroke (3) breaststroke, and (4) butterfly. Events are held in all the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age-group of the swimmer. In addition, the individual medley (IM) is a combination of all four strokes swum by one swimmer. The order of the IM is butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. Other swimming events include relays, which are groups of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swims one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle (medley relay).

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by United States Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 8-under, 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and Senior. The Senior classification includes any age-registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmer's age on the first day of the meet will govern the swimmer's age for the entire meet.

Within each age group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as "C" swimmers. As they improve, they advance from track "C" to track "B" to track "A." United States Swimming publishes the times required for each ability level yearly. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

TYPES OF SWIM MEETS

1. Missouri Valley Multi-Team Meets – COOL will compete with a variety of Missouri Valley teams. These meets are fun and help promote team unity. All levels of swimmers can usually compete.
2. Developmental Meets – These are "C" novice and "B" and below meets and do not have minimum qualification time standards. Swimmers with an "A" time in a specific stroke cannot swim their "A" time stroke at these meets.
3. Qualification Meets – These meets have some type of qualification time standards that a swimmer must meet in order to enter the meet.
 - Level I and Level II Meets – Missouri Valley Swimming determines the time standards used for these meets based on a fastest/slowest range of times.
 - Division I and Division II Meets – These meets are held in March at the end of the short course season and in July/August at the end of the long course season. Missouri Valley Swimming sets the qualifying time standards for these championship meets. Generally, the standards for Division I fall around the national "A" track time standards.

- Zone Championships – USA Swimming is divided into four zones: Eastern, Southern, Central, and Western. Missouri Valley is a member of the Central Zone, which also includes the following LSC's: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Lake Erie Michigan, Midwestern Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Ozark, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Zone Championship meets are held in early August. A swimmer must have an AAA time to qualify for this meet, and swims as a member of the LSC Team rather than their local swim club.
- Region Meet – USA Swimming is divided into 14 Regions. Missouri Valley is a member of Region 8, along with Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Ozark (eastern Missouri). Region 8 meets are held twice a year (March and July) and require special qualifying times. This is the first “non-age group” meet; swimmers compete against qualifying swimmers, regardless of age. Qualifying times are approximately AAAA times.
- Phillips 66/USS National Championships (Senior Nationals) – Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held every four years, the highest level of competition for senior swimmers is the USS National Championships. Any swimmers meeting the national qualifying time standards travel to various cities throughout the US to compete against America's best swimmers. Swimmers can qualify for national teams that represent the USA in international competition by their performances at Senior Nationals.