

## **Senior**

Welcome to the top training group of the Tidal Wave program. There may be a variety of speed at which the Senior group swims but they will all have made a commitment towards creating a dedicated training group with high goals. They will continue to improve their technical skills as well as life skills which would include time management, goal setting, teamwork and a strong work ethic. The Senior group utilizes kick boards, pull buoys, paddles and fins as training equipment. As an option, they may purchase a snorkel and a tempo trainer. A list of topics frequently discussed is listed to help answer questions you may have about your athletes training group.

**Practice Attendance:** The group requires a high rate of attendance as this is the top tier of the program. They set the environment of excellence for themselves and serve as an example for the swimmers working towards the Senior program.

Secondly, swimming is a time demanding sport. One of the most important skills an athlete can develop is Time Management. Like most life skills, it is better learned earlier than later. By finding a way to balance schoolwork with swimming at a young age when the homework load is less intense than later years, they will be able to excel both in school and the pool when they get older and the work load increases. As a bonus, a number of scientific studies have found that including daily exercise in your life helps mental development. Long term studies have shown on average that people who exercise (one study even focused on swimming) maintain a higher GPA than those who do not exercise.

The Senior group will have doubles (more than one practice a day) throughout the year. During the school season, we will have 2 mornings a week either at the weight room or swimming at Amberton. During the holidays, they will have some double workouts. Over the summer program we will swim a second workout at the Cobb Aquatic Center a few times a week.

The Senior swimmers will also participate in pre-season training after school begins in August. These will be held at the Pinetree Country Club.

**Goal Setting:** This is a life skill that the swimmers should have taken ownership over by this stage of their swimming. If it is to become a tool to help them reach their dreams, they have to learn how to evaluate their efforts and decide what they can do to improve themselves. It has to become a regular part of their daily routine to be truly effective. This will not happen if someone else is setting their goals. In the end, goal setting will be one of the most important skills in determining if they continue swimming through high school and college.

**Teamwork:** Teammates can be a valuable resource for those who nurture a healthy relationship with them. They can boost you up on a bad day and celebrate with you on a good day. The trick is to develop a relationship of mutual respect. In that sense, it is a good lesson for learning how to develop relationships whether at school, work, social or the pool. A healthy training group can elevate the level of performance of everyone in the group. A bad environment can make the sport tedious and bring an early end to the career of a swimmer.

**Competitions:** Competitions have different purposes throughout the season. Early season meets are about evaluating the condition level of the swimmers due to training and looking for stroke technique improvements. They will swim the maximum amount of events offered per day. Senior State and the December Invite is a mid-season test to see where they stand on conditioning, technique and racing habits. It is also the first introduction of the prelim-finals format. The increased time at the pool and increased number of swims serves as a learning experience for maintaining their energy level through proper post-race warm-downs, eating, staying hydrated and getting rest. These lessons will be very

important to the championship meets later in the season. Once we pass the December invite, they will juggle both the High School season as well as USA swimming competitions. They should use these opportunities to fine tune racing habits. The end of the season stretches for a little over a month. It starts with High School State Championships and ends with either a Sectional meet, Divisionals or Juniors depending upon the scheduling of these competitions which can vary year to year. Senior swimmers will want to focus on their best events, even swimming as few as 1-2 events a day, for these high level meets. Colleges, for those who are Juniors and Seniors thinking about collegiate swimming, will be more interested in one or two very fast times rather than 9 pretty good events. There will most likely be a situation where 2 meets fall on back to back weekends. In that case, the swimmers will want to shave for both competitions in order to make the most out of their end of season taper.

A similar pattern will be followed for the Long Course season with two exceptions. First, they will not have High School meets during this time, so they need to make the most of the early season meets to fine tune racing details. Secondly, it is shorter and the transition from early season races to championship races come quicker.

**Travel Competitions:** These opportunities only occur once or twice a year. They are a great way to develop and enhance team chemistry. When I speak to former swimmers, they always tell a story or two about a travel trip. It can be one of the longest lasting memories for a swimmers career. It also serves as a valuable learning tool. It makes a swimmer learn to be responsible for more than just the pool portion of a swim meet. They have to plan what to bring to the pool, how much to eat and how to manage their energy away from the racing environment. Not only will these be valuable lessons for when they attend Sectional, Junior, Zone or National level competitions but, they are essential lessons for taking care of oneself when they go off to college and leave their home. Swimmers in this training group are strongly encouraged to participate in Travel Trips.

**Competition Suits:** Swimmers at this level will need a high tech suit for major competitions. They may choose to “break in” a suit for a race leading into the championships season at an earlier meet to make sure they like the fit and are comfortable wearing it while racing.

**Summer Swim Camps:** At this level, camps should be limited to USA Select type of camps. The summer is too short to miss a week of training.