

Mesa Aquatics Club

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024

DISCIPLINE OF A CHAMPION!

PRACTICE WITH PURPOSE



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.

Happy New Year
~ 2024 ~

Pre-Team Base Camp / Narwhal (Skyline)

By Coach Shawna

As December comes to a close, Coach Tim and I are amazed at how much these groups have progressed! They have worked hard to learn what “body line” means and the importance of it in swimming. They have learned new drills to help with their body line, and are starting to understand if the body is out of line (wonky) then they are not as efficient and effective in the water (don’t look good and go slower). This is a process, and we are impressed at how they are taking their time to learn it.



We also have really worked on turns this past month, slowing down to grasp each step of the turn. This group is now really doing a wonderful job in practicing purposeful turns more often, and knowing what they did wrong if their turn was not quite right. This is a huge step and we get very excited when swimmers know and can verbalize what they are doing well and what still needs work!

In December we talked about “practicing with purpose” in our CHAMPION acronym, and how everything that is done (in and out of the water) is practice to improve and get better. In swimming if we practice sloppy streamlines the result is sloppy streamlines. What you practice is what happens in meets. While this seems like an easy concept, for 5-10 year olds it is something they need to learn. They need to learn it takes thousands of purposeful streamlines before it becomes a habit, constant reminders about head position for a good body line, and the constant drills these groups so the skills become second nature. We are also talking about how all of the Disciplines of a Champion relate to life outside of swimming, and how all of the things we talk about help us outside of the pool as well. In November we talked about M: motivate, and Ella Lopera and Coach Tim are examples of great motivation! Ella is encouraging, helping others do their best, and always tries her best! If she struggles she still has a good attitude, and is motivated next time to push herself a little more. Coach Tim radiates motivation! The swimmers love having him on deck and he is so encouraging to everyone. He is constantly looking for ways to improve as a coach, and to help swimmers in whatever stage of their swimming journey they may be in. Congratulations Ella and Coach Tim!

We hope you have time to enjoy the Christmas season, and look forward to seeing you back in January!!

Narwhal (Kino)

By Coach Trey

This group has been rocking the cold weather challenge with 8 swimmers making 90% attendance in December ! Awesome! We spent December working on the short axis strokes (Butterfly and Breaststroke) We worked on making each stroke legal and strong. Jax John received the Motivation award for our group, as he lifts up his teammates and encourages them to try their best.

White (Kino)

By Coach Nichol

If you are an athlete with some racing ANXIETY- you are not alone. When I was about 10 years old I discovered that I had some race anxiety and I did NOT like getting nervous before a race. Over the years, I have found a few strategies that have helped me focus my energy in a positive way so that I could be successful in racing AND learn to feel confident and excited about approaching my races.

Here are a few tools to think about:

1. **Grounding-** Anxiety ususally stems from thinking about something that happened in the past or something that hasn't happened yet, so it helps to use the senses to bring you to the present. What does the water smell like? What do you see ?(focus on your lane), What do you hear? (listen for your event and sing or listen to a song that gets you excited) What can you touch? (your cap, your goggles, stretch or slap your knees or back) What can you taste? A sip of water or a deep breath.
2. **Back pocket thoughts-** Have a thought that you LIKE to think about so that you can pull it up when you need something good to think about. It can be a great race that you have had before, a meal that you look forward to with your family, a favorite person, or even something kind that someone said about you. Having a comforting or positive thought can will keep the worried thoughts at bay.
3. **Move your body-** creating a stretching or preparatory race routine can alleviate anxiety. The structure of a plan combined with body movement that takes thought can eliminate anxiety or worry. Getting in to warm up for a second time may also help if you have had a lot of down time to overthink.
4. **Deep breathing-** Sometimes our anxious thoughts can make our bodies feel like there is an emergency happening. This might feel like a racing heart, dizziness, week muscles or trembling. Usually the thing we are worried about isn't actually

an emergency. Here are some examples of actual emergencies: someone has stopped breathing, a tornado has picked up your home. Our job is to teach our brains the difference between an actual emergency and not an emergency. Deep breathing is a way to do that as it slows the bodies nervous system and reminds you that you are not in any danger.

- a. 3 deep breaths: inhale slowly through your nose and exhale out of your mouth 3 times in a row Be noisy about your breathing.
 - b. 4-7-8 Breathe in through your nose while you count to 4. Hold your breath while you count to 7. Breathe out through your mouth while you count to 8.
5. **Release your feelings-** When you hold things inside, you get to a point where you feel like you want to explode. Make sure you have someone you can tell that you need to talk. It could be a parent, coach or even a teammate. I really like to hear about what my teammates do when they feel anxious. What you are feeling is normal and chances are that most of the athletes, coaches and parents are also feeling a bit of anxiety as well.
 6. **Music-** A playlist of happy, upbeat or relaxing music is perfect for the car ride or the race wait. Music can affect our mood and help us remember things. It can bring up memories and help us manage anxiety. It's one of the best tools to change our mental direction.
 7. **Plan for Fun-** The best way to beat anxiety is to plan to have fun while at a meet. Plan to interact and cheer for your friends. Plan to get excited about racing. Plan to be happy with the outcome and learn from it.

The December focus of **Practice with Purpose** came at a great time in the season. We started the season with tons of skills and drills, but as we have moved into more yards and transitions, it was nice to have the reminder to stick to the structures that have given us efficiency in our swimming. Practicing with Purpose means we don't change what we know works just to be faster.. rather we apply tempo to skill (maintaining the skill). This month **Paige Murdock** is the perfect example of practicing with purpose. She is very involved in other sports and activities and she values every minute she has in the pool. She is always asking if she is doing it right, or if there is something she can do to make it better. She takes her streamlines very seriously and gets the most out of every single push off the wall . She practices with PURPOSE and it leads to some fast swimming!!

We had a group goal to swim a 100 butterfly everyday for a month and it was fun to mix it up and try different ways to make it happen. We did it!! So don't be afraid to sign up for the 100 fly in a meet. We are definitely ready for that!



White (Skyline)

By Coach Maggie

This past month in the White group, we have focused on practice. Every practice, we show up with a purpose and swim with intention. Every set. Every wall. Every drill has a purpose and a goal to achieve.

We have also been keeping our eye on those Regional and State cuts! These swimmers are so focused and determined to be a part of the Championship team this season. They have been working on tempo, clean & fast turns, breakouts, and pacing for each distance and each stroke. December is a HARD month to stay motivated during the holidays, family time and overall holiday season. White Group were among the elite as they continued to show up to practice and work hard! After coming back from the break, we will refocus on details for the first week. We really slow it down, break bad habits, KICK a lot and determine our goals to finish up a fantastic season. We have the SAC meet, Havasu meet, our Last Chance meet and then we are looking at CHAMP SEASON!!!! White Group swimmers have shown the MAC Way profoundly this season in not only working on themselves, but being a part of the team and making

wonderful friends throughout the groups, like bonding with cactus caps and suits with Senior swimmers!

GOOOOOO MAC!!



Red (Kino)

By Coach Trey

This group spent December working on Butterfly and Breaststroke. Our main focus of keeping each stroke powerful and bodyline on top of the water. Congrats to James, Drake, Natalie, and Grace for making 90% attendance for the month of December. Drake Peterson received the Motivation Award for our group, as he is always so kind and uplifts his teammates with his words and actions.

Red (Skyline)

By Coach Jonah

Even in the chilly weather, Skyline's Red group is doing great! They've been working super hard, both in the water and out of it. Despite the cold, they're showing real

teamwork and dedication. Their effort and positive attitude are paying off, and they're achieving impressive results. It's clear that they're not letting the weather get in the way of their success!

Black & Gold (Kino)

By Coach Meg

December was a fantastic month for the Kino Black and Gold Group. The kids had a tremendous turn out at the Candy Cane Classic meet with a number of best times and additional state and regional qualifying times.

After the December meet we began to work on rebuilding our aerobic base. This is an important aspect to the long term success and versatility to swimmers. IN addition it is crucial to season ending swims and recovery at meets. We are working on the education component of this so the group understands the meaningfulness of certain sets we are doing at this point in the season. In addition we have been working on understanding the value of our stroke tempo. We have started the learning process of where our tempo should be for specific strokes and races.

I look forward to the second half of the season with this group!

We had 4 swimmers complete the Christmas Challenge: Nelly, Bella, Natalie and Farrah. Congratulations to these girls for training hard over the Christmas holiday. We expect to see great dividends from this training as we head into our Championship season!

Black & Gold (Skyline)

By Coach Angela

'Tis the season! For working hard! Skyline black and gold groups are continuously pushing the limits in and out of the pool and we are thrilled with the results we are seeing. The truth is, that hard work works!



We started out the month with The Candy Cane Classic meet in Phoenix. The amount of best times we saw was jaw-dropping! This was a great opportunity for us to have a prelims/finals meet in the middle of the season. We were able to have a taste of what the "finals" scene is all about. When the atmosphere is filled with competition and

adrenaline rushes - amazing things can happen! Congratulations to Caden Baker for breaking the MAC team records in the 200 IM and the 200 breaststroke!

Congratulations to our newest state qualifier Maddy Fox! Congratulations to our newest SWAGR qualifier KayeLee Fry! Congratulations to Caden Baker and Riley Price for being selected to the Arizona All-Star team that will compete next month!



After Candy Cane Classic we had a great group activity and something I've liked doing each year with the athletes. The annual cap exchange! We did this white-elephant style and each athlete ended up with a funny cap to wear for the rest of the month! It was really fun watching which caps were the most popular ones or to see which caps got stolen so often. This year's most coveted cap: the rainbow unicorn!



These groups have done a great job sticking to the season plan. With winter training coming up; when they continue the hard work they've done thus far, they will set the bar high for the next part of the season. Some ideas to get the most out of winter training are:

1. Use this time without school to catch up on sleep. You might think that this is a good time to catch up on Netflix or gaming. Even during the school year a solid eight hours of sleep can be hard to get! Take advantage of this chance!

2. Spend more time with teammates outside of the pool. We will try to have some group organized activities at and away from the pool to help build our team culture and bond. It's great to build good relationships with those you are training so hard next to - we can really boost team chemistry and morale!

3. Take advantage of the training! Winter training happens for a reason - these grueling practices will definitely pay off! There is still time to tweak stroke techniques, improve paces, focus on details, and break down barriers. We will have a few opportunities for athletes to do doubles during winter training as well. Rise and grind!



Dryland (Kino/Skyline)

By Coach Bear

Some of you might remember the era (2007-2009) of the *SUPERSUITS*! These suits did TWO things really well. So well, in fact, that only a couple of years later they were banned from competition completely. Records were being broken right and left and it became more about the suit and less about the swimmer...

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1. **Increased Buoyancy:** this allowed you to be on the surface more, allowing you to swim faster by reducing drag and increasing tension.
 2. **Compression:** this allowed for better core function and helped the muscles connect better.

Since then there has been an increased focus on dryland training to 'build' your own natural supersuit! On land, you are able to expose potential core weaknesses and able to train the core to MAXIMIZE your swimming power. Dryland training for high school-aged athletes will be focused on three areas:

1. **Increasing Athleticism:** increasing your coordination, mobility, power, speed, rhythm, and reactivity to name a few. See where you measure up with these **General Athleticism Standards** (see attachment).
2. **Building Strength:** increasing your ability to produce force, power, endurance, resiliency, capacity, and ability to recover.
3. **Improve Core Stability:** increasing your ability to have a better and more solid line through the torso and having the ability to maintain tension the whole time.

You can invest your **MONEY** in a tech suit (*which nowadays are not as buoyant, does not allow for the full-body compression and you'll drop a few tenths of a second*) OR you can invest your **TIME & ENERGY** in dryland and drop multiple seconds, seeing even bigger improvements!



Senior 2 (Skyline)

By Coach Joey

Skyline S2 is right in the thick of our heavy training period. During December we really started ramping things up and improving our aerobic fitness. This period of training is always crucial to our swimmer's ability to finish races and be fit enough for our longer events. As we get into January, we are looking forward to more opportunities to race as well as our hardest couple weeks of training. These weeks are where we really peak in yardage and muscle fatigue then we will start to come down as we approach our taper meets and the swimmers will rest to go fast at the biggest meets of the year. During this important period of training, we continue to express the importance of consistency in training. In Swimming the generally saying is for every 1 day you miss it takes 2 days to get back into shape. Showing up and working hard every day is the most important part of training. When we miss extended days or take days off practice, we are sacrificing results at the end of the season. Swimmers will not always have their best at practice but showing up and finding something to work on even during those days that are a struggle will not only make you better but will give you a sense of accomplishment. The more that you do things you don't want to do the easier they become. This is one of the great lessons that this sport can teach us all. Not everything we do in life will be something we want to do or our favorite thing, but we must do it anyways in order to do what we do want to do. Learning this at 14-18 years old makes all the difference when you get into the real world and must look for jobs or finish school, or whatever may come. We have a very exciting 2 months in front of us with lots of fast swimming to come but to get there we need to stay consistent.

Senior 1 & 2 (Kino)

By Coach Jack

“How swimmers get better”

Practice, practice, practice

It may sound too simple but the general rule is the more practices you attend the better swimmer you will become.

Some skills take 10 practice sessions to master them, some 100, others 1000's no matter which schedule you're on the higher frequency of attendance the closer you are getting to that goal.

There are other ways to both educate and enhance the swimmer. These include watching instructional videos, if you know what to look for, dryland and strength training, motivational tapes, film sessions, swim camps or private lessons, but while all these things can be helpful none by themselves without a consistent practice schedule will make much of a difference.

Does your swimmer approach practice as a chore, a social engagement or a place to improve their swimming? It can be all of the above but when it is approached with a purposeful mind then big changes will happen and be retained. Ask your athlete not just how practice went but what skills they worked on, what was the hardest set and how did they do on that set. If you ask these questions a couple of times a week you will see that skills are both introduced and refined in different sessions and challenges change daily. You may also discover things about your athlete through their own assessment of how they did. Everything else about swimming is the icing on the cake. Practice sessions ARE the cake. We offer the number of practices for each group in accordance to what's necessary to insure the swimmers development at that level. We'd love for them to attend every practice but realize that's not always possible but one more per week from what they are attending now makes a huge difference.

We love working with your children and want them to be successful in their swimming careers and a consistent practice attendance is a necessary part of that equation and makes all the rest secondary. Hope you have a fantastic 2024 and we see you at the pool often!!