

PRACTICE GROUPS INFORMATION & DESCRIPTIONS

Fox Valley Swimming (FOX) is a competitive swim program offering high quality year-round with training locations in Naperville and Aurora, primarily at Neuqua Valley HS, Waubonsie Valley HS and the Fry YMCA. Age Group Program swimmers shall be residents of District 204 while Senior Program swimmers do not need to be residents of District 204.

Families should check the online Calendar on the Fox website at least weekly to see if there are practice changes. Also, any last-minute changes are sent via email and text so long as a family has provided their contact information in the registration system.

PRACTICE GROUPS

Each practice group has different skill levels and expectations within the practice. Lead Coaches organize practice groups and lanes within the groups based on the athletes experience, skill levels, willingness to work hard, and/or by the practice design. **Placement in a practice group is at the sole discretion of the Fox coaching staff.**

Team Development Group

TDG All Groups- Lead Coach Kristian Alexandrov

TDG Group Values: Enthusiasm, Fun, Patience

Team Development Group (“TDG”) is designed for athletes beyond swim lessons, but still in need of skill and endurance development before joining an Age Group. TDG athletes must be able to swim freestyle with face in the water and side breathing, refined backstroke for 25 yards, and proficient (close to legal) fly and breaststroke. TDG is not a beginner swim lesson and most swimmers are just shy of skills to make the Age Group team. TDG is also an avenue for young athletes involved in other activities to remain in the sport with less of a commitment than an Age Group.

TDG mainly focuses on fundamentals of all four strokes, underwater kicking, turns, starts, working within a practice group, and using a pace clock. Race strategies are covered prior to meets. TDG swimmers are eligible to swim in all home meets and there is an expectation that TDG swimmers will commit to swim at least one day of each home meet.

TDG has two coaches working with a maximum of 25 athletes per workout in the three-lane, 20-yard training pool. At times the main pool is used for start clinics and other times when available.

In the Fall/Winter season there are three Team Development Groups (“TDG”): 9/10, 11/12 and 13/14, and all TDG practices take place at Waubonsie Valley HS.

Group focus events: Corresponds with AG program age group

Group attendance expectation: Corresponds with AG program age group

Age Group Program

8 & Under Age Group- Lead Coach Bri Finkelstein

8U Group Values: Enthusiasm, Fun, Patience

8 & Under (“8&U”) is offered in three levels during the Fall/Winter and two levels in the Spring. 8&U is not offered in the Summer. During Summer, we encourage all our 8&U’s to swim on their neighborhood team.

Practices for 8&U are generally 45-60 minutes based upon the time of the season and group, three-four times per week.

There are two coaches working with a maximum of 25 athletes per workout in the three-lane, 20 yard training pool mostly at NVHS. (An 8&U may be held at WVHS if enrollment supports the addition of that group). At times the main pool is used for start clinics, and other times when available.

All 8&U groups focus on technique of all four strokes, jumps and underwater kick outs, followed by turns/starts, learning to work within a group, having fun with the sport and their teammates, and beginning stages of race strategy. Meet participation is important and expected, even if for one day of a weekend. 8&U swimmers participate in all meets where eligible. Although performance is important, it’s not the main priority.....staying in the sport is.

To be placed in the 8&U group, swimmers must be able to swim all four strokes legally and maintain competitive level training for that age.

Group focus events: 25s of each stroke, 50 free

Group practice expectation: 60%

9-10 Age Group- Lead Coach Rebecca Baugh

9/10 Group Values: Passion, Courage, Self-Awareness

To qualify for the 9-10 Age Group, swimmers must be able to swim all four strokes, and be proficient in starts and turns. Furthermore, swimmers must have the endurance level to swim repeatedly and make it through practices without stopping.

Practices focus on technique of all four strokes along with starts, turns, and racing strategies. Listening skills are taught along with group cooperation, and swimmers improve their reading of and working with pace clocks. Most sets are designed around all four strokes, and individual medleys (“IM’s”) ranging from 25 to 200 yards being repeated. Skill improvement goals are more important than training volume in this group. Meet participation is expected on a regular basis, as is practice attendance.

Group focus events: 50s of each stroke, 100 IM, 100 free

Group attendance expectation: 67%

11-12 Age Group- Black Lead Coach Joel Wallace, Gold Lead Coach Domonique Guzzardo

11/12 Group Values: Bravery, Sportsmanship, Discipline

The 11/12 age group is our largest on the team and is broken up into two training groups, Black and Gold. These training groups are broken up by ability level to best serve the individual needs of each swimmer, but both groups have similar goals.

Swimmers must have an endurance level to swim 50’s and 100’s of all four strokes, IM’s, and short mid-distance sets without stopping. All four strokes are broken down technically and isolation drills are taught to improve efficiency. Further explanations of technique with sprinting, pace work, and race strategy are covered, along with starts and turns. The psychological aspects of the sport are also introduced. Team building, group cooperation, pride of our sport, and appreciation of our culture are promoted. Meet participation is expected on a regular basis.

Fall/Winter offers an 11-12 group at each location in the main pools. The groups have the same goals and skill levels. Dryland is offered in the Fall/Winter and Summer, and serves as an important part of the program.

Group focus events: 100s of each stroke, 200 IM, 200 free, 500 free

Group practice attendance expectation: 75%

13-14 Age Group- Lead Coach MJ Lackos

13-14 Group values: Commitment, grit, athlete-centrism

The 13-14's have three coaches with a maximum of 65 athletes in eight lanes. Practices are 105-120 minutes, six to eight times per week. Dryland is offered M-F for 45 minutes. The routine of water and dryland training should be viewed as equally important in this group.

This is one of the more complex groups in swimming, as swimmers cross over from age group to pre-senior and begin maturing into high performing athletes. Events change from 50's in strokes to 100's and 200's, and 100 IM's are replaced by 200 and 400 IM's. Preparation, training, skill work, consistency, accountability, time management, and social activities all begin to operate at a higher level. This progression and change in team dynamics is all part of a 13-14's development and opportunity to learn and begin practicing healthy choices as an athlete.

As stated in other group descriptions, technique, training paces, styles of sets, race strategies, turns, starts, etc. are all addressed in the seasonal plan. There are different levels within the group and lanes are arranged accordingly. To help prepare swimmers for longer and more strenuous events, the training volume and intensity significantly ramps up from 11/12s. Team building and support is stressed, and pride of our sport and positive team culture is promoted.

Group focus events: 100s and 200s of each stroke, 200/400 IM, 500 free

Group practice attendance expectation: 80%

Senior Program

Our senior program is divided into three training groups to serve the unique needs of each high school swimmer in our program. As swimmers age, more consistency

and dedication is required to continue to reach new heights. All senior athletes are expected to participate in all meets.

Senior Program values: Ownership, leadership, investment

High Performance- Lead Coach Michael Hamann

The High Performance Group is the top training group on FOX. Swimmers in this group make swimming a high priority in their lives and have goals like qualifying for national-level meets and competing in college. Swimmers in this group are expected to be role models for younger swimmers on the team and exemplify the traits of commitment, hard work, dedication and more, for the next generation of FOX swimmers. Swimmers in this group are held to a very high standard by themselves, their teammates and their coaches.

Registration for the High Performance Group is done on a year-round basis.

Practice is offered 8 times per week, including double practices on Monday and Wednesday, as well as dryland M-F for 45 minutes in the afternoon. Dryland should be viewed as just as important as swimming and commitment to both is key to continued improvement.

Swimmers in this group are required to have at least one ISI Senior Champ cut and maintain 85% practice attendance over the course of the season.

Group focus events: All events with some specialization

Group practice attendance requirement: 85%

Senior 2- Co- Lead Coaches Ryan Farmer and Pat Torpey

The Senior 2 Group is our second group in the senior program. Swimmers in the Senior 2 Group are committed swimmers with goals of qualifying for ISI Championship meets like Regionals and Senior Champs.

Swimmers in this group are trained to be versatile, resilient swimmers who are ready and confident to tackle any event or challenge put in front of them.

Practice is offered 8 times per week, including double practices on Monday and Wednesday, as well as dryland M-F for 45 minutes in the afternoon. Dryland should be viewed as just as important as swimming and commitment to both is key to continued improvement.

Group focus events: All events, with some specialization

Group practice attendance expectation: 85%, 50% required

Senior 1- Lead Coach Bri Finkelstein

Senior 1 is our third senior group and practices 5 nights per week for an hour, primarily at Neuqua Valley HS. Senior 1 athletes focus on developing speed through technique, skill development and training.

Athletes in this group have goals of improving their technique, skills and fitness. The group will also discuss developing race strategies and preparation to improve racing skills.

Group focus events: All events, with some specialization

Group practice attendance expectation: 85%

High School Swim Teams and FOX: In the Fall, the High School (“HS”) Girls are competing for the HS (Aug.-Nov.), and the boys are swimming with Fox. Once the Girls HS season ends, the girls return to Fox and the Boys begin their HS season (late Nov.-late Feb.) and then return to FOX for practice and Championship Meets. Once an athlete finishes their HS competition season, they may return to Fox to practice and compete. The athletes should always check with their HS coaches before returning to Fox.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- Practice is important to the athlete’s development, so please have your athletes attend scheduled practices as much as possible and be on time. Practice schedules are designed for the age and ability of the swimmers.
- Meets for all groups are approximately every three weeks after the first month of the season. Sign up is required six to seven weeks prior to the event dates.

Please be timely during sign-up for all meets. Late enrollment in a meet is not allowed and any athlete withdrawing from a meet following the declaration deadline is responsible for all entry fees. High School athletes during their high school season are still responsible for sign-ups on time.

- “Championship Meets” include Regionals and State meets where time cuts are needed. All athletes qualifying for Championship Meets will be automatically signed up and expected to participate.