

Every season we are asked for our opinion on High School swimming. As the lead coaches of the program, we feel that High School Swimming is a great opportunity for an athlete to compete and achieve while representing their High School at the local, regional, and state level. We define High School as your High School is structured - we consider High School as grades nine through twelve. For seventh and eighth grade athletes, we feel there are better opportunities with the club for the following reasons:

1. You can compete within your own age group. As an eleven to fourteen year old athlete **swimming for your high school team**, you will be essentially swimming against Senior/Open competition from your first meet on. While we have many younger athletes who are competitive within the Big 9 Conference, we would urge you to take a look at the MSHSL results from the High School Sectional and State Meets to see what you are up against. Imagine if on your return to the Rochester Swim Club we only allowed you to compete and be awarded against 15 to 18 year old athletes regardless of your age - that's what High School swimming is for seventh and eighth graders.
2. Our staff consists of professional coaches and we work hard to create an environment where the coach to athlete ratio is manageable and there is enough space to develop skills and training. We are the coaches of your children for roughly 46 weeks a year.
3. The High School season is only 14 weeks long (assuming you qualify for the HS State Meet.) Most of our club athletes make it to at least the Section level, which is roughly 12-13 weeks. This season it will be even more compressed with limitations on competitions at the end of the season.  
It is an exercise in compression - be aware of the weekday meets **in other cities, team** commitments, pasta feeds, team meetings, and other gatherings that are "optional". In a college environment, the season is generally 22 to 26 weeks long, which mirrors our short course club season. **Since we are striving toward long term success for our swimmers, gearing your 7th/8th grade swimmer toward a longer season (22-26 weeks) promotes that goal.**
4. The High School order of individual events is as follows:

200 Free, 200 IM, 50 Free, 100 Fly, 100 Free, 500 Free, 100 Back, 100 Breast.

There are also three relays - 200 Medley, 200 Free and 400 Free.

We feel that the events available to an eleven to fourteen year old developmental athlete in USA Club Swimming are more appropriate for the development of each athlete.

Here is what is available:

50/100/200/500/1000/1650 Free, 50/100/200 Back, 50/100/200 Breast, 50/100/200 Butterfly, 100/200/400 IM, 200/400/800 Free Relay, 200/400 Medley Relay

Some of our greatest achievements in our Pre Senior and Junior groups come from athletes breaking out of traditional events into new ones they have evolved into. Too often we feel athletes are "typecast" into roles (The Sprinter, The Distance Swimmer, The Backstroker) which do not allow them to try different things. People change and a goal of our programming for the continued physical and mental health of our athletes is a broad variety of events for them to participate, train and find success in over the course of years, not weeks.

5. Please understand that even if you are a Varsity High School swimmer in seventh and eighth grade you will be placed in a skill-appropriate group upon your return to the Rochester Swim Club. We can't guarantee that you will be placed in a group with your High School Varsity or Junior Varsity Swimming friends or the same group you contributed in during the previous season - we have to do what is right for **your swimmer and put them in the correct**

training group and what is best for the Rochester Swim Club as a team due to spacing and size issues. Speed in events does not dictate the training ability of an athlete.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opinion. There are always exceptions to the rule. For some athletes regardless of age and grade, the High School opportunity is a great one and for others it may not be the best option. Please seek out and communicate with your swimmer's coach for more information pertaining to your child and specific questions regarding HS swimming and their transition back to club should they decide to participate in HS swimming. Thanks for your continued support of the Rochester Swim Club and we look forward to seeing you this fall!

Thanks,  
Rochester Swim Club Staff