

Practice Objectives And Routine - What To Expect

Practices are planned in advance based upon short term and long term goals. Short term goals are usually eight weeks to 26 weeks in time and revolve around increasing the quantity of work, improving the quality (times) achieved in practice, skill development, and progressing towards "A" time standards or above. Long term goals can be summarized by simply saying we are preparing the children for higher levels of practice ability and higher levels of competition.

There is another aspect of practices beyond the improvement of physical abilities. We strive to teach and provide opportunities for young people to learn responsibility, self reliance, team support, ability to face challenges, and satisfaction from meeting and exceeding challenges.

In general, on three days a week we develop aerobic ability. Practices range from 3000 yards to 6000 yards in 90 minutes depending on ability. The practice is divided in "sets" of swims lasting 10 minutes to 30 minutes. Within the set we will do a series of distances ranging from 25 yards to 1000 yards non stop, for example, 12 times 100 yard freestyle leaving every 2 minutes. We work on all strokes during the course of a workout. We teach the swimmers to read a pace clock, to calculate their times, and to swim with control. Most sets are designed so that swimmers will descend (go faster) with each swim. Learning to use the pace clock and report their times to the coach helps the swimmers become accountable and to have focus on their efforts. Coaches also make stroke corrections between swims.

In general, on two days a week, we do extended dryland work, then warm up swimming, then stroke drills, and then race pace or sprint work. These days are shorter in yardage, typically 2000 to 3000 yards, but very intense on quality of times. Swimmers are challenged to achieve fast times.