

PRACTICE GROUPS INFORMATION & DESCRIPTIONS

Fox Valley Swimming (“Fox”) is a competitive swim program with two practice locations in District 204: Neuqua Valley High School (“NVHS”) and Waubonsie Valley High School (“WVHS”). Age group swimmers (14 and under) shall be residents of District 204.

Fox offers three swim seasons:

Season	Dates	Description
Fall/Winter	September-Feb/March	Also known as “Short Course” season. Competitions held in 25-yard pools.
Spring	April-May	No meets.
Summer	May-July/August	Also known as “Long Course” season. Some meets held in 50-meter pools.

Practice times are designed around District 204 programming. While Fox attempts to keep its practice schedule as consistent as possible, there are sometimes changes to the schedule to maximize practice times due to changes in pool availability with District 204. (District 204 programming takes precedent over Fox). **Families should check the online Calendar on the Fox website at least weekly to see if there are practice changes.** Also, any last-minute changes are sent via email and text so long as a family has provided their contact information in the registration system.

PRACTICE GROUPS

Each practice group has different skill levels and expectations within the practice. Lead Coaches organize practice groups and lanes within the groups based on the athletes experience, skill levels, willingness to work hard, and/or by the practice design. **Placement in a practice group is at the sole discretion of the Fox coaching staff.**

Team Development Group

Team Development Group (“TDG”) is designed for athletes beyond swim lessons, but still in need of skill and endurance development before joining an Age Group. TDG athletes must be able to swim freestyle with face in the water and side breathing, refine backstroke for 25 yards, and proficiency (close to legal) fly and breaststroke. TDG is not a beginner swim lesson and most swimmers are just shy

of skills to make the Age Group team. TDG is also an avenue for young athletes involved in other activities to remain in the sport with less of a commitment than an Age Group.

TDG mainly focuses on fundamentals of all four strokes, jump and under water kicking, turns, starts, working within a practice group and using a pace clock. Race strategies are covered prior to meets. TDG swimmers are eligible to swim in all home meets and there is an expectation that TDG swimmers will commit to swim at least one day of each home meet.

TDG has two coaches working with a maximum of 25 athletes per workout in the three-lane yard, 20-yard training pool. At times the main pool is used for start clinics, and other times when available.

In the Fall/Winter season there are four Team Development Groups (“TDG”): 9-10 TD at WVHS; 9-10 TD at NVHS; 11-12 TDG at NVHS; and 11-14 TDG at WVHS. The Spring season offers 9-10 TDG, and 11-14 TDG at WVHS. Practices are usually 50-60 minutes based on the season, three times per week.

Stroke Clinic

Stroke Clinic is held only in the summer at NVHS. This program is very similar to TDG, and is offered three days per week for an hour. There are no competitions for this group during the summer. Many of the athletes ages 9-12 that sign up for this program are just shy of making the Age Group or seek more technique work and participate in their neighborhood swim team.

8 & Under Age Group

8 & Under (“8&U”) is offered in three levels during the Fall/Winter and two levels in the Spring. 8&U is not offered in the Summer. During Summer, we encourage all our 8&U’s to swim on their neighborhood team.

Practices for 8&U are generally 45-60 minutes based upon the time of the season and group, three-four times per week.

There are two coaches working with a maximum of 25 athletes per workout in the three-lane/20 yard training pool mostly at NVHS. (An 8&U may be held at WVHS if enrollment supports the addition of that group). At times the main pool is used for start clinics, and other times when available.

All 8&U groups focus on technique of all four strokes, jumps and underwater kick outs, followed by turns/starts, learning to work within a group, having fun with the sport and their teammates, and beginning stages of race strategy. Meet participation is important and expected, even if for one day of a weekend. 8&U swimmers participate in all meets where eligible. Although performance is important, it's not the main priority.....staying in the sport is.

To be placed in the 8&U group, swimmers must be able to swim all four strokes legally and maintain competitive level training for that age.

9-10 Age Group

To qualify for the 9-10 Age Group, swimmers must be able to swim all four strokes, including turns. Furthermore, swimmers must have the endurance level to swim repeatedly and make it through practices without stopping.

Practices focus on technique of all four strokes along with starts, turns, and racing strategies. Listening skills are taught along with group cooperation, and swimmers improve their reading of and working with pace clocks. Most sets are designed around all four strokes, and individual medleys ("IM's") ranging from 25 to 200 yards being repeated. Skill level goals are more important than yardage in this group. Meet participation is expected on a regular basis, as is practice attendance.

There are two 9-10 groups offered Fall/Winter (one at NVHS and one at WVHS) with the same goals. The NVHS 9-10 group has three coaches with a maximum sign-up of 70 athletes in eight lanes, and WVHS location has two coaches with a maximum sign up of 35 athletes in four lanes. Most weeks there are five practices offered, and 9-10 athletes can attend four of five practices. On Saturdays and Holidays, both groups are combined and practice together. Spring and Summer there is only one group of 9-10's with four practices offered on non-meet weeks. Practices usually are 90 minutes. Dryland is offered in the Fall/Winter and Summer.

11-12 Age Group

The skill level to make the 11-12 Age Group is all four strokes, including turns, and must be done repeatedly. Swimmers must have an endurance level to swim 50's and 100's of all four strokes, IM's, and short mid-distance sets without stopping. All four strokes technically are broken down and isolation drills are taught to improve efficiency. Further explanations of technique with sprinting,

pace work, and race strategy are covered, along with starts and turns. The psychological aspects of the sport are also introduced. Team building, group cooperation, pride of our sport, and appreciation of our culture are promoted. Meet participation is expected on a regular basis.

Fall/Winter offers an 11-12 group at each location in the main pools. The groups have the same goals and skill levels. NVHS has three coaches with a maximum sign-up of 70 athletes in eight lanes and WVHS location has two coaches with a maximum sign-up of 35 athletes in four lanes. Most weeks there are five practices offered, and the athletes can attend all five. On Saturdays and Holidays both groups are combined and practice together. Spring and Summer offer one group of 11-12's with four to five practices offered. Practices usually are 90-105 minutes. Dryland is offered in the Fall/Winter and Summer, and serves as an important part of the program.

13-14 Age Group

Each season there is one 13-14 Age Group primarily practicing at WVHS. The 13-14's have three coaches with a maximum of 65 athletes in eight lanes. Practices are 105-120 minutes, five to six times per week. Dryland is offered two to three times per week for 45-60 minutes. The routine of water and dryland training should be viewed as equally important in this group.

This is one of the more complex groups in swimming crossing over from age group to pre-senior. Everything starts to evolve in all areas of the sport and outside it. All have an effect on the athlete! Events move from 50's in strokes to 200's, 100 IM's are replaced by 400 IM's. It's quite a change. Preparation, training, skill work, consistency, organization, time management, and social activities all are happening at a higher level. This is all part of their development and opportunity of learning about good choices, including nutrition and sleep habits.

As stated in other groups' technique, training paces, styles of sets, race strategies, turns, starts, etc. are all addressed in the seasonal plan. Team building and support is stressed, pride of our sport and team culture is promoted. There are different levels within the group and the lanes are arranged accordingly.

The skill level to make 13-14 Age Group is to swim and compete in all four strokes in 100's, 200 free and 200 IM. Training begins at a moderate level and progresses quickly within a month. Meet participation is expected on a regular basis.

Senior Group

Each season there's one training group primarily practicing at NVHS. Two to three coaches oversee training sessions in the pool and dryland/weight room. There are five to six swim practices (1 ¾-2 hrs) per week for the Fall/Winter and Spring, with three dryland/weight room sessions (1-1 ½ hrs). Summer the same is offered, in addition the Senior Elite program offers six to nine swim practices (2-3 hrs) per week. Commitment is key!

The Senior Group is the most advanced part of the program and requires a level of commitment and support to be successful. High School and College age athletes make up the Senior program throughout the year. These are young adults managing multiple activities and requirements. Being organized and not losing focus is important, along with good communication.

Athletes at this age start to specialize in their events and training. The coach/athlete relationship is key to knowing each other's roles, goals, and what the athlete view of "success" is.....everyone is different. There are different levels within the Senior Group and lanes are arranged accordingly. Athletes need to know and compete in all four strokes in 100's, 200 free and 200 IM. A commitment of five days or more per week is expected. Meet participation is a must.

High School Swim Teams and FOX: In the Fall, the High School ("HS") Girls are competing for the HS (Aug.-Nov.), and the boys are swimming with Fox. Once the Girls HS season ends, the girls return to Fox and the Boys begin their HS season (late Nov.-late Feb.) and then return to FOX for practice and Championship Meets. Once an athlete finishes their HS competition season, they may return to Fox to practice and compete. The athletes should always check with their HS coaches before returning to Fox.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- Practice is important to the athlete's development, so please have your athletes attend scheduled practices as much as possible and be on time. Practice schedules are designed for the age and ability of the swimmers. Please attend as many practices for your practice group as possible.
- Meets for all groups are approximately every two week after the first month of the season. Sign up is required six to seven weeks prior to the event dates.

Please timely sign-up for all meets. Late enrollment in a meet cannot be guaranteed. High School athletes during their high school season are still responsible for sign-ups on time.

- “Championship Meets” include Regionals and State meets where time cuts are needed. All athletes qualifying for Championship Meets will be automatically signed up and expected to participate.