

# **SHARK TRAINING PROGRAM**

**We are a developmental program – from top to bottom.** 10 year olds are developmental swimmers 13 year olds are developmental – high school seniors are developmental. It is in that belief that our training philosophies are born. *Our program is based on the long-term benefit to the athletes.* Keep in mind that a fast 10-year-old does not equate to a happy and fast 18-year-old. **The record books are full of fast little kids that didn't stay in the sport to their teen-age years.**

We will not specialize in strokes or distances. All swimmers going through the program are swimmers – not backstrokers, butterflyers, or sprinters. We will train swimmers to be able to compete in the 400 IM, 200 of stroke and the distance freestyles. Once an athlete conquers those events – everything else is more easily conquered. We will also not wear technical racing suits until the coaching staff sees fit – which is usually at the USA Sectional level or 15 years old.

## **PRACTICE GROUPS**

The following is a brief overview of the group structure. The guidelines are general descriptions, as group makeup changes on a yearly basis. **Like all swimming related decisions, the coaching staff makes group placement decisions.** Placement decisions are made in the best interest of the individual swimmer and his/her long-term development. Please note that there are both minimum requirements that need to be met to guarantee a spot to continue on the team, and attendance that is recommended to track towards our higher groups.

**When it comes to practice, striving for the minimum is just that – striving for the minimum.**

### **Pre-competitive Groups:**

These groups are designed to help the beginning competitive swimmer who is not yet ready to train with the team. These groups are excellent for the 10 & under that wants to try out the sport. Practices will be held twice weekly for approximately 17 weeks. The basics of the competitive strokes are taught in these groups in the hopes that the swimmer will be ready to move up to the main team. These are not swimming lessons, and participants must be interested in learning the 4 competitive strokes, flip turns and racing starts. USA SWIMMING membership is included in the fee. The opportunity to swim in a meet will be available toward the end of the session, followed by an optional "Journey to Silvers" session for those who want to transition to the team. This includes entry in the Silver Championship meet and participation in the team picture and Spring Banquet.

### **Group 1:**

Group 1 is usually the starting point for new swimmers who join our team. Swimmers must already have the ability to swim the competitive strokes. (See **Pre-competitive** for a program that prepares children for group 1.)

It is recommended that swimmers in this group attend **3-4** practices per week in order to be able to build on learned skills. **To meet pre-registration requirements, 2 practices per week are required** – and swimmers must attend the meets scheduled for that group. Spring/Summer sessions are optional.

The four competitive strokes and basic start and turn techniques are taught. Elementary stroke drills are introduced at this level. We teach that technique comes first. Speed comes later. The ability to swim correctly will pay big dividends in the athlete's competitive future. It is never too early to learn that teammates are teammates – not yet competitors.

### **Group 2:**

Group 2 swimmers have demonstrated an ability to do all four competitive strokes legally, can maintain their stroke for 50 -100 yards, **and have listening and learning skills necessary for a more structured environment.**

It is in Group 2 that swimmers will begin to compete in longer events. All Group 2 swimmers will compete in 100 of **all strokes** and freestyle events up to 500 yards. 11-over swimmers will compete in 200 of strokes. These swimmers are ready to learn slightly more advanced stroke drills. More swimming is done in practice than in Group 1, though the emphasis is still technique first, speed later.

It is recommended that swimmers in this group attend **3-4** practices per week in order to be able to build on learned skills. **To meet pre-registration requirements, 2 practices per week are required** – and swimmers must attend the meets scheduled for that group. Spring/Summer sessions are optional.

### **Group 3:**

Group 3 swimmers have begun work on endurance and basic interval training. They are ready, willing, and able to spend more time at the pool than Group 2. Group 3 swimmers learn most of the stroke drills that are taught to our top swimmers. The emphasis in group 3 begins to lean toward aerobic conditioning. Group 3 swimmers will begin to compete in the 400 IM and the distance frees. We do start thinking about working on speed and endurance, but not at the expense of stroke technique.

Athletes in Group 3 are recommended to attend **4-6** practices a week to continue to track to the higher groups. **To meet pre-registration requirements 3 practices per week are required.** The requirement for any teenager in this – or any group -is at least 4 per week. They must attend meets on the Group 3 schedule. Spring/Summer sessions are recommended but optional.

### **Bronze group (Pre-Senior):**

Primarily, the Bronze Group prepares younger swimmers for eventual advancement into the SSC senior groups. These swimmers are ready to make a greater commitment and face a heavier practice load, and will ultimately become our senior group. In order to continue to track toward the higher groups, **it is recommended that these swimmers try to make all available practices.** The coaches can distinguish the Bronze members who are tracking towards the senior groups by their dedication to the sport – and their commitment to the team.

The Bronze group is also the group for older swimmers who are not interested in or able to make the necessary commitment to the **Senior** groups.

Bronze group swimmers will compete in all events – with emphasis on the distance events, 400 IM and 200s of stroke.

**To meet pre-registration requirements,** bronze group swimmers are **required to attend 4 practices a week.** They must attend meets on the Bronze meet schedule and must swim in either the spring or summer.

### **Senior Group:**

Each member of the Senior Group will recognize his/her position as a role model for the entire Shark program. A positive attitude toward training and competing is vital. Swimmers will be on the deck for practice AT LEAST 10 to 15 minutes early every day to prepare for workout. Members of this group will prepare themselves to train at the highest level on a daily basis. There will be room in the Bronze group for those who initially enter the senior team but cannot live up to the training level or role model position.

**Senior athletes who swim for their high school teams recognize that the varsity season falls within the USA SWIMMING season. Swimmers will be at SSC practice any time the HS team is given a practice off – and will swim every Saturday practice that does not interfere with meets.**

Athletes who have already graduated from high school, but live locally and continue to swim for the Sharks, will make individual plans with Jerry to compete in the senior group. Requirements for those swimmers *may* differ from the younger swimmers. Fees for those swimmers will be determined on an individual basis.

**Collegiate swimmers** must have a current USA Swimming Membership and are welcome to swim with the club when home during the year on breaks at no charge. They must register and pay Summer session fees before beginning summer training.

**Those athletes who are not meeting the group requirements will be re-assigned by the coaching staff.**

## **PRACTICE ATTENDANCE**

1. **Always be present at the pool at least 10 to 15 minutes before the start of practice** so that we can start on schedule and make efficient use of the allotted time.
2. Bring all belongings into pool area during practice. Do not leave things in unlocked lockers.
3. In case a youngster is late for practice, it is our hope that the parents will send a note with the child explaining the reason for tardiness.
4. Plan to stay for the entire practice. The last part of practice is very often the most important, and usually there are announcements made at the end of practice. In the event that your child needs to be dismissed early from practice, a note from the parent for each dismissal is required. Parents should not interrupt or talk to coaches on deck during practice.
5. **When a swimmer cannot attend the required number of practices for his/her group, we will expect the parent to notify the swimmer's coach to discuss the situation.**
6. Swimmers who fail to meet their practice requirements will be approached by the coaching staff to ascertain the problem. A continuation of deficient attendance will prevent pre-registration or necessitate a group re-assignment.
7. If your swimmer will be out of the water over a long period of time with an injury or illness, please notify the swimmer's practice coach so he/she is aware of the problem.
8. Practices are closed to parents and other observers at the Burnt Hills Pool, except for Saturdays. At Union, parents can find comfortable seating outside the pool area by the observation windows. At Skidmore, parents can observe quietly from the viewing area, when unlocked.

## **PRACTICE SCHEDULES**

As our club has evolved in the use of our **website**, and the use of three pools on a regular basis, the club website has become **your primary source for current practice schedule** information. Our practice schedule is determined by the availability of the BHBL, Union and Skidmore pools. We sometimes get last minute notification before vacation times regarding pool availability. Unexpected scheduling changes can occur at any time. *Please check our website daily as well as the bulletin boards at your practice site.*

## **PRACTICE BEHAVIOR**

1. Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at practice as well as in competition. Working together as a unit for the benefit of all individuals in the group is an important part of the "Shark Spirit."
2. Sharks are expected at all times to follow the verbal directions of the coaching staff. At no time will disrespectful attitudes be tolerated from any swimmer.

3. Abusive language, lying, stealing, and/or vandalism are intolerable. These behaviors are directly contrary to the objectives of the Schenectady-Saratoga Swim Club and are detrimental enough to the group to warrant strict disciplinary action.
4. Spitting on the deck or in the pool will not be tolerated.
5. Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach's permission.
6. Remember, at every pool we go to, including Burnt Hills, Union and Skidmore, we are guests.

We must do everything possible to make our hosts happy that we are there!

## ***SSSC POLICY CONCERNING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES***

The swimmers, coaches, and parents of SSC desire to lead our swimmers towards positive lifestyles that are conducive to achieving their best in swimming, school, their professional careers, and in their family lives. The team has seen fit to have a drug policy that all SSC swimmers will abide by for the good of the team and each individual as well.

### ***CODE***

- All SSSC swimmers will refrain from drinking alcohol, using any form of tobacco, or abusing any drug.
- All SSSC swimmers will restrict themselves from attending any gathering during any swim function where alcohol, drugs, or tobacco are present.
- Attendance at any gathering where alcohol and/or tobacco is present is strongly discouraged by SSC. Certainly, parents should be informed of any such attendance. All SSC swimmers will refrain from attending any gathering where their presence alone breaks the law (i.e., trespassing on private property) or the trust of their or someone else's parents (i.e., party at someone's house when the parents are out, or telling your parents that you're doing something other than going to the party).
- All swimmers will be truthful in all matters dealing with this policy. To purposely hold back information from the coaching staff is not considered being truthful. This policy does not rely solely on the honor system. The coaching staff must be made aware of problems that exist on our team.

### ***DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS***

Offense #1. Discussion with coach. Parents will be told, by the athlete, what happened by an agreed upon date. A parent will be contacted by a coach to ensure that the athlete has discussed the situation with a parent and has been entirely honest. Any further actions taken by the coaching staff will be discussed with the swimmer and be of a severity less than one would receive as a result of a second offense.

Offense #2. Discussion with coach. One week suspension from practice. However, attendance will be required and the athlete will be prepared to do some activities for the team as determined by the coaching staff. Swimmer will sit out one major meet.

Offense #3. Swimmer will be suspended from practice and meets for 6 months to one year. Length of suspension will vary according to the severity of the problem and the time of year. At the end of the suspension, the swimmer must try out for the team. The athlete's attitude throughout this process and lifestyle since being suspended will weigh heavily on the outcome of the tryout.

Gross Offense A. Any athlete who is approached by the coaching staff with regards to any violation of this policy and does not tell the truth in its entirety will be treated the same as if it were the third offense.

Gross Offense B. Any athlete who does drink, smoke, or use drugs illegally at any swim function will be sent home as soon as possible. Further, that swimmer will be treated the same as if it were the second or third

offense (depending on whether or not the swimmer has had trouble with this policy previously). If the swimmer is at Eastern Zones or a similar meet, the people in charge of the "all-star team" will be notified of the situation.

***POLICY IN ACTION***

*Let us never forget that this policy exists to help lead young swimmers towards positive actions and activities. Each older swimmer is a role model for the younger swimmers, and therefore, has a responsibility to uphold this policy. Also, this policy is designed to rid our team of negative actions and influences, not individuals. Our hope as a team is to correct problems before we lose individuals from our team. With that in mind, keep lines of communication open between coach and swimmer, help your teammates stay on track, and help every individual on our team to strive for his/her best in all fields.*