



Winchester Swim Team Practice Group Descriptions

Winchester Swim Team offers practice groups for swimmers of all ages and ability. Whether your swimmer had a great summer swim team experience, recently took swim lessons or is currently a member of a high school swim team, WST has a place for you!

Winchester Swim Team's goal is to create a long-term passion for the sport of swimming for families in the greater Winchester community. To accomplish this goal, we strive to make swimming fun, exciting and fulfilling for each WST swimmer. Stroke technique and efficiency, cardiovascular endurance, and starts and turns are stressed in each practice group in a manner tailored to the age and skill level of the group. Dryland training supplements the time spent in the water. This training includes age appropriate exercises to improve a swimmer's overall fitness level, and to strengthen the key muscle groups that are important for swimming.

The mission of the Winchester Swim Team is to provide a diverse program which supports and encourages swimmers of all levels, and which promotes a sense of sportsmanship, healthy competition, and team spirit. The Winchester Swim Team seeks to always operate in an atmosphere where all swimmers feel welcomed, encouraged, and supported in achieving their goals. In addition, the WST seeks to develop a team spirit among family members, as well as swimmers, through continuing to educate them in the sport of swimming and always encouraging families to volunteer in support of their swimmers, their team, and their sport.

All new swimmers are evaluated by a coach and assigned to a practice group that matches their age and ability. Guidelines for practice groups allow our coaches to work more effectively within their practices with a cohesive group of swimmers. The WST coaches always have each swimmer's best interest and long-term development in mind when assigning a practice group.

The WST coaches are responsible for determining when it is appropriate to move a child to a higher practice group. These determinations are made twice a year (November/July). The coaches consider the age and physical ability of the swimmer, practice attendance, meet performance, and the emotional readiness of each child for the training required of the higher practice group.

Please note that the pre-requisites for each group are only guidelines. The coaches use their experience and judgment to determine the practice group most appropriate for the swimmer and his/her long-term development and enjoyment of the sport.

To support the ongoing training of all our athletes our coaches have designed each practice group with required training sessions and meet requirements to produce optimum growth and development. Therefore, swimmers who are unable to meet the minimal requirements for their practice group may be moved to a practice group that better accommodates their attendance and training needs.

Thank you for your support in this process. Please email Kelly@warnagiris.org to schedule an evaluation.

White Practice Group

The White Group is Winchester's introductory group for 5 to 10 year old swimmers. White Group swimmers will learn the basics of all 4 competitive strokes in an encouraging atmosphere. The coaches focus on teaching proper stroke technique, introducing starts and turns, and developing a joy of swimming using games, activities, and challenges. The interpersonal skills necessary to compete in the sport of swimming also will be taught – working with teammates, following directions, listening to the coaches, and having fun.

Participation in swim meets is encouraged so that coaches can assess a swimmer's progress; however, it is not required for White Group Swimmers.

Practice Recommendations

2 practices a week are required. Each practice session lasts 45 minutes. Swimmers practice session are emphasis drills and skill development. Swimmers at this level are encouraged to participate in other sports and activities.

Pre-requisite for the Explore White Group

- Able to complete a 25-yard freestyle and backstroke without assistance.

Blue Practice Group

The Blue Group is Winchester's novice level athletes 7 to 12 years of age. This group is designed to teach and develop strokes and philosophies of competitive swimming. Focus is on teaching the basics of all 4 competitive strokes. The coaches will emphasize proper stroke technique, starts and turns, and building cardiovascular endurance through drills, sets and enjoyable activities. The coaches will continue to work on the interpersonal skills necessary to compete in the sport of swimming– working with teammates, following directions, listening to the coaches, and having fun.

Winchester Swim Team recommends that the Blue swimmers participate in 2 season meets along with all eligible championship meets.

Practice Recommendations

2 practices a week are required. Each practice session lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes and includes dry land training. Swimmers can expect to work up to swimming 2,000 to 3,000 yards/meters per practice session. Dry land activities include simple exercises and skills. Swimmers at this level are encouraged to participate in other sports and activities.

Pre-requisites for the Explore Blue

- Able to compete legally in all four strokes in a swim meet.

Bronze Practice Group

The Bronze Group is designed for 8 - 12 year old swimmers with some previous swim team experience or swim lessons and legal in all 4 strokes.

The Bronze Group will continue to work on stroke technique while introducing race strategies in practice by learning and performing stroke-specific drills during practice. Training will begin to include a focus on longer distance events and IMs. The coaches will introduce race strategies and techniques used by swimmers in the next level practice group and continue to emphasize the importance of working with teammates, following directions, listening to the coaches, and having fun.

The Bronze Group coaches will work with swimmers to understand and use USA Swimming time standards to set personal goals and to achieve these goals using interval training in practice. Turning swimmers into athletes while nurturing and growing the love of the sport and the team is the goal of this group.

Winchester Swim Team recommends participation in 3 season swim meets with the focus on swimmers qualifying at the end of the season for district, regional and state championship meets.

Practice Recommendations

2 practices a week are required. Each swim practice session lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes. Swimmers can expect to work up to swimming 4,000 yards/meters per practice session. In addition, two dry land sessions a week are required for those swimmers when not participating in another sport. Swimmers at this level are encouraged to participate in other sports and activities.

Pre-requisites for the Junior Group:

- Minimum 1 time standard
- Able to meet the Bronze Group Practice Challenge time standards – see practice groups chart.

Silver 2 Practice Group

Silver 2 Group is designed for 10-14-year-old swimmers with some previous swim team experience and who wish to participate in other sports.

The Silver 2 coaches focus on stroke technique while working on overall athletic conditioning and endurance using freestyle and IM training. An emphasis will be placed on learning and applying race strategies and techniques. Each Silver 2 swimmer will establish personal goals and work towards achieving those goals using interval training in practice. Coaches will hold meetings to focus on competitive excellence and personal development. Topics will include teamwork, time management, nutrition, race strategies, mental training and other life lessons.

Minimum 4 meets per year required in addition to all eligible regional and state championship meets.

Required Practice Commitment

3 to 5 practices a week are required. Each swim practice session lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes. Swimmers can expect to work up to swimming 4,000-5,000 yards/meters per practice session. In addition, two dry land sessions a week are required for Silver 2 swimmers when not participating in another sport.

Pre-requisites for the Age Group Bronze Group:

- Minimum 4 time standards
- Able to meet the Silver 2 Group Practice Challenge time standards – see practice groups chart.

Silver 1 Practice Group

Silver 1 Group is designed for 9-14 year olds who choose the competitive track, choose swimming as their primary sport and who have state championship qualifying times. Tracking towards the Gold 1 group is a priority for Silver 1 swimmers.

The Silver 1 coaches will focus on proper stroke technique using stroke-specific drills while teaching race strategies/techniques and overall athletic conditioning and endurance. Each Silver 1 swimmer will establish personal goals and work towards achieving those goals using interval training in practice. Coaches will hold meetings to focus on competitive excellence and personal development. Topics will include teamwork, time management, nutrition, race strategies, mental training and other life lessons.

Participation in monthly swim meets is required with the focus on swimmers qualifying at the end of the season for district, regional, state championships, NCSA Junior Nationals, and USA Junior Nationals.

Required Practice Commitment

5 to 7 practices a week are recommended. 6 practices a week are recommended for those swimmers working towards meeting the requirements of the Gold 1 group. Each swim practice session lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes. Swimmers can expect to work up to swimming 5,000 yards/meters plus per practice session. In addition, 3 dry land sessions a week are recommended.

Pre-requisites for the Age Group Bronze Group:

- Minimum 4 BB time standards
- Able to meet the Silver 1 Group Practice Challenge time standards – see practice groups chart.

Gold 2 Practice Group

The Gold 2 Group is designed for high school athletes who enjoy swimming but wish to participate in other sports and activities during the high school years or swimmers who are working towards Gold 1 qualifying time standards and practice sets.

The Gold 2 coaches will focus on a mixture of freestyle, IM, stroke, and sprint work while reinforcing correct stroke technique. Learning and improving race strategies and techniques will also be emphasized. Each Gold 2 swimmer will establish personal goals and work towards achieving those goals using interval training in practice. Coaches will hold meetings to discuss topics such as leadership, academic excellence, team spirit, and drug and alcohol avoidance.

Participation in monthly swim meets is recommended. A minimum of 4 meets are required with the focus on swimmers participating in district, regional and state championship meets at the end of the season.

Practice Recommendation

5 - 7 practices per week are recommended for continued progress and development but are not required. Each swim practice session lasts 2 hours. Swimmers can expect to build up to swimming 5,000 yards/meters per practice session. 3 dry land sessions a week are recommended but not required.

Pre-requisites for the Senior I Group

- Minimum 4 time standards
- Able to meet the Gold 2 Group Practice Challenge time standards.

Gold 1 Practice Group

Gold 1 is designed for advanced 15 to 18-year-old swimmers who have state championship qualifying times and choose swimming as their primary sport. Tracking towards the Senior group is a priority for Gold 1 swimmers.

The Gold 1 coaches emphasize proper stroke technique while working on overall athletic conditioning and endurance. Distance freestyle events and 400IM will be the primary focus with a secondary focus on event specific training. The advanced race strategies and techniques used in the Senior group will be introduced.

Each Gold 1 swimmer will establish personal goals and work towards achieving those goals using interval training in practice. Coaches will hold meetings to emphasize, encourage, and highlight important topics associated with achieving success both in and out of the pool. Topics will include teamwork, time management, nutrition, race strategies, mental training and other life lessons.

Participation in monthly swim meets and all championships is required with the focus on qualifying for state championships, NCSA Junior Nationals, and USA Junior Nationals.

Required Practice Commitment

6 to 8 practices a week are required. Each swim practice session lasts 2 hours. Swimmers can expect to swim 5,500 to 6,500 yards/meters per practice session. Gold 1 swimmers are required to attend an additional 3 dry land sessions per week.

Pre-requisites for the Age Group Gold Group

- Minimum 3 "A" time standards
- Able to meet the Gold 1 Group Practice Challenge time standards.
- Must consistently attended 6 practices per week plus dryland.

Senior Practice Group

Senior Group is designed for advanced swimmers who have made a commitment to focus on swimming as their only high school sport. Tracking towards consistent Senior Qualifying times is a priority for Senior swimmers.

The Senior group focuses on distance as well as stroke specific training. The coaches regularly discuss leadership skills, personal accountability, team support, hard work and overall healthy life style habits (nutrition and drug/alcohol avoidance) to help guide the athlete to personal excellence in life. Each Senior swimmer keeps a personal log book or journal to foster open and honest communication between the athlete and the coach and to help keep the athlete on track towards meeting his or her personal goals.

Participation in all senior meets is required with a focus on swimmers qualifying for senior championships, sectionals, NCSA Junior Nationals and USA Nationals.

Required Practice Commitment

6 - 8 practices a week and all dry land sessions are required. A swimmer unable to consistently meet these requirements may be moved to a lower level group until the athlete demonstrates the required practice commitment.

Pre-requisites for the Senior II Group

- 15 and older swimmers with minimum 3 Senior Championship qualifying times;
- Swimmers must consistently attend practice 6 or more times per week.