

Mesa Aquatics Club

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024

DISCIPLINE OF A CHAMPION!

OPTIMISM



Upcoming Events

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

March 16-17: 8 & Under Championships in Anthem.

March 22-25: Southwest Age Group Regional (SWAGR) 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.

March 25-29: MAC Team Break!

April 12: MAC Team Picnic 4:00-6:30 pm

April 19-20: MAC Intra Squad (Red vs. Black)

Pre-Team Base Camp / Narwhal (Skyline)

By Coach Shawna



As we close out the Cold Weather Challenge, hats off to everyone who swam through the chilly winter months! For the month of February Base Camp and Narwhal had Emilia, Nora, Latham, Brady, Penelope, Nathan, Claire, Lilly E, Soren, Anvee, Vincent, Hudson, and Jude make up 90% of the practices! Congratulations swimmers!

In the water we continued with a lot of the short axis strokes (butterfly and breaststroke), working a lot on the kicking in the beginning before introducing the arms/timing of the stroke. Timing is important in all of the strokes, but in butterfly and breaststroke it is much harder to get it correct. We spent considerable time on each part (kick, arms) before putting the stroke together. It is a process, and they are taking great steps forward.

Out of the water we continued to “march” to work on body line, how the body connects, and when one part of the body does its own thing it impacts everything else. They are doing a great job with this, and in time will start to understand how this relates to what their body does in the water.

We also talked about the inconveniences that happen in swimming (it’s cold, water in the goggles, bathroom, forgot swim gear, etc) and how we need to swim through some inconveniences. They are doing a stellar job in identifying what inconveniences are and pushing through them! It’s a great life lesson as well!

We are excited to have Coach Morgan on deck with us! She comes with an impressive swimming/coaching background and we look forward to all she brings to MAC!

Thanks to all of the parents and grandparents who get their kids to the pool! We appreciate all that you do!

Narwhal (Kino)

By Coach Meg

As we said goodbye to Coach Trey we want to reiterate our gratitude for everything he has given to MAC and to the Narwhal group over the years. His knowledge and patience has brought a sense of security and confidence to this group. He has provided a strong swimming foundation with fun sprinkled in all along the way. I will take what Trey has taught each of these swimmers and continue to help them reach their full potential.

I look forward to working with the Narwhal Group. Building a strong foundation for kids to continue to develop and grow is something I am passionate about and having fun is always a high priority. Over the next few weeks we will begin to build trust and confidence with one another while we continue to have fun and build a strong foundation.

White (Kino)

By Coach Nichol and Coach Abbey

We followed the season plan. We started slow and with purpose. We added 10% increase each week after the first few weeks. As we increased in ability and speed, we revisited vital skills and set goals for meet performances. We showed up to meets and attained best times. We reached for the stars and improved every step of the way. I love looking back on the season to see the growth that has come in tiny steps. We have climbed the mountain and it looks pretty great from here. We have honored the process and it shows. In the next few weeks we will look at advancements and plan for next season. I could not be more proud of the slow, steady and consistent work that we have built our foundation on. Sometimes SLOW is fast!

I'd like to shout out each of the strengths our team members bring to us each day! We have an awesome group!

Ducati loves to have fun! He has lots of ideas about what we could do as a group. He likes to challenge his friends and that helps us all try a little harder!

Ava is always aware of how situations may affect her teammates. She is sensitive and caring, but balances that with hard work.

Maddox has the strength of integrity. He doesn't ever try to cut short the work he has been asked to do. He honors every single yard he swims.

Dante loves to race and gets everyone else excited to race too. He loves a challenge. Finding his groove in a set motivates everyone around him to do the same.

Andrew has perfect attendance. He has better attendance than me! Haha.. and it shows! His improvement has been steady and persistent. He is a great teammate and has shown leadership in attitude and positivity.

Braden smiles...when it's easy, when it's fun, when it's hard. He is persistent. He has the most beautiful strokes and is often used as an example.

Emma is like the energizer bunny... she is consistent and strong. She listens and pursues. She is strong and persistent.

Tommy has a great attitude. He protects his sister, friends and teammates. He is coachable and willing to make changes. Tommy is the best kind of teammate.

Ace is an incredible team leader. He rallies his friends, He brings the skills and energy of ARMY training to life on deck. His friendship is sought out by his teammates because of his sense of humor and kindness.

Paige is a serious competitor. She is focused and engaged. She LOVES to race and takes it very seriously. She is also talented in many other areas of life.

Sunny is coachable and kind. She puts her whole heart into improvement and smiles through it all. We are loving getting to know her better.

Sometimes you just need to hear your strengths to remember to lean into them!

Goooooo MAC!!

Red (Kino)

By Coach Abbey

I remember being 13 years old at a swim meet and in the locker room written in big letters on the wall was:

“Creating excellence through the sport of Swimming”

This sentence has stuck with me ever since. Swimming has so much more to offer us than a few years of “impressive times” only to one day retire and have it be in the past. However, the person we become through the sport of swimming will remain with us. This is what swimming has been for me. In college I competed and placed at a national level, but what I’m most thankful for is the person that I’ve become through swimming.

To name a few skills I learned growing up in swimming:

- Cheering and being happy for my teammates even when I didn’t do well
- Going to practices and meets even when I was tired and didn’t want to
- Setting goals and working to achieve them
- Learning to balance fun and competition
- Learning how to deal with pressure
- Learning what it means to be apart of a team
- How to be a leader
- How to sacrifice for others
- Learning how to fail
- How to take care of myself
- Time management/prioritization
- Swimming allowed me to travel and encouraged me to move to a new place for school

These are just a few of the values that I have developed through swimming, that are so valuable to me, and have carried over into my personal life in a way that the times I once went never will. I love swimming! I’m so happy to be here with you. I’m excited to hear why you love swimming and what your personal goals are. I was born and raised in Mesa, AZ and I grew up in the swimming world. I swam through high school and in college at the University of Mary in North Dakota. I have been teaching and coaching swimming the last 13 summers.

Fun fact: coach Trey and Abbey swam together on MAC in high school and first coached together in 2018-2019.

I coached for the city of Mesa and also for MAC at the Las Sendas location.

I graduated in 2021 from college and have spent nearly the last 3 years volunteering in Belize and Mexico during the school years. I was a high school teacher in Belize for 2 years, and this past year lived at a boarding school in Mexico as a caretaker. These 3 years are very special to my heart. Some things I enjoy outside of swimming are: Latino culture, iced coffee, yoga, cooking, sunshine, nails, scrapbooking, my dog Bennie and my Catholic Faith.

I am honored to have the chance to work with you and look forward to getting to know you better. *Go MAC!*

Black & Gold (Kino)

By Coach Meg

February brought a number of new Regional, State and SWAGR time standards to this group. We had a great showing at Regionals and walked away with a full slate of best times and a team win! I am proud of each and everyone of the swimmers in these groups for their dedication and commitment over the past season. I encourage the athletes to look over their goal sheets and I hope they have a great deal of pride in all that they have accomplished.



Congratulations to our Champions of the month - Optimism Jett Jon and Natlie Gammage. These two athletes kept a positive attitude both at meets and at practice. When sets were tough they pushed through and encouraged their teammates to do the same. They both are a great asset to our team and we are grateful for their impact on the Kino Gold and Black Groups.

We will be taking 31 athletes to the Age Group State meet, which is more than twice the number we took last season. Congratulations to Emmerson, Natalie, Jett, Finley, Benson Ellingson, and Holland Jesclard! I look forward to seeing your continued success this season in Oro Valley.

As we begin to wrap up a successful season we look forward to a little time to refresh and refocus. Our team break is March 23-30.



Black & Gold (Skyline)

By Coach Angela

This winter season has prepped us well for what is about to come. We trained hard, had fun, and continued to race. At the start of this month we competed at the SAC meet. Right after this meet we headed into the MAC last chance meet. Again, we turned around and competed the very next weekend at the Dutchman Invitational. But wait, there's more! We finished the month off with our Regionals Championship Meet! Phew! The amount of best times had through all of these meets is truly amazing. Majority of our swimmers swam faster at every single meet too! We are getting a front row seat to watching these athletes reap the benefits of hard work during dryland, early mornings, cold and rainy meets, swimming while tired, and working through prelims/finals meets.





Coming up we have our Age Group State meet where we will see the best of the best in the State. How exciting! Two weeks after we have many athletes qualified for the Southwestern Age Group Regionals meet - this is the first time MAC has attended this meet and we are stoked to see what it is all about!



After these championship meets I'm hopeful that all of our athletes take advantage of our team break and use our time wisely. Swimming world has put out a great article on how to approach our time after our championship meets and at the end of the season. I thought there was some great advice here and I'd like to summarize it!



When you have spent so many weeks and months leading up to a championship event and what will happen for those three to four days, the moment that it is over can leave you feeling a little in no-man's land. Whether you had the best meet of your life or left

the meet feeling like you could've accomplished more, the next actions you take are just as important as your pre-meet actions. Here are a few steps that can help during the rest and rejuvenation stage.

1. Swim It Off!

Shake it off! Kidding! It may be the last thing you want to do, but hitting the pool every now and then with some easy efforts while you're on break can help you reconnect with your body and feel confident about what your body has been able to go through this past season.

2. Reflect

Whether you were successful with your goals or barely fell short of achieving them, take a few days to reflect on the season. Take the time to think about all of the things that went right and the things that went wrong, the things that were and were not in your control. Hindsight is 20/20 so this is a great time to take advantage of being honest with yourself so you can be better prepared for the next season. Sometimes writing these thoughts down on paper, talking with a friend, parent, or coach can help them stick in your brain more.

3. Catch Up

Taking time to go to meets means there has been a lot of missed school days! Take this time to get back to the grind with your school work and making sure you've completed anything you missed while competing. The extra time you'll have since you aren't at the pool will help with this! Keeping in good communication with your teachers/counselors can be helpful to make sure you're on track with your school work.

4. Do Something Outside of the Pool

Spending some days out of the pool is a great chance to try some other forms of activity that you haven't been doing recently. Try jogging, cycling, playing pickleball, or even go for a hike with some friends! Doing something outside of the water will be a nice reset; be careful not to get hurt!

5. Set New Goals

All swimmers know that the end of a swim season is not the end of a swim journey. Use this past season as a building block for the next. After you've spent time reflecting; you may find it natural to think ahead and make plans for what you want to do differently or better in the future. Most importantly, take the time to pat yourself on the back for your efforts given this past season!

Dryland (Kino/Skyline)

By Coach Bear

Taper time! When it comes to dryland the same approach is taken as you would for swim training. Dryland taper is individualized - volume is reduced and intensity is maintained. We target to reduce the volume of dryland by 25% of peak volume by the championship meet they are preparing for. We maintain the volume of intensity of workouts, weight and reps decrease while trying to maintain intensity by keeping the exercises light and explosive. More power work is integrated to keep the athlete explosive and ready to go for their big meet. Programming stays simple and effective, nothing new is introduced at this point. The most important piece to the puzzle is to keep it light and have some fun!

Senior 2 (Skyline)

By Coach Joey

Championship season was a major success! It was great seeing so much of the hard work you all put in pay off with lots of best times and fast swims. The best part about coaching is seeing your smiles after you hit those best times. To recap we were combined region champions with the boys finishing it first and girls second in their groupings! This is something us coaches were hoping for and you all were the reason that it happened. Let's take that success and use it as motivation to qualify for state meets and compete in those state meets going forward!

As we look into March, I think everyone is looking forward to a well deserved team break. Prior to that we will be focusing on some easy, aerobic swimming with an emphasis on drills to try and correct our strokes. This is also a great time to get really good at underwaters, streamline, and turns. Every time you push off the wall is an opportunity for you to be practicing these things. Use that opportunity and get better during this time! You start building those habits now and the better your swimming will be this summer.

Something I also want to touch on is nutrition in your swimming. Nutrition and sleep are the two easiest things you can do to come more prepared to practices and swim faster in meets. Are you eating vegetables every meal? Are you avoiding extra sugar and fats? If you have a smart watch I would encourage you to hook up to MyFitnessPal app and add in what you eat in a day and track your workouts. This app shows you exactly

how much you should be eating as well as what food groups you should be eating from. If you dial that in, the impacts on your overall health, swimming, and energy are going to be massive. Consider it over the next month.

Again, amazing job this season! So proud of all of you and can't wait for the season to come!

Senior 1

By Coach Eric

Senior swimmers just had an amazing couple of weeks as we competed amazingly at our championship meets. It is always a fantastic feeling when we train hard and see amazing results at the competitions. As we get faster that becomes more and more of a challenge. This article from SwimSwam talks about improvement and how it gets harder as you get faster.

I work hard every day at practice but don't seem to be getting faster. How do I stay motivated when this happens?

Sound familiar? I bet it does. I've experienced it, continue to experience it, and judging by the number of emails I get from swimmers frustrated with this exact thing, a whole chlorinated bunch of you do as well. The dreaded plateau. We all experience it. For those of us who have been around the block a few times we might even know that it's coming, but this doesn't make it any easier when it does happen.

- *Am I doing this all wrong?*
- *Have I maxed out my abilities and talent in the water?*
- *Will I never get any faster than I am right now?*
- *What if I keep working hard in the water and nothing ever gets better?*

There are about a thousand different reasons that things have flat-lined for you in the pool. But there are a handful that I see pop up over and over again both with other swimmers and in my own travels around the black line.

Here are some of the more common reasons your hard work doesn't appear to be paying off:

THE ILLUSION OF THE CLOCK.

The way we judge our swimming, both in practice and in competition, is usually based completely on the scoreboard and pace clock. Best time? Great success. Slower than our PB? Booooo. Using the clock as the only marker for whether a swim was good or not is a problem because the clock isn't the only marker of improvement in the water. ***Not even close.***

The time on the clock doesn't lie, but it doesn't tell the whole truth. If we base how we feel about our swimming completely and totally on what we see on the clock, then we are ignoring the millions of other things that are happening in the water. Improvement in the water isn't always reflected by the clock. When you think about it, becoming a faster swimmer is a transformation—your body is literally adapting and learning to move through the water with less effort. ***Not all of the changes you want to happen are going to happen at exactly the same time, and they don't happen at the same rate.*** Read that again, because it's important to understand. Change and improvement doesn't happen uniformly. That being said, even though the clock might not be telling us what we wanna hear that day in the water, what are you doing to improve today? Are your turns improving? Is your breakout getting better? Are you getting better at holding the breathing patterns? Are you being mindful of your stroke rate on every lap? Are you crushing the high elbow pull? Not rolling your head too much to breathe?

See where I am going with this? The clock is just one measure of getting better in the water. Being "faster" means doing countless things better. Just because your overall rate of improvement isn't there today doesn't mean you can't hammer away at those other little aspects of your training. The most powerful side-effect of this mindset change is realizing that there are always things you can control and focus on during workouts when you feel like your hands are slopping through Jello. We can't always control how we feel in the water, or what the results are, but we can choose to work on something today that has nothing to do with either of those things. And of course, the fact that there are so many things you can be working on means that there are countless ways for you to take control of your swimming (and consequently, feel motivated again).

THE FASTER YOU GET, THE SLOWER YOU IMPROVE.

This is one of the less-talked about aspects of high-performance swimming—when we first commit to getting better we improve quickly. Everything is gravy during this phase.

But as we master it (whether it's a skill, a conditioning level, or a higher elbow catch), and those first few waves of adaptation pass us by, improvement starts to slow down. It might even completely stall out. Even though we are still working super hard and doing everything right. It's just the nature of improvement. The top swimmers in the world know this better than most. Think about all of the training and practices they do just in the hopes of matching or slightly improving their best times. When we first start something the rate of improvement is hilarious—just don't expect it to last forever. Which transitions well into...

YOU ARE WORKING HARD AT DOING THE THINGS YOU ARE COMFORTABLE DOING.

Progress comes from doing new things. By “new” I don't mean suddenly switching coach and club mid-week—but by doing a new interval, a lower stroke count, or more dolphin kicks off the wall. “Working hard” is a really subjective thing to say and just about every swimmer in the water can find a way to justify saying it. For example, I can say that I went and swam 2,000m really hard, but that certainly doesn't mean I swam well or even in a way that is going help me become a better swimmer. If you are working hard at doing the same things you've always done you are just gonna get really good at swimming the same speeds you always have.

Effort isn't enough. Your effort needs to be focused at swimming better in all respects, and not just “hard.” Those times where you experience violent bursts of improvement come from when you are swimming harder and better.

ACCUMULATED FATIGUE.

One of the biggest crises in confidence I experienced in my competitive days was around a month out from big meets. This was usually when training was at its hardest. The volume was high, the intensity was cranked, and I would find myself frustrated with a lack of speed in the water. Because I was showing up and working hard every day at practice I was carrying around some serious work fatigue that had built up over the weeks and months of training. Contrast this with other swimmers in the group who had missed a fair chunk of training. To my chagrin and frustration, they'd crush me in practice because they were essentially tapered. It felt hilariously unfair to be getting dusted by swimmers who were barely showing up to practices. The harder you train, the more fatigue you are going to carry around with you.

The effects of yesterday's hard workout don't just disappear after a night of sleep. Now imagine the stockpile of fatigue that comes from weeks and months of hard training.

This is the burden of being the swimmer who shows up and kicks butt every day. The good news? Have faith in the program and when you get your chance to fully rest up and recover you'll discover a new gear in the pool you never thought possible.

YOU AREN'T GIVING YOURSELF A CHANCE TO RECOVER.

Speaking of fatigue, how hard do you work at the recovery aspect of your training? How serious are you about getting to bed early each night? How well are you eating before, during and after your swim practices? Along the same vein as accumulated fatigue, if you aren't giving yourself a chance to recover properly between thrashings in the water you aren't giving yourself space to adapt to the training. Think of your body as a big old battery. If you don't let it charge overnight, how much battery are you left with in the morning? If you aren't giving it sporadic charges over the course of the day how much charge does it have left by the end of the day? With 25% juice left you are scrambling for ways to get a quick charge over the course of the day (coffee, pre-workouts, etc). Working hard is awesome, but you should be recovering just as hard. Think of all those recovery activities as ways to recharge your personal battery. Stretching and foam rolling after practice. Staying hydrated over the course of the day. Doing some form of mindfulness work to help keep stress at bay. Getting all the sleep you can get your hands on. Recover as hard as you are working in the pool.

THE HARDEST PART OF ALL... KEEP SHOWING UP.

I'll never forget the first time I swam a :27 long course for a 50 free in practice. I'll never forget it because I didn't expect it. It came on a Saturday afternoon after a bruising week of training. It was my tenth session of the week, and it was around the 51,550'th meter that I'd swum during that span. At the tail end of a race pace set I dropped a :27 high. Immediately buoyed by this and wanting to make sure this wasn't a one-off or a fluke, I was able to repeat this result on the next rep. Ka-boom. Massive breakthrough. I certainly hadn't planned on it that morning. But I'd shown up, done everything right in training, and gave myself the best possible chance that day for improvement to burst through. That's what you can do each day. Show up, give your best, and good things will happen. Those breakthroughs won't happen every day, and you can rarely predict the exact moment they will happen, but you exponentially increase the likelihood of those huge new jolts of improvement by showing up. That breakthrough you want might not happen today. Maybe not tomorrow. But it's coming in hot as long as you keep showing up.

SwimSwam article by Oliver Poirier-Leroy