

Advanced Age Group

This group is where practices start to add training to the regimen. It is for young swimmers who have developed the skills to perform all four strokes well. The practices will continue to spend time teaching and improving skills but it will also add the element of physical conditioning. We want all our Advanced Age Group swimmers to qualify for the All-Around award by the end of the year (swim all the strokes legally at various lengths in a competition). This group will utilize a kick board, pull buoy, paddles and fins.

Attendance: We ask that the swimmers attend between 3-4 times per week. This group includes a dryland session that will help overall physical conditioning and coordination.

Practices: Advanced Age Group will continue the Tidal Wave theme of teaching swimmers proper technique. Some part of every practice will be dedicated to skill development. The swimmers will also be asked to complete swimming sets. This will force them to focus on technique while they are tired. It is a good way to test what skills have become good habits and which skills are in need of more repetition. It will also provide a base of conditioning that will allow them to compete in longer events. They will learn to use a pace clock (it is not as easy to understand an analog clock in the digital world, so it may take a little “classroom” style instruction).

Goal Setting: This is the earliest group in which Goals will be discussed with the swimmers. Many may already be thinking about qualifying for the State Championships and will want to know how they can achieve it. It is important that the swimmers orient their goals around the process of achieving goal times. The focus should be on the habits they create and repeat in practice daily. This will not only serve to bring awareness to the importance of practice habits and how they relate to competition results but it will also be something that they control. It is also a time for parents to learn to allow their athlete to set goals for themselves. They need to learn to speak in terms of support rather than technical feedback to their child. That should be the role of the coach. When these roles become mixed it creates confusion and unnecessary anxiety for the athlete. This confusion, anxiety is one of the top factors in athletes leaving the sport.

Team Environment: We want our swimmers to enjoy their experience at Tidal Waves. One of the best ways to do this is to make friends at the pool. For swimmers that started in earlier groups, they may already have established friends within the training group. But there will be swimmers who start their Tidal Wave experience at the Advanced Age Group level. It is important that our swimmers be inviting and expand their groups of friends to include new members. This sounds pretty common sense for all levels. But at this stage, it is a place to lay the foundations of relationships that could continue for many years. It can serve as a way to get through the tough Middle-School years of cliques and petty social situations that are common in the school environment at those ages. A solid foundation of friends at the pool can not only help them get through those years, it can also create a supportive climate at the pool amongst friends who also have to race each other at high level competitions. They can learn that being rivals during a race doesn't preclude them from being friends.

Meets: As with all of our swimmers, we encourage them to participate in competitions. There are a number of meets included on the schedule that provide racing opportunities for the Advanced Age Group, they are encouraged to attend them all but the most important are the Big Brother/Big Sister, TWS Invite and Divisionals. The Big Brother/Sister meet will pair them up with an older swimmer who will help them during the meet. It is a great experience for both the older and younger swimmer. It is

also possible that a veteran swimmer in Advanced Age Group may buddy up with a new swimmer to mentor them during the meet. The TWS Invite is our big winter competition. It will offer all the events for the younger swimmers and for any swimmers aged 11-12, it will provide their first experience to Prelim-Final competitions. The Divisional Championships serve as a team competition. It is the one meet that will guarantee relays for all age groups. This is a great opportunity to not only swim many events but also share the team experience with relay members. It is acceptable to attend just one day of a multi-day competition. This can be indicated in the notes section when you sign up for a meet.

Long Course Swimming: At the Advanced Age Group level we like to see them continue through the summer. It is important that they compete for their summer league team but we prefer that they spend more time at our practices than the summer team practices. We also want to see them compete in long course competitions. It is a different experience swimming in a 50 meter pool and it is important that they gain this experience and remove the fear of swimming in the “big” pool.

Fall Dryland Training: This is the youngest level that participates in our pre-season training during the Fall. These practices begin in August and contain more dryland than swimming. They are designed to get the swimmers into physical condition as well as to provide opportunities for the swimmers to interact and make friends with new members of their group. These practices will be offered at the Pinetree Country Club location.

Suits: We ask that the swimmers at this level attain a team suit for competitions. They do not need a high-tech suit for meets. They may observe swimmers of their age wearing high-tech suits at various competitions. We prefer that our swimmers learn that their skills and work ethic are responsible for their results at competitions. If a high-tech suit is desired, we ask that they only be worn at Championship level competitions so that the swimmer feels as though they are on even terms with other competitors.

Swim Camps: Many college programs offer summer swim camps at their facility. We think these are great learning experiences for Advanced Age Group level athletes. They provide the opportunity to make new friends, teach them to be responsible (get sleep and eat properly to maintain strength during the camp) and it will reinforce the technique skills that they are taught at Tidal Waves.