

Elementary Age Group

This is one of the introductory groups to Tidal Wave Swimming. It is for young swimmers who can swim freestyle, backstroke and either breaststroke and/or butterfly. The practices focus on honing basic skills and teaching advanced ones. A good goal for members of the Elementary Age Group is 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 and fins to assist in the development of their skills.

Attendance: We ask that the swimmers attend regularly between 1-3 times per week. If the swimmer enjoys their time at the pool so much that they want to attend more often, they are welcome. This group will include a dryland session after each practice, except Saturday.

Practices: Like Great White Sharks, this group spends much of the time teaching skills. Many members within this group either have joined from a summer program, lesson program or started with the Great White Sharks. If the latter is the case, then the following will be familiar. Our muscles learn through repetition. They don't know if it is a good habit or a bad habit, they just learn to repeat what they do often. For this reason, our younger swimmers will not complete many laps during a practice. Swimmers at this level will be stopped frequently at the walls for feedback and instruction. We want them to develop good habits like balance in the water and body awareness. These fundamental skills will not only help them learn the basic mechanics for the various strokes, but they will also assist them as their bodies grow and they have to adjust for these changes later in their life. You may see them doing drills that look nothing like the final stroke. These drills may focus on just the arms, legs or assist with learning the timing of putting it all together. Because we want Elementary swimmers to participate in the various distances of the strokes, they will swim more than the Great White Shark group. Their basic skills should be sound enough to allow for more swimming while continuing improving their skills.

Meets: As with all of our swimmers, we encourage them to participate in competitions. They serve multiple purposes for young athletes. First, it is a great way to see what they have learned in practice. Second, it begins to teach them ownership for their sport. They learn to talk to their coach before their swim and apply those directions to their swim, to report to their races on time and to report to their coach after the swim to evaluate their performance. This will help differentiate the coach-swimmer relationship from the parent-swimmer relationship at competitions. Learning the correct role at an early age will greatly improve the likelihood of a long, happy swimming career. The swimmer needs to know that their parents support them no matter the result of their race. Let the coaches provide feedback while parents provide support.

There are a number of meets included on the schedule that provide racing opportunities for the Elementary 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. The TWS Invite is our big winter competition. It will offer all the events for the younger swimmers. 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: The long course season begins in April following spring break. We know that many swimmers at this level will compete for their summer league team. We want them to continue to do so. We like for them to try to do both so that we can continue to improve their technique. It is not

uncommon for swimmers to reduce their attendance to once a week so that they can spend time with their summer program.

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. You will find that the suit will last longer if they only wear it for competitions and wear a different suit for practices.