

Mesa Aquatics Club

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2023

DISCIPLINE OF A CHAMPION!



Discipline of a champion is our theme this season. Each month we will focus on a different quality in the acronym CHAMPION (Coachable, Honor, Attitude, Motivate, Practice, Integrity, Optimism, Never give up!) Discipline is an essential foundation for success in any sport, and in life!

Discipline in swimming paves the path toward skill development, following directions, being punctual, and practicing with a purpose. Discipline is often what separates the champions from the rest! We encourage our athletes to make choices this season that go beyond their comfort zones, that align with their individual goals, and the goals of the team.

Let's train hard, have fun and stay disciplined. Remember that discipline is not a one time event.... It's a lifestyle. As Michael Phelps once said, "if you want to be the best, you have to be willing to do things other people aren't willing to do."

Meet Information

As we start the season with renewed enthusiasm and dedication, it's crucial to recognize the immense value of attending swimming meets as a team. Our meet schedule through the end of the short course season is listed on our website. I encourage you to take a look and plan to attend all of our home meets, and any away meets in which you qualify. Attending and competing in swimming meets serve as invaluable learning experiences for individuals and the team as a whole. Analyzing the strategies, techniques, and race tactics, can offer new insights and inspiration. Meet appearances allow coaches to assess what has been taught and how well athletes are implementing skills and strategies. The knowledge gained from attending these meets can be applied to future competitions, helping to elevate individual and the team's skill level and performance.

In addition to developing stronger skills, attending swimming meets also facilitate the development of friendships and team camaraderie. When swimmers attend meets they are surrounded by others who share a similar passion for the sport. During these events, swimmers come together and encourage and support one another. Developing friendships at swimming meets fosters a sense of belonging and creates a supportive friend group. Meets offer relationship building and team cohesion that a daily practice cannot provide. As a team, let's make this the best season yet!

Fall League



What a time we have had these 3 weeks! We started with pushing off the wall properly. We needed to establish what ready position looked like, how to drop, call (your mother), and push off in a streamline—all within a few seconds of each other. We started slow and broke all of those components apart so swimmers could understand each step of

the process. Then we worked at putting it all together, and the result has been amazing! It is fun when the pieces come together.

With the strokes, we started with freestyle, a lot of side kicking working on breathing to one side at a time. This was to get swimmers comfortable with breathing to their right and left. When we put it all together it was mind blowing how so many of them understood, and were able to execute, breathing every 3. This is a work in progress, but we are ecstatic as to where they are.

We have begun backstroke, focusing on the kick, then moving on to the attitude (rotation) of the shoulders and hips while keeping the kick small.

The fun meet on Wednesday was FUN! We saw so many great things; streamlines, breathing 3, white water kicks, no one missing a race, trying new things, and the best was, kids smiling and having fun. As coaches we love meets because it gives us a chance to see what we need to work on, and what is looking good. Thank you everyone for participating!!

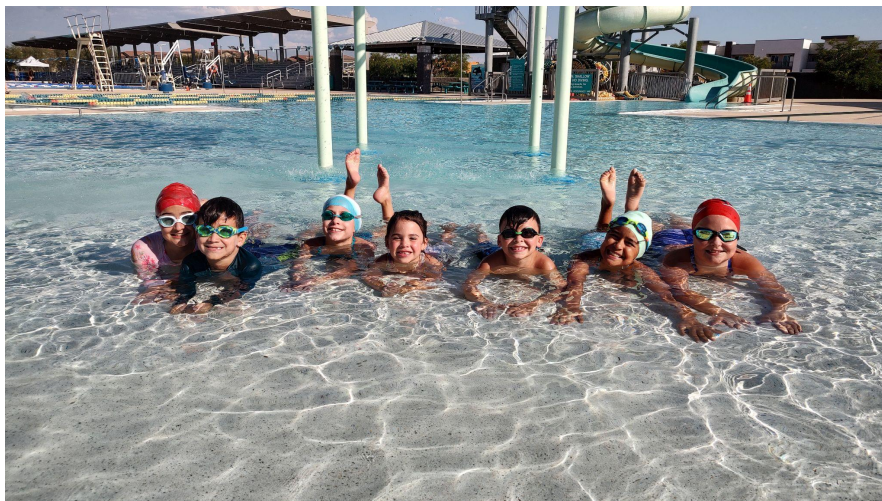
We have enjoyed getting to know your swimmers, and are excited for the next 9 weeks!

GO MAC!

Pre-Team Base Camp / Narwhal (Skyline)

By Coach Shawna

Skyline Blooming Base Camp and Nautical Narwhals!



What an amazing beginning of the season this Narwhal group has had! Most of the first week was spent working on ready position, streamlines, and doing drills to progress to breathing every 3. It is a slow process, but to go faster we need to slow down. By breaking down the strokes into manageable pieces the swimmers are able to grasp the specific concepts we are working on. They have done a tremendous job slowing down and really thinking about what they should be doing. Breathing every 3 is an incredible way to keep the body balanced as they are learning other components of the stroke. We also are starting to work flip turns by just doing flips in the water. When it becomes a game they do not even realize they are working a skill. 😊

We did begin backstroke! A few specific aspects are; kicking, thumb out/pinky entry with one arm at a time, shoulder attitude, and backstroke finishes. Very few swimmers at this age enjoy backstroke due to the fear of hitting their heads on the wall, so we really worked hard for them to have their finish number.

Out of the water we are starting the Dynamic Warm up and our discussion on the MAC way and making of a CHAMPION. The Dynamic Warm up is something all MAC groups are doing, and the Narwhal group is starting with some basic moves to get their bodies ready for practice, and to help prepare them for the groups ahead of them. We have discussed the MAC way; HONOR the Process, Team, Yourself, and we are talking about the disciplines of a CHAMPION. We started with C, which is coachable, willing to learn and grow. We are getting ideas on what that looks like for our group.

We had our first fun meet, which was so fun to watch! There is so much to learn from meets. Don't worry, the season just started, your swimmers have made improvements, and will continue to do so. We have more meets coming up, and we hope to see more of the Narwhal swimmers at our MAC hosted meets.

Thank you parents for your support, and getting your swimmers to the pool! You have amazing kids!

Narwhal (Kino)

By Coach Trey

The Kino Narwhal Group is off to a great start this season! We have spent time working on the fundamentals of swimming, such as ready position, streamlines, and body line we're having fun and making progress daily!

White (Kino)

By Coach Nichol

The WHITE GROUP at Kino is a coachable bunch and we are off and running. We are trying to squeeze in so many skills and baseline habits to prepare ourselves for fast swimming later.

Sometimes fast is slow! To become a fast swimmer, we have to break down all the tiny parts and make them the very best they can be and then add them back together for performance. In any race, there are tiny components that can feel frustrating to slow down and break apart, but doing so with repetition is the foundation for the habit.. and the habit is the foundation for the performance. We have been dissecting leaving the wall, approaching the wall, how to initiate forward motion, how to sustain forward motion, how to balance the body for optimal glide, how to initiate and follow through on a transition to the same or different stroke, how to finish to the wall using the full extent of the lane, how to use the tools (flags) to aid us in precision and so forth. There are hundreds of tiny components we have started working on and will continue to focus on throughout the season. If it felt like you saw a gap in skills at the fun meet... don't worry.. we are always learning and relearning for perfection.

Having fun is super important to me because I think it's super important to 8-12 year olds. Yes, we play a game almost every day and I'm not even a little sad about it. The truth is, that a swimming game builds endurance and skill as much as a set that's designed to raise the heartrate. Not only that, but they are building relationships and stay motivated to come to practice each day as well. We will have fun!!

We have filled out our goal sheets, signed up and participated in the first meet and are looking forward to our first sanctioned races at the Hurculean invite. I'd say the goal of progress is in action already. But this week we will also set a group goal or something we all agree we can be better at. These are honestly my favorite goals because every has to invest in the greater good to be rewarded. Try a group goal at home too!!

Thanks for being the best and most supportive parents around! Your kids are awesome!! Gooooo MAC!!



White (Skyline)

By Coach Maggie

GOALS!! GOALS!! GOALS!!

This season is all about instilling the Discipline of a Champion. That doesn't only apply to the swimmers, but the coaches as well! Longer seasons like Short Course gives the coaches a GREAT opportunity to start off slow and follow through on things that will help our swimmers become true champions.

This month, White Group has had a huge push on goals, Goals, GOALS. Every single one of the swimmers have been taught how to create and process goals and create a roadmap on how to achieve these goals. We began goal sheets the 2nd week we returned to the pool. We talked about why they like to swim, what their number one goal is, and 3 ways to achieve this goal. Many of the swimmers have goals like, "Make State," "Make Regionals," "Improve my times." My question to them, "What are your times?" "What are the Regional and State times?" Teaching the swimmers realistic times and achievements was HUGE. It set an expectation for them and lit a fire to become better and stronger. Part of their goals this season is to memorize 3 events and their times throughout the season. We also discussed which events they are close to in Regionals and/or State.

Once they finished their goal sheets, we moved onto goal meetings! These meetings ranged anywhere from 5-10 minutes and established a more concrete plan to their goals. For example, if they said 1 of the ways to achieve Regional times was to work harder, well how are you going to work harder? Work hard at practice. Work hard at practice on what? Most conversations went this way and it really got the swimmers thinking about what they specifically need to work hard on or focus on during practice or at home. It became personal and real...some want to improve their turns or dives or have a better attitude about kicking, etc.

Their athletic maturity is incredible! They have incorporated these conversations and goals into their practices already! Every swimmer in White is swimming with intention and accuracy to details.

This is the perfect way to start our season and continue to build on GOALS. GOALS. GOALS. GOALS. GOOOOOOO MAC!!!

Red (Kino)

By Coach Trey

The Kino Red group has been making strides in the water. We've spent our time building good habits, such as starting and ready position, breathing every three strokes in freestyle and flip turning at every wall. Red group is learning a lot, and having even more fun!

Black & Gold (Kino)

By Coach Nichol

Talent or dedication...

Not everyone can choose if they are given the talent of swimming, and it certainly is a gift if you were just born with athleticism and a natural feel for the water... but there is good news. You can develop talent with a little thing called dedication.

Developing a talent takes a lot longer than natural skill because it requires time and thoughtful attentiveness to details and of course the "A" word.... ATTENDANCE, but the great thing about swimming is that a swimmer with dedication often rises above a swimmer with talent due to pure effort.

You can be a great swimmer with dedication and we already see that on week 4 of the season. Swimmers who have been coming to a minimum of 5 practices a week have more "natural" looking body position, head position and kick.

So the great news is.... if you don't feel like a natural athlete, but you put the time in.. you have every bit of chance to be a champion as someone who just makes it look so easy, but doesn't put the work in.

We love seeing this young group put the work in. We feel so lucky to be a witness to the work.

We will continue with skills and drills and start to build up our endurance in the next few weeks!

Our dryland has been an important part of our progression and we are so lucky to have Coach Bear be a part of our strength program. We aim to protect and strengthen our shoulders and prepare for a fantastic season!!

Honor yourself, honor your team, honor the process! Gooo MAC!!



Black & Gold (Skyline)

By Coach Angela



And they're off! The season has started out well for our Black and Gold groups! In the water we have been able to visit each stroke. For each stroke we really focused on our body line, drills, and kick. The hope is that after tackling the technique side of things; we can add some more yardage and, later on, intensity to produce a great looking stroke. We've had the opportunity to give our legs some tough work and attention. I am a firm believer that our kick strength and endurance can carry us through our races! This month we've also started dryland and yoga. Our dryland has increased to two times a week which we hope to see strengthen our athleticism and power in the water. Coach Bear is a wealth of knowledge in this area and we are lucky to have him! Coach Maria has helped us with our flexibility and range of motion - all just as important to have as a strength when we're in the water.

The groups have already had a chance to have some FUN on FRIDAY while we went FISHING! This is something I plan to bring out more often after seeing how much the kids enjoyed it. The following day, those that came to practice were able to participate in a swimming clinic. This was a great opportunity for them to be able to share their knowledge and help some others learn. I was really pleased to see how they were patient and able to teach others.

Lastly this month we were able to have our goal sheet celebrations from last season! HURRAY! And now that the brand new, fresh ones have been sent home; we can start planning for this season. These have proven to be so helpful in the past in aiding our

progress and I am very anxious to meet with each swimmer to begin our goal-oriented journey this season. A goal of mine, as the coach of these amazing groups, is to really have a great feeling of unity within the groups. Be on the lookout for some team building activities coming up :-). Over all it has been a great start to the season and we are all headed in the right direction! GO MAC!

Dryland (Kino/Skyline)

By Coach Bear

At the beginning of the season we have been focusing on creating good habits. One of those is getting in the habit of having a great warm up. We have been working with each group on helping them better understand the importance of warming up and getting into the frame of mind of a champion.

There are many reasons to warm up properly. One of the most important is about getting your muscle temperature up. Studies have shown that for every 1 degree you raise your muscle temperature it equals up to a 4% increase in performance. Activate the muscles and get them warm and generate some heat so you can be ready for practice or competition. Do you want to increase the quality of your training and races? Then make sure to increase the quality of your warm-up on land and in the water. This is something you will need to get used to swimming in college! Let's have some fun with it!

To help with this we have split the warm up into 3 parts.

1. Heat it up!
 - a. Get the body warm, increase your muscle temperature, increase your performance and training in the water.
2. Loosen it up!
 - a. Whether it is an early morning practice or you just got to the pool after sitting at school all day you need to loosen up the body.
3. Activate it!
 - a. Get those muscles activated! In this part of the warm up we want you to consciously contract or engage a specific muscle to increase its activity. By getting those specific muscles firing we are not only helping them get warmed up but also helping to prevent injury.

HS Development Group (Kino)

By Coach Jack

The morning group at Kino is an experimental group and a Swim Lab, we are offering a new seasonal program that is entirely skills based, we focus in detail on one or two skills per morning. The group is composed of kids from 6 different high schools who all swim for their teams in the afternoons, those are the practices that will build their conditioning and fitness, we are focussing in the mornings on the skills they will need to complement that training and take their performances to a new level. The skills we work on are the ones that normally don't get enough practice time in most training sessions including; starts, turns, breakouts, stroke efficiency and race planning. We spend maybe as much as 40% of our time working on underwater kick development, as no swimmer will advance very far these days until that one skill is learned and perfected.

We have a robust group of kids who have shown the dedication not just to participate in additional practices, but to set their alarms before 5 am to do so. Our average attendance for these sessions is over 40 kids per day and they seem to be enjoying the extra work. We also have introduced an advanced stretching and conditioning program that works far more than just the muscles. We do about ten minutes of multi axis and balance stretching to both improve movement skills but also help in recovery by stimulating the fascia and connective tissues. Most professional athletes now utilize this type of program, but very few high school athletes get exposure to it. The entire emphasis of our morning program is to do the skills correctly, repeat it often enough that new habits form, and try to ensure that every rep is a quality effort done correctly. So far it seems to be working.

Seniors (Kino/Skyline)

By Coach Eric

We are starting a new season. It is allows a little hard at the beginning of a short course season. Swimmers leaving for college and swimmers missing to do high school. The swimmers miss their friends and training partners. We get through it every year, but it's still hard.



We are starting off with quite a bit of skill building. We will continue to build the yardage and intensity over the next couple of weeks. After a few weeks of building you into savages, we will get to October and get ready to taper for High School State. After state we need to get right back at it for the second half of the short course season.

The beginning of a season is a great time. The excitement of what you will accomplish, the people you will beat, the times you will smash and the fun (hard work) that you will have.

To accomplish any of the things that a new season brings you will need to refocus. Setting several goals is very important. The goal will allow you to have a motivation when times are hard. Pick a couple of events that you want to have your season focus. Pick your goal time and break down the swim. For example: if you want to go a 2:00 in a 200 free. The first 50 needs to be a 27.5 and the next 50 needs be a 30.5 and the last two need to be 31.0. With the swim broken down in this manner you have created training paces. You know what you need to be able to hold on practice. After you pick your events and break down your swims give them to your coach. Coach will look over your goals and you two can have a good discussion.

The fun is had by making friends and working hard together. Friends are the ones that are there in hard times and good times (and they can help turn the hard times into good times!). The best friends are the ones that push you to be your best even when you don't want to. Can you be that best friend?