

Wolfpack Swim School – Pack Prep Program

Pack Prep is the bridge program between group swim lessons and club swimming. The swimmers in Pack Prep need a minimum skill level of Pack 1 to join the program. They must be comfortable and confident swimmers in the water (in shallow and deep water) on their own, with the ability to swim 50-75 yards without stopping.

Practice Structure: The Pack Prep coaches will continue to be the UIC swimmers, former CWAC swimmers returning from college, and current CWAC swimmers. They will coach from the pool deck using workouts provided by the CWAC coaches in the Bronze (9-10) and Silver (11-12) groups, adjusting as needed based on the Pack Prep group's needs. Practices run three days a week for 1-hour each day. As with swimmers on the swim team, the more practices attended the greater the opportunity for improvement and advancing skill sets.

Program Goal: Develop strong, efficient swimmers in all four strokes who are confident, capable swimmers ready for the transition to competitive swimming. The focus in Pack Prep is on technical improvement, not speed. While there will be opportunities for swimmers to swim fast, speed is not our main concern. As strokes develop properly, swimmers grow, and become stronger speed will get faster. If they never develop the technical aspect of swimming that protects their joints, muscles, and ligaments they will only increase the risk for injury and early retirement from the sport.

Skill Evaluations: Swimmers will be evaluated on a regular basis throughout the Pack Prep Program so that the coaches can best track swimmer progress. The evaluations will assess the swimmer's endurance, speed, and stroke competency in a structured way for more accurate comparisons. Evaluation dates are noted in green on the schedule. Swimmers who miss the evaluation day will be evaluated on the next one. Goal is to have a more accurate record of the swimmer's progress throughout the session for more specific progress reports at the end of the session. Progress Reports will be emailed to parents at the end of the session.

Group Structure: Swimmers coming into Pack Prep must all meet a minimum skill level but there will be variation in the range of skill strength beyond that minimum. Swimmers will be grouped with similarly skilled swimmers and have their practice adapted in a way best suited to support their stroke development. The groups can change each session as the swimmers in the program change. No swimmer is guaranteed a spot in a group and no group placement is set in stone. This is a fluid program that allows for movement based on skill and technique, not speed, age, or size.

Practice Make Ups/ Schedule Changes: While it is never our intention to cancel practices, conflicts do pop up at UIC that we must work around. If a practice is cancelled and we can find another practice day we will and will communicate that to families at the earliest convenience. On the personal side, I understand that schedule conflicts come up, so there is no required number of practices swimmers should attend each week. The more practices attend the better opportunity for more speedy improvement and development. Missed practices by a swimmer are not offered credits, refunds, or make ups.



Minimum Skills Required to join program:

- 50 yards of proper technique freestyle swimming
- 50 yards of proper technique backstroke swimming
- Prior Introduction/ Understanding of breaststroke and/or butterfly swims; stroke not yet legal, but has learned body mechanics in prior swim lessons
- Can continuously swim for an hour practice with minimal breaks
- Strong, confident swimmer in the water on their own, in shallow and deep waters

Skill Development focused on:

Swimming Technique over Swimming Speed – the age, size, or speed of a swimmer is not considered when it comes to group placement. Groups are placed based on the technical ability of the following stroke and skill foundations.

- **Freestyle foundations**
 - Streamline off all walls with strong flutter kicks
 - Timing and arm positioning for [efficient pulling](#)
 - Body alignment for smooth rotations
 - Appropriate use of side breathing
 - Use of a flip turn or open turn for continuous swimming
- **Backstroke foundations**
 - Streamline off all walls on the back with flutter kicks
 - Remains on back for entire swim
 - Body alignment for smooth rotations and powerful pulls
 - Strokes count to wall for turns and finishes
 - Use of flip turn or open turn for continuous swimming
- **Breaststroke foundations**
 - Correct [Pull and Kick technique](#)
 - Stroke timing
 - One breathes per stroke cycle (pull + kick)
 - Two hand touch for turns and on finish
 - Pull out off the walls after streamlining
- **Butterfly foundations**
 - Stroke timing and body positioning
 - Legs stay together kicking up and down in wave like motion (think mermaid kick), two kicks per arm pull
 - Arms pull simultaneously in big circles, must enter, and exit water at the same time
 - Lift head and look forward for breathing
 - Two hand touch to finish
- **Racing Dive foundations**
 - Successful progression: seated >> kneeling >> standing >> blocks
 - Understanding of “take your mark” – dominate foot forward, toes curl over edge, track start
 - Front leg pushes for driving power, arms streamline up and around the head (at the ears)
 - Fingertip entry, body follows fingertips through ‘hole’ for smooth water entry
 - Remains in streamline position and holds, swimmer kicks to surface/ does pull out

- **Flip Turn foundations**

- Used for Freestyle and Backstroke continuous swimming
- Correctly uses pull and kicks to propel body turn wall, into a tucked position
- Somersaults around until both feet land on the wall
- Arms up in streamline, use both feet to push off the wall with power

- **Open Turn foundations**

- Used for Breaststroke and Butterfly continuous swimming
- Swim into the wall and touch with two hands (think high five vs. grip/grab)
- Knees drive up toward the chest, bringing the feet up to the wall
- Feet on the wall, swimmer drives one elbow back as the other comes over top. At the same time the feet start pushing off the wall
- Arms meet into a streamline; body pushes off the wall on the side into a tight streamline
- Bring dolphin kicks or pull out after streamlining