

Moving From Swim Lessons/Summer League to Year Round Swimming, and other tidbits

Each summer many parents get involved in their child's primary activity, such as summer league swimming or swim lessons. Summers leagues in general and water safety in particular, are important in the Valley of the Sun. When the summer season ends, the YMCA Westside Silver Fins offer assessment and group placement families interested in continuing in a swimming program.

These swim lessons or summer leagues are short and each swimmer strives to improve from the past summer or build on their newly acquired skills. We believe all parents want their children to participate in a healthy activity with intangible benefits offered by a Team sport with goal setting.

Silver Fins believe strongly that it's very important to present a well-rounded program for each age group swimmer. They must enjoy themselves certainly; we all learn more effectively in a pleasant environment. Stroke development is of utmost importance to the young swimmer. They should not be allowed to focus on any one stroke. Long distance training is not necessary in the developing years. Poor stroke habits develop and the boredom of long distance training will most likely have a negative effect on them. A young swimmer must learn proper starts, turns and stroke mechanics so that he or she will develop in many other areas as he or she progresses and gets older.

Parents should encourage their children to be involved in a number of activities, when in the younger groups. When a youngster devotes too many hours to training each week, he or she will be unable to experience other sports and activities such as music, theater etc. We believe that we should give each child the opportunity to be well rounded. Often times, a swimmer will drop out of the sport and not have another activity to fall back on.

Swimmers should be taught and trained in a progressive manner. Each step should include continued stroke development. Other important areas of competitive swimming should be introduced as the swim progresses. A youngster having fun while he or she learns will show the greatest amount of improvement.

Parents, throughout the competitive swimming experience, play a vital role in the success of the swimmer. They must continually reinforce the swimmer and support the program and coaching philosophies that they have chosen.

Effective communication between the parent and coaching staff is critical so that a child does not experience conflict and confusion. Parents should feel free to present their thoughts and concerns to the Head Coach, assistant staff, YMCA aquatics staff or Parent Action Committee members, through appropriate avenues. The best avenues for this are telephone, email and private meetings. As professionals, the pool deck is part of our office where we (the coaches) should be focused on the athletes and their swimming. With that, the practice deck or attendance at a meet is not the ideal place for a serious discussion.

See you at the pool!

YMCA Westside Silver Fins Coaching Staff