

Mesa Aquatics Club

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024

DISCIPLINE OF A CHAMPION!

INTEGRITY



Upcoming Events

February 9-11: Last chance meet hosted by MAC.

February 29-March 3: Senior State at Skyline (hosted by MAC).

March 7-10: Age Group State in Oro Valley.

March 22-25: Southwest Age Group Regional (SWAGR) meet in Clovis, CA.

- This will be a family travel meet for all age group swimmers who qualify. Time standards for this meet are attached to this email. This travel meet will be open to all swimmers ages 14 and younger who have qualifying times.

March 20-24: We will be attending 4 Corner Sectionals in Phoenix.

Pre-Team Base Camp / Narwhal (Skyline)

By Coach Shawna

These two groups are full of mighty individuals! While their friends are bundled up in blankets they are in the water! How many of their friends decide that swimming on a cold winter day is a fantastic idea? These kids have braved some cold temperatures, wind, rain, and are stronger for it! Not only physically stronger for exercising, but mentally and emotionally because they are doing things most people don't want to do! Congratulations everyone!

January was a month of really focusing on body line and all of the different ways to knock the body out of line, and how to get it back in line. This skill will carry them so far throughout their swimming careers! Coach Tim and I don't know what happened in January, but these groups have knocked it out of the park with their underwater work and streamlines! Let's keep the momentum going!

We are halfway through our Cold Weather Challenge. For these groups they receive a prize for their monthly attendance at 90%. For December Base Camp and Narwhal had Nathan, Claire, Lilly E., Vincent, Hudson, and Anvee earn some fantastic MAC socks! Way to rock it!!

These groups are starting to learn some exercises on how their body connects, and when one part is off it throws the rest out of balance. We will do some exercises on land to help them grasp what this looks like, and then transfer the skills to the water. Coach Tim and I really enjoy watching these groups progress so well! They are learning from their teammates, coaches, and themselves on how to become better both in and out of the water. With January being the MAC Integrity topic we have had some great discussion on what that looks like. Thank you swimmers for keeping things lively, thank you parents for your dedication and time to get your kids to the pool!!

Narwhal (Kino)

By Coach Trey

The kino Narwhal group crushed it in January. We cycled through the long axis strokes (freestyle, and backstroke) and made tons of progress! We worked on swimming towards the wall, swimming with power, and keeping a good body line. We are still in the full swing of the cold weather challenge. Congratulations to Amy, Austin, Kate, Lily, Annie, Bennett, Keria and Soraya for making 90% attendance this month!



White (Kino)

By Coach Nichol

Theme of the season is "Discipline of a champion"

CHAMPION

Coachable: *willing to learn and grow*

Honor: *yourself, the team, the process*

Attitude: *positive and encouraging to yourself and others*

Motivate: *yourself and others*

Practice with Purpose: *every day...every practice...every turn...every stroke...*

Integrity: *who are you when you are alone, when your coach is not watching*

Optimism: *what can we learn, what did we see that was good in the practice or race*

Never Give Up: *perfect for championship season, finish strong, mental self talk*

It's pretty easy to celebrate this group of incredible kids... so in keeping with the theme this month of OPTIMISM I'd love to celebrate Emma Johnson!! Emma doesn't have much to say, but I often push her into a group that has a challenging set to make and she doesn't shy away from it, say it's too hard, or even look less confident... she

embraces it with OPTIMISM!! Thanks Emma for showing us what it looks like to be up to the task with a hopeful heart!

The white group spent the last few weeks talking about training through inconvenience. Life rarely goes that way we think it's going to go... and the same is true with training. There are plenty of variables that could make a race or even a set not optimal, but we are trying to prepare to have grit and swim through it!!

Leaky goggles, inclement weather, lanemates with poor steering, a lost suitstring, missing swim gear, a bad dive, a cramp, a headache, an empty water bottle... the list goes on and on. There are enough possibilities for distraction (some legitimate and some developed as excuses) that swimming any set can become shortened in order to FIX the various problems that can and do occur. So we have to make a decision to move forward despite the inconvenience, put our heads down and perform. We can have a drink after we finish the set, we can use the restroom after the series is over (before or after practice is best of course). We can talk to the coach between the intervals... but swimming during the duration of the prescribed set is imperative if we are to develop grit... both for meet/ race prep and for life. How we practice performing through inconvenience is also how we will perform during life. If I never finish a set because it's hard and I just want to talk so that I don't have to do the whole thing, then racing a 200 free or a 400 IM or a mile will feel like an impossibility since my stamina has not been developed. Stamina works much like a muscle... It takes practice to stretch it. Regularly stretching our stamina makes it simple and easy in the long term. The last few weeks when someone stopped to get a drink while their lanemates continued the set, or stopped on the bottom to ask me a question before they reached the wall, I had the chance to ask... are you swimming through inconveniences to develop your stamina?

At Jimmy Johns I saw a sign that said, "First do what you need to do so that later you can do what you want to do." I think that sums it all up! Gooooo MAC!!

White (Skyline)

By Coach Maggie

INTENSITY

This past month in the White group, we have focused on intensity. We are training hard and focusing on small details. White Group has been doing a fantastic job to push their limits and even surprise themselves during practices and meets! Candy Cane Classic and the SAC Winter Invite held best times and AMAZING swims! And our first State cut this season, made by Kinley McCarthy in her 50 freestyle! YIPEEEEE!!!

We excelled in our distance free and also our sprints. White has been working hard in individual strokes and IM efficiency. As we head into championship season, we are remembering all the hard work, tears, sweat, and goals we made and endured throughout the season. WE ARE READY! With our Last Chance meet coming up, Regionals and State, White Group is super prepared for amazing swims.

GGOOOOO MAC!!!!



Ellie Parsons at the SAC Winter Invite keeping hydrated with her favorite drinky!!!

Red (Kino)

By Coach Trey

The Kino Red group has got it going on! We spent January continuing to build good habits, and specifically worked on freestyle and backstroke. We saw lots of improvements and personal successes within the strokes. Congratulations to Drake, Madi, Grace, Natalie, and Caleb for making the cold weather challenge this month!



Red (Skyline)

By Coach Jonah

Skyline's Red team is doing great as we get ready for the meets ahead. They're working hard, getting better with each practice. We're fine-tuning everything to make sure they're ready to compete. I'm proud of their effort and can't wait to see them succeed in the pool.

Black & Gold (Kino)

By Coach Meg

January was a month of great gains. As we track progress on test sets we continue to see steady improvements. The effort being put out in practice improves each week as does attendance. Our weekly, monthly and season plans are designed with swimmers attending 5-6 practices per week. Every practice missed is a missed opportunity to gain skill, strength and endurance. I continue to be impressed with the attendance in both of these groups.. We can't improve if we don't show up to practice.

As we approach Championship season, it is important to take care of yourselves physically. Try to avoid activities that increase opportunities to become injured. It is difficult when an athlete trains well all season and then misses out on a big meet due to an avoidable injury. In addition, sleep and nutrition are crucial to staying healthy. Be sure to get 8-9 hours of sleep each night; the more sleep before midnight the better! Finally, take note of your nutrition. Sugar wears down the immune system and makes you more susceptible to illness. I encourage athletes to minimize sugar intake throughout the end of the season.

Finally, Regionals, State and SWAGR are all part of our Championship season. IF you have a qualifying time for these meets please be sure to commit ASAP. These events are what we have been working towards, if you have qualifying times you should enter the meets! We will be entering relays for all of these meets so it is crucial that we know who plans to attend to solidify strong relay teams. If you have any questions about these meets please let us know ASAP

Black & Gold (Skyline)

By Coach Angela

Winter training was busy for this group! All athletes worked hard and we broke down barriers left and right. Congratulations to those who earned themselves a Buca Di Beppo dinner for completing the attendance challenge! Although we are through the roof when athletes complete challenges; we know the real reward comes at the end of the season when we see all of the progress from our consistent hard work!



In January we had two athletes from our groups compete in the Arizona vs. San Diego All-Star meet. Congratulations to Caden Baker and Riley Price. Both represented our state very well and had a great time making swim connections with others! We also had one of our athletes, Ryan Parsons, represent our team in Colorado Springs at the Jimi Flowers Classic. Ryan was able to rub shoulders with the pros while representing MAC. Way to go!



Every year, without fail, when we ask all the kids which meets stick out in their brains, they say the team travel meets! There is something special about rooming with your teammates, traveling on a van with them, making memories, and swimming fast! We recently had a team travel meet to Havasu, AZ. Not only did we swim out of our minds, we had many high point awards and even broke Arizona state records! We really learned how to ask for help from and rely on our teammates at this meet. Great job to all who competed and we eagerly await our next team travel trip!



As we embark on our championship season I wanted to share some tips I came across to help us get ready for "The Big Meet".

1. Pack like a boss - extras and back ups of all the things as well as making sure things are charged before heading to the pool (music).

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2. Manage extra energy - you will notice our yardage decreasing in practices and this will make you feel super! Be mindful of how you are spending this extra energy and how it will affect your rest/taper.
 3. Keep your diet surprise free - stay consistent with your regular food items and meals. The last thing you want is an upset stomach the day before or on race day!
 4. Plan out your pre-race routine - plan all the way down to the little things. How long will you warm up and stretch? What about your second warm up? What will you listen to? What and when will you take a bite or drink? Having a pre-race routine helps keep things familiar and predictable.
 5. Have goals for the meet - carrying around your seasonal goal sheet would be a great idea! Checking in and out with your coach for every race is key. Go into your meet and races with a clear outline of what you want to accomplish.
 6. Practice - you've heard the saying practice makes perfect right? Well I believe that practice makes improvement. Practicing with a purpose and putting emphasis on developing speed and power will help in "The Big Meet" preparation.
 7. Envision success - mentally going through your races and watching yourself achieving your goals is great practice before a meet. Even envisioning different types of scenarios and how you can prepare for those would be helpful!

Let's have a great start to our championship season! **GO MAC!**

Dryland (Kino/Skyline)

By Coach Bear

Do you have the proper tools to help you succeed?

You come to swim and have tools in your swim bag i.e. goggles, kickboard, fins, buoy, paddles, etc. Each of these tools has a purpose or multiple purpose when it aids in your swimming and your ability to improve your swimming. Just like in your swim bag you have a dryland gear bag with tools in them to help you improve the two main purposes of dryland 1) increase strength and 2) increase athleticism. Below is a short list of what I believe to be the essentials when it comes to dryland training and the tools necessary to improve your abilities. Of course you can have many more tools in your bag, these are just the few I feel are essential and necessary to build a strong foundation. Links to Amazon are available to purchase and have with you at each practice.

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- **Mesh Bag**
 - Helps keep all your tools in one place.
 - **Exercise mat**
 - Whether we are doing core exercises on the ground or stretching a mat will help provide a comfortable area for you to focus on the exercises to perform.
 - **Foam roller** (18-inch)
 - Foam rolling for swimmers offers benefits such as increased flexibility, faster muscle recovery, injury prevention, heightened body awareness, and improved circulation, ultimately enhancing performance and overall well-being. Use this tool often.. Before and after practices, meets, at home on your recovery days, etc.
 - **Lacrosse ball** (2-pack)
 - Lacrosse balls can benefit swimmers by targeting specific muscle knots and trigger points, aiding in muscle relaxation and improving mobility. They can also be used for self-myofascial release to alleviate tightness and improve flexibility, enhancing overall strength and mobility for better performance in the water. We will also incorporate the lacrosse balls into our strength exercises including isometrics. Isometric exercises benefit swimmers by improving stability, enhancing strength in key muscle groups, preventing injuries, offering time-efficient training options, and ultimately enhancing performance in the water.
 - **Mini-bands** (5-pack)
 - Mini resistance band exercises benefit swimmers by enhancing strength, power, and stroke efficiency while preventing injuries. They offer versatility and convenience in training, ultimately improving muscular endurance for better performance in the water.
 - **Resistance Band** (1 - #0, 5-10 lb., yellow band)
 - Resistance band exercises benefit swimmers by enhancing strength, technique, and endurance while preventing injuries, thanks to their versatility and ability to target key muscle groups crucial for swimming and thousands of strokes you take in the pool.
 - **Jump rope**
 - Jumping rope benefits swimmers by enhancing cardiovascular endurance, footwork, and coordination while providing a full-body workout that's portable and convenient, ultimately aiding injury prevention and complementing swimming training. **Jump ropes are used in our dynamic warm up before practices and meets so make sure you have this one!**

Start with these few and help build a solid foundation for your swimming journey!

Senior 2 (Skyline)

By Coach Joey

January was a great meet for S2 at Skyline! We had a very successful SAC winter invite, filled with great swims and got to see our training really start to pay off. The kids were tired and did not have much rest going into the meet but got on the blocks and competed, which is always what we want to see. If we get behind the blocks and not focus on the scoreboard but rather get our hand on the wall first and win our heat, the time will be exactly what we want. This is the mindset we want to have going into our championship meets here in February! Swimmers often put pressure on themselves to succeed as we get closer to those big swims. If you show up with the competitive mindset and trust your coaches and yourselves you will swim great. Positive self-talk is a key component to success. The more you tell yourself you can, the more you believe it, and if you believe it, you will accomplish it! Keep that same mindset as we get ready for Regionals and State!

Senior 2 (Kino)

By Coach Jack

The Kino S2 group is now at the peak of their training for the short course season. Our championship meets begin in 3 1/2 weeks and we have spent the last 3 months building up their endurance and introducing them to a higher level of training and they look ready.

First, we will compete at the Regional Championships Feb 23-25, and then our team hosts the State Short Course Championships a week later. In order to keep our kids on track I'd love to see all the kids attend as many practices as possible and focus on their rest between workouts. One of the factors that can affect your athlete is not being able to fully recover from one practice to the next. We try to vary practice intensities to keep them fresh, but the biggest recovery factor is how much sleep they are getting on a weekly basis. We look forward to the great races our kids can swim in a month! Please check and make sure your swimmer is entered for Regionals and State depending on which meet they qualify for.

Senior 1

By Coach Eric

Burnout

One of the biggest risks to being successful in any endeavor, especially sports, is burnout. Here is an article about burnout. Two of the things I find particularly interesting from the article:

1. Focusing on fun
2. Not getting enough sleep

The pressure of being a successful athlete entails non-stop activity of games, practice and physical conditioning.

Games and practice have traditional and non-traditional seasons, usually encompassing six or more months of the year. For many athletes, summers are spent on campus working out or practicing. Conditioning sessions that are physically taxing can take place as early as 5 a.m. to accommodate class or work schedules. Additional “voluntary” sessions of physical conditioning, film study, or skill development, along with the rigors of school work, the modern athlete is on “overload” as a result of participation demands from the moment they step on campus until they leave school. This can create, for the athlete, a condition of chronic stress physically and, more importantly, mentally.

The attitude of “more is better” in terms of constant activity in a quest for individual or team success is prevalent in today’s sports world, starting at the youth level and continuing through the secondary school and collegiate levels. Interestingly, professional sports have in place, through their collective bargaining agreements, mandated time off for the athletes to recover from the rigors of their season. Burnout is a response to chronic stress of continued demands in a sport or activity without the opportunity for physical and mental rest and recovery. Burnout is a syndrome of continual training and sport attention stress, resulting in staleness, overtraining and eventually burnout. Many athletes experiencing burnout report feeling trapped by circumstances of sports participation. The athlete first starts feeling stale or overwhelmed, but is encouraged by coaches, strength staff, athletic trainers, teammates or parents to push through symptoms of overtraining and potential burnout to continue with a demanding schedule in order to feel a part of the team, maintain their starting position or keep their scholarship.

Other athletes self-induce their burnout with personal motivation for success. This type of athlete applies more personal demands on their physical conditioning and skill sessions, or is fully consumed by sports participation as a way to fulfill their identity as an athlete. Either way, the chronic stress the athlete experiences without the opportunity to rest and recover from the rigors of such stress places the athlete at risk for burnout. For some athletes, burnout may be the triggering mechanism in developing or exacerbating a mental health disorder that negatively impacts the athlete's life and relationships.

Burnout affects the athlete in various stages:

- The athlete is placed in a situation that involves new or varying demands on their physical ability and time management
- The athlete at some point – usually early on as a young athlete, or later if a more experienced athlete – views the demands as excessive or non-productive
- The athlete feels as if their performance is being hampered by the demands of participation and the inability to rest and recover
- The athlete starts experiencing subtle signs and symptoms of physical and mental burnout
- Burnout takes place and the physical and mental toll on the athlete impacts their lives and performance on and off the field, perhaps even discontinuing sports participation

Signs and symptoms of burnout include:

- Leveling off or diminished performance or conditioning, including strength and stamina losses, chronic fatigue
- Physiological signs such as having a higher resting heart rate and blood pressure
- Cognitive issues such as difficulty in concentration or diminished work in school, forgetfulness
- Illnesses as a result of suppressed immune system
- Emotional issues such as disinterest, moodiness, irritability
- Low self-esteem, increased anxiety and depression as a result of falling short of sport demands

Athletic trainers can help in identifying and preventing burnout in athletes through an awareness of the signs and symptoms, and in communication with coaches and strength staff to monitor the athletes for overtraining, which is a large contributor of

burnout. Whenever an athlete, particularly a younger athlete new to the level of participation, exhibits some signs and symptoms of burnout, a physician evaluation for a physical cause is warranted. After the physician exam and any testing prove negative, consideration should be given to modifying the activity to permit more athlete rest and recovery. If physical causes for signs and symptoms of burnout are negative, consideration should be given to referring the athlete for a psychological evaluation and care.

Coaches and strength staff should be educated on burnout and consider modifications to workouts both in terms of intensity and length of time in order to preserve optimal levels of performance and to prevent burnout. Some measures such as heart-rate monitoring during practice and conditioning are one of several approaches teams are utilizing to monitor potential overtraining. Rest and time away from sport are the two best methods to prevent and treat athlete burnout.

Athletes, like most students and American adults, do not get enough sleep to feel rested and ready for physical and mental activity throughout the day. Seven to eight hours of sleep are recommended daily.

Considering that many athletes rise before or at dawn for conditioning sessions and practice, their sleep cycle is hampered to be fully effective in providing the rest necessary for daily activities and optimal school and sports performance. This results in a state of constant fatigue, placing the athlete at risk for developing burnout and mental health issues, especially when the athlete feels there is no escaping the time and physical demands of their sport and school.

Time away from sport is another method of preventing burnout. Being away from the demands of their sport, even for a short period several times a year, provides an athlete with an opportunity to attend to their schoolwork and relationships that are necessary to leading a more rounded life that leads to enhanced motivation once they return to sport.

Burnout is a very real and underreported state that many athletes experience. Knowing the signs and symptoms of escalating burnout, along with an appreciation of how burnout occurs, are important steps in prevention and treatment of this situation, and may well prevent the start or worsening of a mental health disorder in an athlete.