

To Gold & National families:

I have been working on redefining the descriptions and goals for our TOPS training groups. We are offering three different programs for the team: Developmental, Age Group & Senior. The Senior program is for athletes ages 13 & older and will be divided into 3 training squads; High School, Gold & National. The new High School group will help address the needs of some Senior athletes not ready for the training or commitment of the Gold and/or National groups. This new group will begin May 12th and run through the end of July. Practices will be 4-5 days per week for 1.5 hours.

There will not be many differences for the Gold and National squads, but both groups have been better defined as to their goals and expectations. If you are currently participating in either of these groups, I encourage you to sign-up for these levels again. The commitment and journey is well worth it. These groups are still offered discounted training fees of 30% for athletes participating in a spring high school sport. Those of you that wish to strive for your own personal peak performances, the Gold & National groups are for you. The idea behind the new group descriptions is to make sure that like minded people are training together, building a supporting environment and striving towards similar goals. This new structure will allow us to better serve the local community.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns and feel free to forward this email on to anyone that might be interested. I will be out of the office for Spring Break, but will get back to you the week of March 31st. If it is something urgent, Coach Patrick will maintain office hours next week.

Go TOPS! Swim fast!

Eric Meyer
Head Coach
The Oak Park Swimmers
West Cook YMCA

Senior Squads Descriptions

Note on training: Once swimmers are fully grown and are promoted as far as the Senior program, they must train more and better than they did when they were younger to continue to swim faster.

High School

The High School training squad takes athletes coming from other sports, high school swimmers or swimmers currently in the TOPS program who are not ready for the Gold level of training. Technique is the primary focus with speed, power and explosiveness playing large roles.

Practice is offered 4-5 times a week. While there is no attendance requirement, athletes are strongly encouraged to attend all practices as skills and progressions build from one practice session to another.

To Enter High School

Athletes may enter this group beginning in the spring of their 8th grade year.

Goals for the High School Squad

- Continue becoming more fluid in swimming (no splashing)
- Actively improve distance per stroke
- Learn leadership skills
- Swimmers will learn to actively monitor and improve their stroke technique
- Swimmer understands and takes responsibility for attendance and performance, work habits in practice and how these three relate to meet performance

Gold (Age 13 & up)

The Gold squad is the highest level of training for TOPS swimmers before reaching the National team. A great deal of importance in the training of the Gold group is placed on enhancing skills and technique, as well as increasing the intensity of the training sessions. Gold swimmers also have increased expectations of consistent practice attendance (70% or better) and are expected to demonstrate leadership to the other members of the team.

Practices are offered 5-6 times per week for 2 hours and will consist of both dryland and swimming workouts.

To Enter Gold

- Display intention of adhering to attendance commitment before moving into group
- Show willingness to learn
- 10x100 @ 1:30
- 8x50 @ 1:00 kick
- Under 2:30 in 200yd freestyle
- Kick 1x50 under :35 with fins

Goals for the Gold Squad

- Continue becoming more fluid in swimming (no splashing)
- Actively improve distance per stroke
- Translate power and athleticism developed in dry land training to speed in the water
- Learn leadership skills
- Attendance should improve, not decline as the athlete matures
- Swimmers will learn to actively monitor and improve their stroke technique
- Swimmer understands and takes responsibility for attendance and performance, work habits in practice and how these three relate to meet performance

National (Age 14 & up)

Athletes in the National squad are **committed** to serious training for the sport of swimming. Training in the group is at a very high level, and each member is expected to contribute to the team's pursuit of excellence. National practice is offered 6-9 times per week depending on the time of year. National swimmers are expected to maintain 90% workout attendance and communicate with the National coach about their training schedule.

Practices are 1.5 to 2.5 hours and will consist of both dryland and swimming workouts.

To Enter National

- Display intention of adhering to attendance commitment before moving into group
- 10x100 @ 1:20
- 8x50 @ :50 kick
- Swim under 1:00 in 100yd freestyle for girls/ :56 for boys
- Kick 1x50 under :30 with fins
- 30 pushups in 1:00

Goals for the National Squad

- Prepare athletes for both competency at a National & State level
- To consistently improve commitment level and training/racing ability from season to season
- Actions and attitudes match goal of National group
- Continue becoming more fluid in swimming (no splashing)
- Actively improve distance per stroke
- Learn leadership skills
- Attendance should improve, not decline as the athlete matures
- Training attitudes should be more productive and supportive as the athlete gets older
- Athletes must conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to actions needed to promote and support the goals of the team
- Attend all meets prescribed by coaching staff unless Senior coach agrees to absence