

Smoke Signals February 2010

PERSONAL WORKOUTS

Swimming in snow is not exactly what we have in mind when we prescribe “personal workouts” for senior level kids, but as a description of our recent conditions, it certainly reveals the usefulness of the concept. It pays to be able to shift into other modes of training when we have unexpected pool closings. Not only is it practical in making up for lost water time, but it’s a great life lesson of turning adversity into opportunity.

We appreciate ALL your efforts in helping us weather the storm!

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PREPARATION IS KEY

There’s much more to achieving individual potential than wanting it badly enough. “Thinking I can” is certainly a good place to start, but it isn’t going to build the lactate tolerance required for the last 50 of a 200 Butterfly, ensure ideal kick-out speed or produce lightning quick reaction time off the block. This part of the equation—execution--comes from preparation, from identifying and repeating the thoughts, behaviors and actions necessary to create peak performance.

With eight championship meets occurring in the final four weeks of our short course season, we thought it would be a good time to highlight some of the essential elements of preparation that we impart to the kids:

1. *Frequency of training/practice attendance.* Fast swimming is not simple. There’s a lot to cover. Limiting exposure has consequences.
2. *Ideal rest and nutrition as a consistent way of life.* Swimmers fall short when they address these as last ditch efforts before big competitions. It may be better than nothing, but how many months of training have been diminished in the interim?
3. *Detachment from results.* Great athletes are often goal driven, but they’re always process oriented. Races will not always result in lifetime bests. Get over it. Factors affecting athletic performance are complex and varied. Reducing them to a simple dichotomy of good and bad is foolish.
4. *Develop confidence.* Any act which undermines confidence inhibits growth. We must be mindful and careful in how we relate to ourselves and to each other.
5. *Invite failure.* In a sense, success is inversely proportional to failure. The willingness to fail in the act of seeking perfection is what makes sport humbling and awesome.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Due to the concentration of meets in March we may have to condense groups and coaching coverage at times. There are also several practice cancellations due to championships meets being held at Fairland.

Please note the following cancellations and modifications:

Cancellations

Friday 2/26 - Levels 1, 2 & 3 - No pm practice @ Takoma due to IM Xtreme Games

Thursday 3/18 - All levels - No pm practice @ Fairland due to JO's

Sunday 3/21 - All levels - No am practice @ Fairland due to JO's

Friday 3/26 – Levels 1, 2, & 3 – No pm practice @ Takoma due to Spring Champs

Sunday 3/28 – All levels – No am practice @ Fairland due to Spring Champs

Modifications

Sunday 3/7 – Level 5 – Practice 8:00-10:00 am (All other levels on normal schedule)

Sunday 3/14 – Levels 2, 3, 4 & 5 – Practice @ Takoma, times TBA

Sunday 3/21 – Levels 2, 3, 4 & 5 – Practice @ Takoma, times TBA

*Level 5 returns to 5:30-8:00 pm on Thursdays as of 3/4

*Final practice of the season for Level 1 is Friday 3/12. See SEASONAL DATES section

MEET SCHEDULE

Senior level swimmers should speak with Dan or Dave if they are unsure of which meets they are expected to swim.

Age group swimmers will compete in Junior Olympics (if they qualify) or Spring Champs (if they do not qualify for JO's.) Age group swimmers who only qualify for a few events at Junior Olympics are invited to enter Spring Champs in a remainder of events.

PVS Junior Championships – NST/NFT qualifications – Entries due by Sunday 2/21

PVS Senior Championships – NST qualifications – Entries due by Sunday 2/28

Mini Championships - 8 & unders – Open - Entries due by Sunday 2/28

NCSA Junior Nationals – NST qualifications – Coach select

Speedo Southern Sectionals – NST qualifications – Coach select

PVS Junior Olympics – 14 & under – NST qualifications – Entries due by Sunday 3/7

Spring Championships – 9 & up – NFT qualifications – Entries due by Sunday 3/14

* NFT – No faster than

* NST – No slower than

SEASONAL DATES

Short Course Season

Level 1 – Last day of practice Friday 3/12 (Mini Champs 3/13 & 3/14)

Levels 2 & 3 – Last day of practice Friday 3/26

Levels 4 & 5 – Last day of practice Thursday 3/25

Long Course Spring

Level 1 – SWIM SCHOOL ONLY: See Swim School program announcement for dates

Levels 2 & 3 – First day of practice Monday 4/12

Levels 4 & 5 – First day of practice Monday 4/5

SPRING PROGRAMS

Spring Swim School – See program announcement attachment

Swim School is aimed at FGAC and non-FGAC swimmers alike, ages 12 & under. As well as being the only program for Level 1 in the spring, it is designed to supplement swim team practice for Levels 2 & 3 as well, with concentrated stroke technique instruction. Even though mechanics make up a good deal of practice content for all levels of our team, the coverage of other components of training requires that time be spent otherwise.

At early stages of development, practice devoted solely to technique is unique and fun, and is essential to building the technical platform necessary for success at later stages. It cannot be overstated that realizing one's athletic potential is not only a process of what to learn but of *how to learn*. This philosophy is at the core of the swim school program.

The levels of swim school do not necessarily correspond with the levels of swim team. The roster is limited by level and filled on a first come, first serve basis.

Training Squad

The spring session of our Training Squad, which practices at PG Sports & Learning Complex, also doubles as a summer league prep program, including stroke technique, aerobic fitness and race technique. We intend to target swimmers in PG County, for whom the facility is more geographically desirable, but we certainly invite anyone from Montgomery County who doesn't mind the drive.

There is a roster limit of 15 swimmers. If you know anyone who may be interested, advise them to check the program information at our website and contact us ASAP.

SWIM-A-THON

We are holding our biennial USA Swimming Swim-a-Thon this spring. The fundraiser will be officially introduced in April, but here's an outline of what we have planned:

- 14 & under Sunday May 9th during regular practice hours
- 15 & up Sunday May 16th during regular practice hours
- Intersquad teams compete for earnings, captained by Senior Level swimmers 16 & older
- **Maximum lap target for 15 & up is doubled, so sponsorship will be by 50 yards instead of 25, with the maximum # of lengths being 400 lengths/10,000 yards.**
- Only non-FGAC member families may pledge a flat amount. Immediate FGAC families may only pledge by 25/50.
- Prizes awarded as provided by USA Swimming and FGAC.

SPRING LONG COURSE PRACTICE TIME-SHARING

The following swimmers are recommended for move up as of Summer Long Course season and are therefore eligible to attend a few designated practices* per week at a level above during Spring Long Course. This is a system we refer to as "time-sharing" and is aimed at helping the transition. This is only a recommendation and is not required.

Level 3

Sofia Eliseeva
Madi Kalen
Olivia Petrusky
Jake Ryan
Jenna Sminkey

Level 4

Daniel Chavez
Katherine Cleary
Andrew Latona
Kaitlyn Sheapp
Kylie Sheapp
Kaitlyn Toth

*Practices available

Tuesday 5-6:30 am
Thursday 5-6:30 am
Sunday 8-10:30 am

Level 4 has been reviewed carefully and swimmers have been personally interviewed to make certain we have identified only those who intend to move to Level 5. If we have missed someone with seniority who meets the criteria and wishes to apply for the move up, please notify us.

NEWS & NOTES

1. Word on the street is that Sport Fair Inc. in Arlington, VA <http://www.sportfairusa.com> is a great place to purchase the new generation Speedo LZR Racer Elite championship level swim suit. They come highly recommended in terms of on site sizing, which is essential given the investment in performance and cost.
2. We're still hoping that we are able to make the supplemental apparel order, but the actual order was lower than expected, so we'll keep you posted. Car magnets will be perpetually available at \$6 a piece or 2 for \$10.
3. Team issue t-shirts and replacement caps have been received and distributed to the kids. If we missed anyone, please notify us.
4. This is the time of year when we help HS seniors wrap up their college searches and juniors to being focusing in on their prospects. Please contact us or have the kids speak to us if they would like assistance with the swimming part of the process. We periodically meet with the kids on the matter, but realize that communication doesn't always make it home.
5. We'd love to have another 8 & under party/activity before Mini Champs. Any parents interested in putting something together, let us know. FGAC could provide some apparel goodies perhaps!