**HHST Practice Group Entry Criteria**

The following outline provides a map of swimmer development and a representative set of specific skills, capacities, behaviors, and attitudes coaches use in assessing swimmer readiness for advancement. The skills listed for a given group are considered entry-level skills; for example, Bronze swimmers who can swim 100 yards of freestyle with alternate-side breathing and flip turns are more likely to successfully transition to the Silver group. Criteria are additive, so those listed at lower levels are assumed at higher levels.

**I. Bronze I**

A. Attitude

1. Respects teammates and coaches

2. Demonstrates desire to improve swimming skills and fitness

B. Skills

1. Swims 25 yards of freestyle face in water with an attempt of side breathing

2. Swims 25 yards backstroke with continuous arms and steady kick

3. Can somersault in water

**II. Bronze II**

1. Attitude
2. Knows when practice starts and plans to arrive on timely fashion
3. Gets in quickly and without need for prodding
4. Cooperates with lane mates
5. Maintains eye contact with coach during instruction
6. Skills
7. Dolphin kick and a semblance of arms-together fly
8. Proper breast pull and a legal whip kick with a semblance of PBKG timing
9. Spears consistently off walls on back and belly
10. Executes head-first dive
11. Knowledge
12. Uses pace clock to monitor rest intervals
13. Knows how to count strokes for the length or from flags (backstroke)
14. Knows two-handed touch rule for breast and fly and proper backstroke finish
15. Understands and practices lane etiquette
16. Knows stroke order of IM
17. Training
18. Leaves on rest interval
19. Swims continuously when instructed
20. Racing—has competed

**II. Silver**

1. Attitude
   1. Arrives for practice prepared and punctual
   2. Pays attention and tries hard
   3. Focuses on technical improvements
   4. Encourages and cheers teammates
2. Skills
   1. Executes a head first dive
   2. Swims 100 yards of freestyle with alternate-side breathing and flip turns
   3. Swims 100 yards of backstroke with flip turns and legal finishes
   4. Swims 25 yards of legal breaststroke
   5. Swims 25 yards of legal butterfly
   6. Performs simple drills

a. 6/3/6 on crawl and back

b. Fists on free and back

c. Two kicks and one pull on breast

d. Hand-lead body dolphin for breast and fly

e. One-arm swimming in all strokes

D. Knowledge

1. Uses pace clock to monitor sendoffs using multiples of 30 and 60

2. Calculates times from those sendoffs

3. Leaves five seconds behind next swimmer in lane

4. Knows two-handed touch rule for breast and fly and proper backstroke finish

5. Knows stroke order of IM

E. Training

1. Pool

a. Swims continuously when assigned; refrains from stopping or breaking stroke

2. Dryland

a. Runs, not walks, during running dryland activities

b. Performs basic dryland movements with increasing proficiency, range of motion, and speed of movement

F. Meets—has competed in at least 5 meets

**III. Gold**

A. Attendance --recommended minimum of 4-5 practices/week with consistently strong effort

B. Attitude

1. Asks questions and requests feedback

2. Willing to try larger challenges

3. More sophistication and clarity with season-long goalsetting

4. Appreciates link between effort and results

C. Skills

1. All strokes
2. Spine line head position

b. Executes a head-first dive with moderate push-off

1. c. Performs a tight streamline and kicks in that position for 25 yards
2. Performs basic drills and drill progressions, for example

1) One-arm swimming in free, back, and fly

2) Two pulls and one kick in breaststroke

3) Three basic prone scull positions

2. Freestyle

1. Minimal head movement
2. Rhythmic side breathing integrated with at least some body roll
3. Backstroke
4. Minimal head movement
5. Some body roll
6. Steady flutter kick

4. Fly

1. Dolphin kick
2. Simultaneous arms

5. Breast

1. Short pulls (no farther back than chin)
2. Legal kick
3. Pullouts
4. Head on the spine line

6. Turns

a. “Hot-plate, ceiling watch” on open turns

b. “Scoop-spear” on flip turns

D. Knowledge

1. Describes basic drills and knows purpose of each

2. Detects major strengths and weaknesses in others’ strokes at Silver level

3. Explains basic rules of strokes, starts, and turns

4. Uses pace clock to monitor repeat times and send-offs of any multiple of 10 or 15

5. Counts stroke cycles/length and understands importance of increasing distance/stroke (DPS)

E. Meets

1. Has competed in at least 5 meets

2. Has completed races in all four strokes legally

3. Competes at least every other month

**IV. Junior**

A. Attendance --recommended minimum of 5-6 practices/week with consistently strong effort

B. Attitude

1. Approaches practice with purpose

2. Formulates clear season-long goals

3. Embraces hard work and big challenges

C. Skills

1. All strokes
2. Accelerates hands from catch to release of all strokes

b. Pushes off walls underwater in “spear”

c. Dives from blocks keeping head down and goggles in place

d. Propels self efficiently with the three basic prone sculling movements

e. Propels self with three basic supine sculling movements

f. Supports streamline with kick alone for at least 50 yards in each stroke

1. Performs intermediate drills and drill progressions, for example
2. Free and back
   1. Rolling human stroke sequence
   2. 3 power strokes and glide
   3. Long-axis drill
3. Fly
   1. One-arm swimming with other arm back and chin-forward breathing

(b) Three hand-lead body dolphins followed by three strokes

* 1. Three sculls with hand-lead body dolphin and pull through on third scull

1. Breast
   1. Three hand-lead body dolphins followed by three strokes
   2. Breast with dolphin or flutter
   3. Double-pullouts
2. Freestyle
3. Head centered and spinelined
4. Bilateral breathing
5. Moderate body roll
6. Beginning hip snap
7. Consistent use of flip turns
8. Backstroke
9. Head centered and spinelined
10. Moderate body roll
11. Beginning hip snap
12. "Machine gun" kick
13. Continuous arm action
14. Consistent use of backstroke flags and flip turns
15. Butterfly
16. Dolphin kick initiated from trunk
17. "Kick-in, kick-out" timing
18. Chin-thrust, low-angle breathing
19. Breaststroke
20. Pull-breathe-kick-glide timing
21. Out-slow, in-fast pull
22. Feet wider than knees on thrust of kick

d. Moderately long pullouts

6. Turns

a. Accelerates into wall

b. Long, powerful pullouts (br) and fast-snappy kickouts (fl, ba, cr)

c. Deep-arm breakouts (ba and cr) and no-breather breakouts (fl and cr)

D. Knowledge

1. Describes intermediate drills and drill progressions and knows purpose of each

2. Explains minor rules of strokes, starts, and turns

3. Explains proper technique and diagnoses stroke flaws at Gold level

4. Uses the pace clock to monitor repeat times and send-offs of any multiple of 15

5. Counts stroke cycles for 50 yards and adds count to the 50 time

6. Takes 6-second pulse check and converts to heart rate (HR); explains relationship between HR

and exertion level and change in HR and fitness level

7. Recalls racing times in best six events and all goal-set times

8. Knows Heartland Area and Ozark Champs time standards and team records for these events

9. Sets seasonal training and racing goals and discusses them with the coach

E. Meets

1. Has completed most events within their given age group

2. Performs warm-ups and cool downs at meets; checks on relays; cheers teammates

3. Begins to evaluate own races objectively and consults with coach

5. Competes at least monthly including USAS meets