



Falfins Swimming
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Falfins Swimming - Facility Reopening Proposal

Falfins Swimming is a competitive swim team and a member of USA Swimming located in Colorado Springs with over 115 year round swimmers, an additional 75 summer swimmers and over 300 children participating in our learn to swim program each year. This proposal is on behalf of Falfins Swimming but also intends to advocate for all competitive programs/pools in Colorado. There are more than 70 USA Swimming registered teams within Colorado representing over 7000 athletes.

The objective of this proposal is to establish a plan, to immediately resume training for all competitive swimmers in our local area and also throughout Colorado.

In any setting, pools can be one of the safest places in that chlorine is thought to be an effective sanitizer of COVID-19— <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

While the CDC has indicated that pools are safe and in the broader context any pool can be safe to open, this proposal is not intended to address neighborhood recreational pools, or even health clubs, but rather the specific training facilities of competitive programs. That said, many programs do utilize rec-centers and health clubs as their training facilities.

Competitive swimming is not kids splashing and playing “Marco Polo” but rather a very structured environment where swimmers are diligently working towards their next goal. Our highest-level athletes are training for Junior Nationals, the US Open, Olympic Trials, and even the Olympics. Currently 17 Colorado swimmers have qualified for Olympic Trials.

Competitive swimming is a non-contact sport, that naturally facilitates social distancing. The pool is divided by lane lines, each lane being 7-8 feet wide. Swimmers circle swim – always swimming on the right side of the lane – like driving down the road. Swimmers swim single-file, one after another, typically 10 seconds (about 5-10 meters) apart, but can be spaced even further apart. The numbers of swimmers in the pool at any given time can be carefully managed by the coaches to assure social distancing requirements are met. Competitive swimmers exhale in the water (thus blowing bubbles) while swimming, only inhaling when they take a breath, further reducing the risk of transmission. Additionally, swimmers already use all of their own gear, such as goggles, caps and paddles.

Competitive swimming facilities can further limit contact by creating separate entries and exits, limit or eliminate the user of locker rooms by requiring swimmers to arrive and depart in their suits. Bathrooms, or port-a-lets can be disinfected before/after each practice session.

Because competitive swimmers are trying to achieve standards at a national level, every day Colorado pools are closed puts them at a disadvantage. The athletes are accustomed to training 1-5 hours a day depending on their age and ability. They are put at a physical disadvantage every day they are out. Unlike, soccer, basketball or football, they can't just go to the local field to practice their craft on their own, they require a pool. They can only run or bike so many miles – they need to be in a pool to effectively train. Beyond the physical aspect, there is the mental impact to these athletes. Preventing them from following their routines, and executing their training plans creates risk for mental health issues, in a community already hard hit.



Below is a proposal to re-open our local training facilities. It demonstrates that competitive swimming can safely enforce social distancing, and ensure a safe environment for the athletes who train there.

Falfins Swimming- Training and Facility Use Procedures-

Athletes:

- Athletes who are sick or have sick household members are prohibited from attending practice.
- Any athlete or staff experiencing any symptoms of a fever (100.4F or higher), recent cough, unusual fatigue, headache or has had any exposure to someone who has had any symptoms (which includes family and friends) should remain at home and seek medical treatment. If any athlete or staff does have a fever or symptoms of illnesses, they may not attend a practice until 14 days after the fever or symptoms have ceased. Athletes and staff must see a physician and be cleared for training after being diagnosed or suspected to have COVID-19.
- Athletes will only be permitted to enter the building 5 minutes before their scheduled practice. If they arrive early they must wait in their car until the appropriate time to enter the building. Athletes must leave the Wolf Ranch Rec Center immediately at the completion of any practice.
- Parents should be waiting in their car when practice is over.
- Temperature checks will be required prior to entrance of the facility.
- Entry in to the Wolf Ranch pool will be through the north gate and the north pool doors. Exit from the Wolf Ranch pool will be from the west pool doors and the west gate.
- Swimmers will arrive in a suit and leave in a suit to limit locker room use.
- Locker rooms are only for restroom use, if necessary, and limited to one swimmer at a time.
- We ask that swimmers use the restroom at home to hopefully avoid using the locker rooms.
- Absolutely no spitting or nose wiping in the pool or on deck.
- Water bottles need to be filled at home (no drinking fountain use) and no sharing.
- Practice time will be actual swimming time and will not include the level of social time prior to getting in the pool that we had in the past. Swimmers must get right in the water when told. Swimmers who cannot maintain the level of social distancing required will not be able to attend practices until they are able to do so. We will come up with some “fun” activities for them using social distancing, but we absolutely have to keep these rules in place for the time being.
- Swim bags will be placed in designated areas on pool deck to ensure social distancing. Athletes must stay in that area until coach sends them to lanes.



Coaches:

- The staff will not be within six (6) feet of the athletes, unless there is an emergency.
- We will have athletes swim one or two per lane keeping family members together in the same lane when applicable. If there are two per lane they will begin at opposite ends.
- Coaches, staff and athletes will follow all recommended USA Swimming guidelines.
- We will begin with one (1) swimmer per lane. As restrictions are lifted, we will begin having two (2) swimmers per lane, starting from opposite ends. There is also a possibility of having three (3) swimmers per lane, one swimmer starting from each wall and one swimmer starting and finishing from the middle.

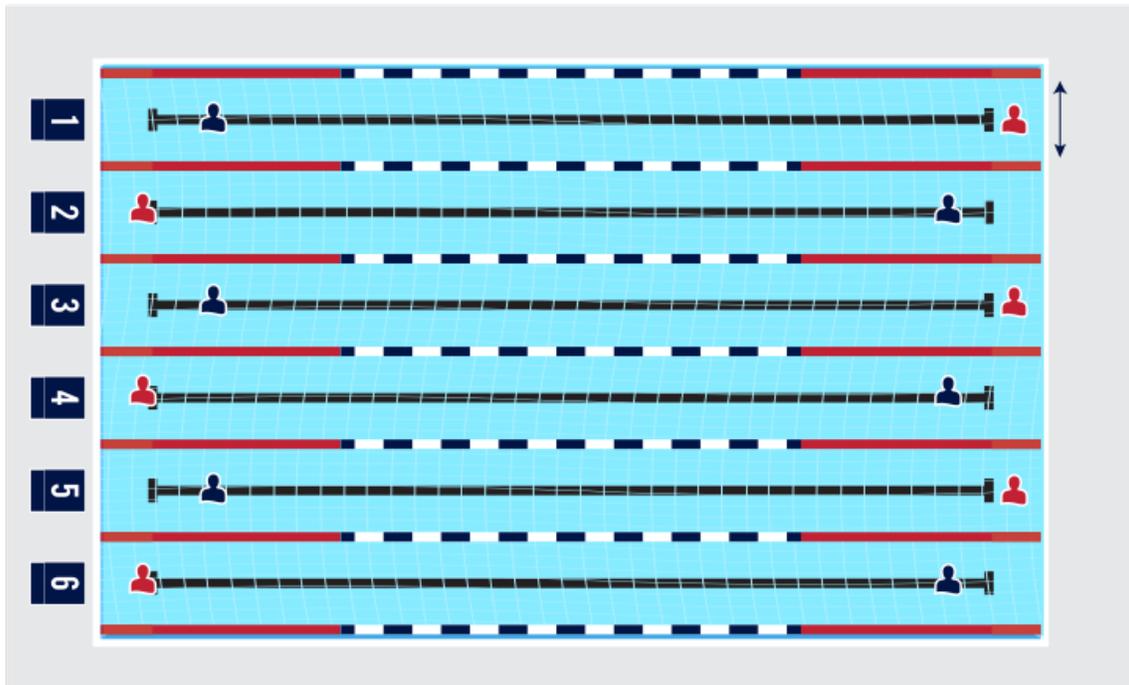
General:

- The plan to return to training depends upon the cooperation of athletes, parents and staff adherence to safety protocols. Should anyone consistently fail to adhere to facility guidelines their access may be suspended.
- Parents/Spectators will not be allowed in the facility at any time and are expected to practice social distancing, including a mask when waiting for their swimmer. With consideration to Safe Sport, parents/Spectators may observe practices from outside of Wolf Ranch fencing or pool structure, thereby making practice open and observable.
- The deck will be marked for 6-foot social distancing.
- Doors and surfaces will be wiped down between practices and as necessary.
- While the Wolf Ranch structure is still in place - doors will always be propped open, exhaust fan and heaters will always be on (circulating non-heated air).
- It is easier to add swimmers than to subtract swimmers. Our goal is to provide each of our groups access to water as soon as it is safe and responsible. While we will prioritize time for the more advanced groups, we also anticipate including water time for each group over the course of a multi-day schedule.
- Chlorine levels will be kept at least 2.0 ppm. We will be diligent about testing and maintaining proper chlorine levels.



Examples of proper social distancing in competitive swimming training environments-

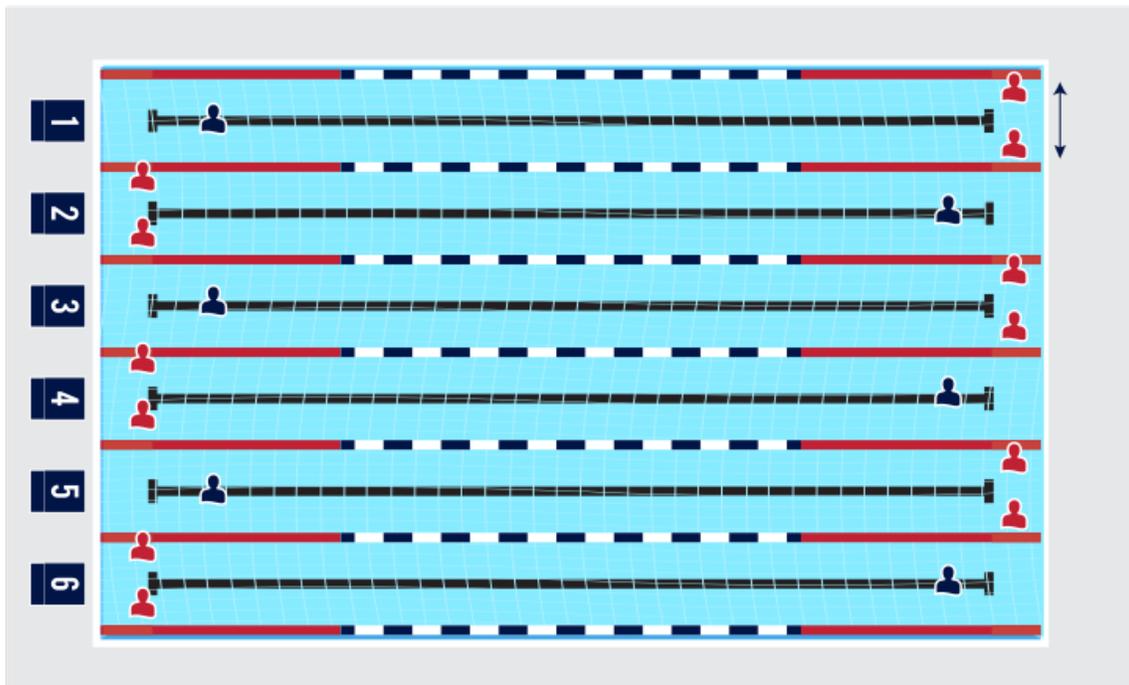
Example #1- 12 swimmers in a 6 lane 25 yard pool





Examples of proper social distancing in competitive swimming training environments-

Example #2- 18 swimmers in a 6 lane 25 yard pool





Examples of proper social distancing in competitive swimming training environments-

Example #3- 27 swimmers in a 6 lane 25 yard pool

