

MADISON AQUATIC CLUB GROUP LEVELS AND TRAINING PROGRESSION

At the Madison Aquatic Club, we train our swimmers to prepare for a long and healthy swim career striving for the highest levels of competition. We do this by creating a training progression that sufficiently challenges swimmers throughout their career. Setting and holding swimmers accountable from the time they start with us through their senior swimming years keeps them engaged and challenged. In the competitive groups, our young swimmers learn to love to swim and to swim well. As the swimmer progresses through the program, they will be sufficiently challenged to keep growing season-to-season and year-to-year through the proper training progression.

Each of our groups is set-up to help swimmers grow and progress to the next level. Without the skills learned in the previous group, they will not be ready for the next group. We feel it is not only important where they are today, but also that they learn the skills to progress and become a better athlete for tomorrow. Group placement is in the best interest of the swimmer for their progress in the sport of swimming and with us.

Group placement is at coaches' discretion and is based on many factors including their ability, experience and their willingness to meet the commitment expected from that level. MAC coaches do not purely base groups around ages or what is in the short-term best interest of the swimmer but instead on what the swimmer needs in order to learn, grow, and thrive on a long-term timeline. Questions regarding your child's level should be directed toward his/her coach.

At MAC, while each individual coach will have his/her own expectations, we have a few universal things we expect from our swimmers. We expect them to always demonstrate respectful behavior towards other swimmers and the coaches via their listening skills, tone of voice and the language they use. We also expect all swimmers to respect the pool and equipment. Finally, we also expect our swimmers to understand the Madison Aquatic Club's Code of Conduct, USA Swimming's Code of Conduct and Safe Sport Guidelines.

COMPETITIVE PROGRAM

Our Competitive Program offers a progression and path toward long term development in the sport through building a base of proper technique beginning with our most novice swimmers through our high school athletes. This is our seasonal program which is divided into 4 separate sessions: Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. An athlete can choose to participate in individual sessions or the entire year.

As a team, we do not mandate any number of practices. However, we do encourage swimmers to attend the practices scheduled for their group. As an athlete, practice is one of the few things that you control that can help you excel at the sport. Your motivation, nutrition and support are all important, but it is practice that contributes the most to your success.

Meet participation is highly recommended, but not mandatory for these groups. Meets help to improve on the training we do in practice, gauge improvement and show things that we need to work on further. Meets also help build relationships between swimmers, coaches, teammates and help promote team bonding. Unlike summer league swimming, swim meets leading up to the season championship meet are not focused primarily on "winning" and "placing" but rather on technical improvement. Technical improvements result in faster swimming, but not always right away. Swimming fast is important, but so is technique, endurance, and race strategy.

Competitive Group Descriptions

Mini MAC Group (10&Under Novice) is an introduction to competitive swimming for our youngest athletes interested in developing endurance, technique and confidence to join our competitive USA Swim team. Swimmers in this group will learn the basics of being part of a swim team including dives, turns and workout sets. Required skills for this group are a legal freestyle and backstroke or success completion of a Learn to Swim program. 1-2 practices per week are encouraged.

White Group (10&Under Foundations) swimmers learn the fundamentals of the four competitive swimming strokes. At MAC all of our age-group swimmers are "IM'ers" meaning that we focus on developing all four strokes. While a swimmer may have strokes that are considered better or not as good as others, we work to make all of our age-groupers well rounded in all areas of swim. We take it one length at a time to make sure that swimmers understand and can master each step in the process before moving on to the next. Besides the four competitive strokes, the fundamentals of swim include: starts, turns, swim etiquette, the main drills we use at MAC, and listening to and working with the coaches. Once they understand and can demonstrate the fundamentals of each of the strokes, they are ready for either our Red or Blue Group depending on where they are in their development.

Red group (Advanced 10&Unders) swimmers advance their understanding of the fundamentals of all four of the strokes, starts, turns, learning the drills that we use across all of our groups as well as the fundamentals of swim sets including using intervals and pace clocks. Once they understand and can demonstrate these concepts consistently they are ready to advance to either Blue, Bronze or Age Group Performance. 2-3 practices per week are encouraged.

Blue group (Intermediate 11-14 year olds) swimmers advance their understanding of the fundamentals of all four of the strokes, starts, turns, learning the drills that we use across all of our groups as well as the fundamentals of swim sets including using intervals and pace clocks. This group focuses on improving stroke technique and building endurance. 2-3 practices per week are encouraged. The Blue group is for seasonal and year round swimmers.

Bronze (Advanced 11 and older) for swimmers coming up from our age group program or senior swimmers with competitive swimming experience new to MAC. Here swimmers will start to specialize in stroke work and will focus on two things: 1) Further their aerobic base and 2) stroke and race specific specialization. Practices are generally four-five times a week at 1.5 hours in-water and may include dryland. Competitions are generally 1-2 meets per month with 1-2 travel meets per season. Swimmers may be invited to Performance once they have advanced, and are ready to commit to Performance standards. Bronze is a great group for seasonal and year round swimmers.

PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Our Performance Program is for those swimmers preparing to compete beyond state on to a Sectional & National levels. Advanced training and aggressive goal setting are required. The bar is set high and participants are expected to make the scheduled workouts. This is a year-round training program. Swimmers will compete at least once per month and they must have the desire and commitment to train diligently.

This program has a more extensive meet and travel meet schedule. Swimmers achieving cuts for Sectional & National meets are expected to travel to these meets to represent MAC. Swimmers are required to have a coach invite to enter this group and new members must try out.

Performance Group Descriptions

Age Group Performance is for our advanced 12 and younger swimmers who continue skill and fitness adaptations and start focusing on higher level concepts such as race strategy. This is our age group level to prepare swimmers for our Senior Performance program. Once swimmers reach 13 years of age and are prepared, they are either offered placement into Silver or in the Bronze group. In both the Performance and the Bronze group, swimmers will be challenged to set their goals high and to progress towards them. Year round participation is expected as well as meet attendance. Swimmers are expected to participate in the highest meet they qualify for at the end of each season.

Silver is for 13-18 year old swimmers that are dedicated and want to take their swimming to the next level. These swimmers are advanced in all four competitive strokes, starts, and turns and are ready to commit to the rigorous year-round training regimen and standards of the group. Here swimmers will specialize in stroke work and will focus on two things: 1) Further their aerobic base and 2) stroke and race specific specialization. Practices are generally six times a week complimented with dryland training. Competitions are generally 1-2 meets per month with 1-2 travel meets per season. Swimmers may be invited to this Performance group when they are mentally and physically ready for further training. Year round participation is expected as well as meet attendance. Swimmers are expected to participate in the highest meet they qualify for at the end of each season.

Gold is the group within the MAC Training Progression where you will find the swimmers training in preparation for higher level competitions beyond state. Year round participation is expected. The Performance Gold group is set-up for 13 and over swimmers. These swimmers are advanced in all four competitive strokes, starts, and turns and are ready to commit to the rigorous year-round training regimen and standards of the group. Here swimmers will specialize in stroke work and will focus on two things: 1) stroke and race specific specialization and 2) striving for their full potential as a student-athlete. Practices are generally six times a week in-water and include weekly dryland. Competitions are generally 1-2 meets per month with several travel meets per season. Swimmers are expected to participate in the highest meet they qualify for at the end of each season.

National is the peak performance group within the MAC Training Progression where you will find the swimmers training in preparation for Nationals, college swimming, Olympic Trials and International competition maximizing a swimmer's potential. Technical precision and efficiency are a focus of both the athlete and coaches. Consistent year-round attendance and meet participation is required. Dryland is held 4 days per week including weight training. Swimmers must compete beyond state championship level and/or be invited to join the National team. Swimmers are expected to participate in the highest meet they qualify for at the end of each season.