



GMSC WEIGHTLIFTING POLICY

Many high school swimmers come to coaches and ask about taking a weight training class at school as part of PE. In some cases, they start a weight training program without talking with their coach, thinking it will help them swim faster. It is highly recommended that you do **not** take a weight training class at school or, depending on your age, do any weight training. In any case, **do not start any weight or dry land program without talking with your coach first.**

The primary reasons are listed below:

1. Class sizes can be too large and not properly supervised for proper technique and injury prevention.
2. Most middle/high school PE teachers have limited training and experience with serious weight programs and in many cases any type of dry land training program.
3. Many of the PE teachers who lead these classes are familiar with exercises designed for football and not swimming.
4. If you have been in club swimming for a number of years, you may have developed some muscle imbalances that may lead to injuries in the water or on land, if the proper exercises are not done. Certain weight exercises can lead to injuries or aggravate existing injuries or muscle imbalances.

A strong age group program will gradually introduce dry land training at a young age and increase the length of time, type of exercises, and the types of equipment used in the routines, as the swimmers move up through the program. It is important to remember that in a sport such as swimming, where a child may be participating in the sport from elementary school through college, there will be plateaus in performance. Integrating and increasing dry land training over time is a proven way for coaches to help swimmers work through these plateaus. The goal of the Gold Medal Swim Club program is to help keep swimmers improving over many years so they stay motivated through college if they stay with the sport.

If a young swimmer is given maximum swim yardage and weight training, they will improve quickly and may be stronger and faster than their peers. However, early in their swim career they will be near the maximum benefit of training and will stop improving. A lack of improvement leads to a loss of motivation and ultimately may cause an athlete to quit swimming all together. A good coach will advise a swimmer as to when they should start doing weights. In most cases, actual serious weight



lifting should be saved for college swimming. If a high school junior or senior is physically developed for their age, it is possible a coach could recommend a weight program if it was organized with swimming in mind and closely supervised.

Current research has suggested that body-weight training with an emphasis on developing body/limb control, joint stability, and strength-endurance should form the basis of the training routine for children (6-12 years) and first stage youth of (12-15 years) if they have no previous resistance training experience. Much of this type of training is referred to as core training. Additional resistances can also be provided initially by elastic or rubber tubing/bands, or so called “soft” weights such as light weight medicine balls, when it is deemed appropriate according to the child’s or youth’s capabilities and training experiences. Progression to heavier and/or free-weight exercises (barbells, dumbbells, weight machines) at a later stage (e.g. 17-18 years) would then appear to be safer if the athletes are of the appropriate age, training experience and capabilities and if the program is well designed and strictly coached/supervised.

If you have questions about weights or dry land training, please speak with your coach, particularly if it is a program done outside of the Gold Medal Swim Club training time.

I have read and understand the GMSC policy regarding weight lifting policy.

Parent Signature _____