



FROM COACH JIM: What Happens at an OCSC Practice?

How we create our Master Plan for the swim year:

- Before every season, (short course and long course), the coaches sit down with the calendar, and plug in a focus for the day from a list of everything swimming related. We rotate through the list multiple times so that ALL skills, techniques, tactics, and fine points are taught and revisited multiple times. We also use the calendar to try to consistently follow an extremely hard workout with one more based on recovery and technique. We hope to promote excellent strokes, starts, turns, finishes, extreme fitness and physical well being by rotating this way.
- We also stick to a plan that differentiates distances, proportions of work vs. technique, and time spent on each skill by age and group.
- Additionally, we try to increase length and intensity of workouts no more than 10% per week so we build our fitness safely.
- I also want to point out that we are focused on developing young men and women of excellence first, superior athletes second, and well-rounded swimmers able to do ALL strokes and ALL distances third. We are never motivated to develop butterflyers vs. sprinters, vs. IMers, vs. distance etc. Hopefully we are also keeping it fun and interesting for the athletes. Olympians I have had the pleasure to meet and talk to usually have shared that that was the approach that worked for them.

How we run each practice:

- Warm-Ups: We will typically warm up between 10 and 25% of the total distance of practice. During warm up we look for what we call "feel good swimming" with lots of thought going into technique, distance per stroke, quality turns and streamlines. We also like to promote long, non-stop swims so athletes feel comfortable and capable of swimming longer events.
- Kick Sets: Everyone's favorite! We will kick almost every day, either as a kick set or during drills. Leg muscles are bigger, more powerful and more effective than arm muscles, so we really want to train kick and avoid pull dependency. We will often use fins because it lengthens the surface and increases resistance. We try to promote fins as a tool to increase work as opposed to a crutch to alleviate it, (except that we do promote fins to reduce upper body load when shoulders are tired or sore).
- Pull Sets: We will also pull (i.e. use the upper body with a pull buoy between the legs), usually 3-5 or times per week depending on training group. We like to promote upper body and core strengthening, cardio vascular fitness, and isolate upper body to focus on lengthening pull and increasing distance per stroke.
- Hard Work: Almost every day will continue with a hard work set, which will vary according to the focus of the day and to be sure we follow the previous day's work set with something different.

How we run each practice (cont.):

- Stroke Drills (aka technique work): At least several days a week, will include a series of stroke drills. These drills are done at drill speed (i.e. a bit slower) so they are great for recovery, teaching, developing muscle memory and striving for perfect strokes. Drills are 100% technique based and aimed at athletes swimming every stroke in such a way that they minimize injury risk and simultaneously maximize speed potential. Each drill's major focus is typically on length and line of the stroke, distance and efficiency of the stroke, and rotation on the appropriate axis, (head to toe for free and back and waistline for fly and breast).
- Starts and Turns: We spend a lot of time going off the blocks AND saying "ready, go" on sets as opposed to just leaving it to them to go off the clock, so that our swimmers are constantly working on starts. Philosophically, we train the athletes that EVERY turn of EVERY warm up, repetition, cool down, etc. is the opportunity to practice correct turns so that we build good habits. We remind them that when they do NOT do their turns correctly, they ARE building bad habits that then have to be focused on during races. We add sets at least once a week that isolate starts, turn, and/or finishes, as well.
- Pace/Speed: We will often include "pace" or "speed" work towards the end of a majority of workouts for Makos/Tiburones/Squali, and periodically for the rest of the groups.
- Cool Down: We conclude practices with cool down which will also be 10 to 25% of the distance of the practice that is ending.

Side note on how we build during the season:

- Early on we will focus more on the freestyle and the backstroke while fitness improves. We do not want athletes with less developed technique to get injured by spending too much time in the beginning part of the season on the butterfly and breaststroke. If you have been at our meets thus far, I hope you have perceived this by seeing how well our athletes are already doing in free and back and how much work we have to do on our fly and breast. Please know that we know and it IS a part of the master plan



Upcoming Meets and Events!

[Oshkosh Champion Meet](#) at Oshkosh YMCA – October 16th – 18th

[SWAT Swim Your Own Age Meet](#) at Greenfield High School – Nov. 30th – Dec. 1st

[OCSC Bowling Party](#) at Ten Pin Alley from 1:00 – 3:00 pm on Sunday, December 2nd

[Arena Midseason Challenge](#) at Waukesha South High School - December 7th – 9th

[11 & Under Single Age Sprint State](#) at Augustine Prep – December 15th and 16th - you must have a qualifying time to attend this meet. Please talk to your swimmer's coach if you have any questions about this.



The Dreaded Plateau

Is your swimmer struggling with feeling like they are not improving? Are you the parent of a 12, 13 or 14 year old enjoying the challenges of puberty? Read through this article - *7 Things Swimmers (and Parents) Need to Know About Age Group Swimming Plateaus*, by Olivier Poirier-Leroy – and make sure to share with your swimmer. It provides some great perspective for when they are frustrated with a perceived lack of improvement.

<https://www.yourswimlog.com/age-group-swimming-plateaus/>