



## Sunkist Swim Team: Training Groups

Sunkist Swim Team trains in groups structured to ensure that swimmers make optimal use of their time swimming and training with their peers—both in terms of age and ability. Under the direction of the head coach, the staff decides group placement based on what is best for a swimmer’s continued development within the structure and goals of the team.

Coaches move swimmers from group to group as needed throughout the season. They may also make adjustments to groups (adding groups, practice times, etc) to meet the needs of the team. Time spent in a group varies from swimmer to swimmer. The focus of every group is to challenge and develop each individual, helping them to realize their full potential both in and out of the water.

Keep in mind, groups provide structure and order to training sessions and are not meant to be viewed solely as a benchmark on progress or skill. Groups also help to define what is expected of each swimmer at various levels of development.

In general, the criteria for advancing in groups involves three core considerations:

**First, is performance.** This involves assessing the swimmer’s racing performances and technical skills. Coaches track times and time improvements from meet-to-meet, measuring against the time standards set forth by USA Swimming.

**Second, is training.** Coaches monitor how swimmers perform in workouts and make sure each swimmer is able to meet the training demands of their group on a day-to-day basis, in terms of yardage, intensity, pace and the making of interval sets.

**Third, is overall commitment.** This involves the level of healthy engagement a swimmer has with the sport, with competitors and with the team. Important considerations are a positive attitude, sportsmanship, a commitment to attending meets, regularly attending practices, focus in workouts, caring about nutrition, proper hydration and following direction. Coaches also gauge the individual desire of a swimmer to participate and improve in the sport of swimming without any undue pressure from a parent.

While the coaching staff looks at all three of these key components when considering moves, there will be times when it is simply in the best interest of the team to make a move based on only one or two of these elements and/or other factors. Ultimately, it is up to a coach to decide when a swimmer is ready to advance or needs more work.



## **SUNFISH GROUP**

*This group is for beginning swimmers 7 years old or younger who have advanced beyond lessons and desire to experience competitive swimming.*

Sunfish is our developmental, pre-competitive group that teaches young children how to swim and transitions swimmers from lessons to competitive swimming. Sunfish swimmers learn the building blocks of swimming and the fundamentals to competitive swimming.

Our teachers aim to instill a passion for the sport of swimming in all of our Sunfish and a readiness to handle the rigors of lap swimming in the big pool. This group is designed to prepare young swimmers for training in the Orange Group with skills acquisition and water safety key to advancement.

### **Sunfish: Skills Progression & Advancement Goals**

Sunfish swimmers are grouped into pods by ability with no more than 5 swimmers per teacher. The composition and skill level of each pod is entirely dependent on the current roster of swimmers. Progressions may over-lap and advancement can vary between Sunfish pods. There is no required time table for advancement, swimmers are tested before advancing to Orange Group and some may progress faster than others as often is the case with novice swimmers.

Sunfish swimmers progress through 6 levels each with specific advancement goals. Progress in all pods is measured by refining technique of acquired skills and not speed in the water.

*To graduate, Sunfish swimmers must be able to demonstrate competence of progression advancement skills and drills, must be able to swim 25 yards freestyle with correct rotary breathing and 25 yards backstroke without turning over onto stomach.*

*Due to the popularity of our Sunfish Program, roster space is extremely limited and the group may be closed to new swimmers. When Sunfish rosters are completely filled, a wait list is kept upon request for swimmers next in line who wish to be notified when a roster slot becomes available.*





## **ORANGE GROUP**

*This group is for beginning swimmers who have advanced beyond Sunfish and are 10 years old or younger.*

Orange Group emphasizes refinement of all four competitive strokes, with an introduction of proper practice behavior and aerobic conditioning. Orange Group training stresses kicking sets to build up important leg strength and places preparatory attention to technique with drills. Orange Group goals include transferring technique into conditioning and beginning training sets. Progress in this group is measured by proper technique and strength of stroke.

Continued stroke instruction is the key to advancement and emphasizing fun is a crucial part of the workout. This group is designed to foster a love of the sport and to introduce the swimmers to USA Swimming competitions.

### ***Expectations***

- Ability to demonstrate all four competitive strokes (legally)
- Attendance – 25% practice and meet attendance
- Be able to complete 1,000 yards per workout in productive fashion
- Compete in 50 yard events for all four strokes and 100 yard IM
- Bring required equipment to every practice

### ***Group Focus Points***

- Technique, stroke drills, kicking, improving, following instructions

### ***Required Equipment***

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy



## **BLUE 2 GROUP**

*This group is for swimmers who have advanced beyond Orange Group and are 12 or younger.*

The emphasis of Blue 2 Group is to build off of the enthusiasm of Orange Group. Technique and conditioning continue to be the focus in extended workouts. Additional racing skills will be introduced, such as flip turns and racing starts.

### ***Expectations***

- Attendance – 50% for practice and meet attendance
- Be able to complete 1,500 yards per workout in productive fashion
- Focus on skill acquisition
- Compete in 100 yard events and 100 yard IM
- Parent meets volunteer responsibilities (including timing at meets)

### ***Group Focus Points***

- Increased quantity of training
- Improved technique, stroke drills, kicking and following instructions
- Accept and incorporate coach's feedback (i.e. changing a bad practice habit)
- Participation in all home meets
- Demonstrate good team sportsmanship

### ***Required Equipment***

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy



## **BLUE GROUP**

*This group is for swimmers who have advanced beyond Blue 2 Group and are 12 or younger.*

The emphasis of Blue Group is to get swimmers more excited about racing and team spirit. Technique and conditioning continue to be the focus, with increased pacing and volume. Racing skills will be refined with an emphasis on speed. Blue Group swimmers learn how to use the pace clock during sets and how to train at different intervals during workouts.

### ***Expectations***

- Attendance – 75% for practice and meet attendance
- Be able to complete 2,000 yards per workout in productive fashion
- Focus on advanced skills and speed
- Excitement about working toward qualifying time standards
- Compete in 400 yard freestyle, 200 yard IM and 100 yard events for all four strokes
- Parent meets volunteer responsibilities (including timing at meets)

### ***Group Focus Points***

- Increased intensity and quantity of training
- Advanced race preparation
- Accept and incorporate coach's race strategies
- Participation in all home meets
- Participation in out of town meets
- Set goals to qualify for championship meets
- Begin developing responsibility for their own swimming (i.e. checking heat and lane assignments without parent assistance)
- Begin to use pace clock and interval training
- Demonstrate good team sportsmanship

### ***Required Equipment***

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy



## **JUNIOR 2 GROUP**

*This group is for swimmers who have advanced beyond Blue Group and are ages 9 to 12.*

Junior 2 Group introduces increased aerobic workouts involving sets of longer distances and durations. Swimmers of this group will have a large focus on developing the strength in their strokes to allow them to become more efficient swimmers. Stroke technique with added strength are the key ingredients that will make the difference in the development of these swimmers.

### ***Expectations***

- Attendance – minimum of three weekly practices and 75% meet attendance
- Commit to year-round training program (includes all holidays)
- Be able to complete 3,000 yards per workout in productive fashion
- Continued excitement about working toward qualifying time standards
- Parent meets volunteer responsibilities (including timing at meets)

### ***Group Focus Points***

- Increase quality and quantity of training
- Improve practice attendance
- Goal setting and knowledge of time standards/personal bests
- Continued progress in performing stroke technique, drills and turns
- Ability to use pace clock without assistance
- Demonstrate good team sportsmanship

### ***Required Equipment***

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Speedo Training Paddles
- Snorkel
- Tennis ball



## **JUNIOR GROUP**

*This group is for swimmers who have advanced beyond Junior 2 Group and are ages 9 to 12.*

Junior Group is expected to have a strong grasp on stroke technique and will be introduced to more advanced racing strategy. Workouts will include an increase in density (more yards per hour) in addition to the introduction of dryland training and yoga. Swimmers train for qualifying meets and prepare to move up to the Senior Groups at age 13.

### **Expectations**

- Attendance – minimum of four weekly practices
- Be able to complete 4,000+ yards per workout in productive fashion
- Regularly attend all team meets
- Commit to year-round training program (includes all holidays)
- Demonstrate personal responsibility and good sportsmanship
  - Communicates with coach about missed practices, illness, injury, etc
  - Takes full responsibility at meets without parent assistance
  - Is a good sport when winning or losing
  - Keeps up with schoolwork
- Parent volunteers for the jobs that require more time commitment

### **Group Focus Points**

- Increased commitment to training and team
- Set and achieve higher goals and time standards
- Exemplary team participation and support
- Accept and incorporate coach's advanced racing strategies

### **Required Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Speedo Training Paddles
- Snorkel
- Tennis ball



## **SENIOR 2 GROUP**

*This group is for swimmers older than 13 who have advanced beyond Junior Group, are just starting their swimming experience and/or are transitioning to year-round swimming from high school or summer league.*

Senior 2 Group is for our less experienced competitive swimmers 13 years and older, bridging the gap between age group/high school swimming and Senior level swimming. Swimmers in this group undergo increased physical training to achieve competitive success at the state level and begin to focus on national level swimming. The swimmers in this group utilize advanced training techniques in the water and on the land, experiencing more intense training cycles as they prepare for the top Senior group. Practices are devoted to challenging aerobic and sprint sets, technical refinement, comprehensive dryland training and yoga.

Senior 2 Group swimmers are also expected to take on a larger role with the team, becoming role models and mentors to the younger swimmers. Senior 2 Group swimmers are the team's next leaders in the pool and on deck.

### **Expectations**

- Regular meet and practice attendance – 75% of workouts offered
- Focus on dryland workouts and cross training
- Focus on improving stroke technique and skills
- Mentorship of young swimmers
- Exemplary team participation and support

### **Group Focus Points**

- Stroke technique while swimming fast
- Increase in set complexity and training levels
- Quick walls (turns) and starts
- Taking it to the next level

### **Required Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Speedo Training Paddles
- Snorkel
- Tennis ball



## **SENIOR GROUP**

*This group is for swimmers who have advanced beyond Junior Group and are older than 13.*

Senior Group comprises our most seasoned and advanced swimmers. The dedication, work ethic, time management and goal setting skills swimmers learn in this group will help them succeed throughout their lives. Senior Group is expected to have great stroke technique, an excellent grasp on race splitting and pace training, and the ability to prepare to race at their best. Practices are devoted to all-encompassing training for every event. Senior Group swimmers must adhere to good nutritional and study habits, and demonstrate a positive work ethic.

Senior Group is expected to lead the team in the water and on the deck. Mentoring younger swimmers and team spirit are primary responsibilities of all Senior swimmers. Senior Group understands they represent the TEAM and by putting the team first they become better individuals and help to grow the sport. Senior Group swimmers may be asked to help younger swimmers with their strokes and to volunteer at team functions. Senior Group swimmers may be hired to coach for Sunkist and city summer league teams.

### ***Expectations***

- Regular meet and practice attendance
- Maximum output and dedication
- Pace training, variation of focused training intensities, dedication to dry-land training, successful school/swimming time management, etc
- Personal Responsibility – take care of injuries, manage social life, school work and maintain proper nutrition
- Role model leaders of the team
- Exemplify sportsmanship in every aspect

### ***Group Focus Points***

- Advanced training including “two-a-days”
- Continued stroke technique improvement
- Increased efficiency in strokes

### ***Required Equipment***

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Speedo Training Paddles
- Snorkel
- Tennis ball



## **NATIONAL GROUP**

*This group is for our elite swimmers 13 and up preparing for collegiate swimming or post-grad career.*

National Group develops our most elite swimmers into nationally and internationally accomplished student-athletes and post grad athletes. Each swimmer in National Group has a goal of participating in collegiate swimming or has already swam in college. Younger National Group swimmers commit to serious training in order to give them the best opportunity to earn athletic scholarships to the top universities. Post grad swimmers continue to swim lifetime personal best times and are professionally committed to serious training.

National Group swimmers train to qualify and participate in top qualifying meets around the country.

### **Expectations**

- Student-Athlete – time management is the key
- Post grad – focused and committed to goals and perfecting life management skills to facilitate and support professional training needs
- Attend all meets on schedule and all Q meets coach requires to attend
- Driven to take their swimming to the next level
- Attendance – maximum participation in all aspects of the program
- Consistency
  - Effort levels in practice
  - Attendance
  - Focus at meets and at practice
  - Stroke improvement key no matter the level
  - Knowledge of times and standards
- Extended periods of absence from workouts during season are not permitted
- “Ownership of swimming” –expected to communicate with coach and take full responsibility for their swimming

### **Group Focus Points**

- Advanced training and participation in national swim camps
- Turns and “underwaters” become assets
- Stroke efficiency – balance between power and tempo
- Fine tuning stroke techniques
- Race strategies

### **Required Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Speedo Training Paddles
- Snorkel