

Elite Age Group

Elite swimmers should demonstrate solid knowledge of all four competitive strokes and turns. They should also exhibit a willingness to work towards higher competitive goals. Swimmers will be expected to repeatedly perform practice swims (workouts) while maintaining proper technique. Practices are designed to continue stroke and turn development but increasing the percentage of emphasis placed on fitness and interval training. Members of the Elite group are expected to work towards qualifying for the All-Around award each year (legally compete in all strokes at all competitive distances offered to their age group). This group will utilize a kick board, pull buoy, paddles and fins.

Attendance: We expect swimmers will attend between 4-5 times per week. We expect Elite swimmers to attend swim meets and we encourage Elite swimmers to plan on travelling to an out of state competition in June.

Practices: Elite 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 more demanding swimming sets than in previous groups. It will provide a base of conditioning that will allow them to progress towards higher performance based goals. They should be comfortable using a pace clock. This group includes a dryland session that will help overall physical conditioning and coordination.

Goal Setting: At this stage, we want the swimmers to set both practice oriented goals as well as performance based goals. The goals should be their own with some guidance from the coach. They need to learn that they are in control of attaining their own goals. It is the work that they repeat in practice and the habits they have at competitions that will get them to the goals. One of the best lessons they can learn is that being exceptional comes from challenging yourself on a daily basis. It is not enough to just show up to practice, but you must push your limits at these practices if you expect to achieve high performance based goals. The swimmer is in control. The parent gets them to practice and the coach provides the workout and technical guidance but the swimmer decides how much they will challenge their physical limits. It is an important lesson as it is true for many aspects of life.

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 Elite level. It is important that our swimmers be inviting and expand their groups of friends to include new members. A solid foundation of friends at the pool can help them get through the awkward Middle School years by having a set of friends who have swimming in common. They also need to learn that being rivals during a race doesn't preclude them from being friends. It provides an opportunity to push each other daily in workout so that both people continue to achieve higher goals.

Meets: As with all of our swimmers, we expect them to participate in competitions. There are a number of meets included on the schedule that provide racing opportunities for the Elite group, they are encouraged to attend them all but the most important short course meets are the Big Brother/Big Sister, TWS Invite and Divisionals. Most Elite swimmers will be returning to the team and will either serve as a Big Brother/Sister for younger swimmers on the team or as buddies for new people within their own age group. 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. Elite swimmers achieving state championship qualifying times are expected to attend the State Championship and represent Tidal Wave. They should also plan to participate in relays even if a relay falls on a day when they do not have an individual event.

Long Course Training: Elite swimmers are expected to participate during the summer long course season. The Long Course schedule will offer a number of opportunities to compete in the 50 meter pool environment. Elite swimmers are also encouraged to continue to represent their summer league team. We ask that they spend a majority of their training time with Tidal Waves but they should enjoy competing with their summer team friends. The "Travel Trip" will be held during the long course season. We encourage Elite swimmers to participate in this competition.

Fall Dryland Training: The Elite group will begin pre-season training in August. These sessions will be held at the Pinetree Country Club location. They are primarily dryland sessions.

Suits: We ask that the swimmers at this level attain a team suit for competitions. They do not necessarily need a high-tech suit for meets. They will 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. We ask that high-tech suits only be worn at Championship level competitions.

Swim Camps: Many college programs offer summer swim camps at their facility. We think these are great learning experiences for Elite group 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. Please choose a camp occurring early in the long course season so it does not disrupt your long course training.