

## **THE ROCKET FISH ENVIRONMENT - Let's Do This!**

### **What can we do to make SWIMMING, THE BEST EXPERIENCE for our our team?**

The best for our kids, our parents, our families, our coaching staff? How do we best connect with our youthful swimmers? Age Group Swimming is about connecting, engaging, teaching, improving, and feeling the JOY swimming!

**We need to set up our environment** for our swimmers, coaches and families to enjoy swimming, feel welcome and included, feel the Aloha Spirit, feel free to try new things, take on challenges, sometimes succeed and sometimes fail. We all learn so much when we fail! Our team needs to be a safe-fun place to learn, thrive, succeed and fail.

**Physical Environment:** Our pool and deck need to be a place of comfort, a home at the beach, a classroom and a place to play, learn, take on challenges, struggle succeed, fail and work as a team! Having healthy snacks is on snack day is a part of this physical, supportive environment. Keeping our deck clean, keeping our gear tidy, encouraging our swimmers and parents to assist in cleaning up after practices.

**Emotional Environment:** A stable, positive, encouraging place in which we are completely engaged and connected with our swimmers. Listening, watching, helping, with a caring tone of voice and intentions of supporting and teaching each swimmer. We are the first swim team ever for so many of our swimmers. **The biggest gift we can give our novice and more experienced swimmers is the JOY OF SWIMMING.** If they feel cared about, if they enjoy their swimming experience, they will return to the pool for more swimming and incrementally progress over time. Swimming can be a sport in which they feel JOY and a forever home.

**Character-First Environment:** What do you do when no one is watching? By defining our program as a character-first team, we are setting out an expectation to our swimmers, parents, and staff that we make every effort to do things right. We are a team that is helpful, generous, kind, fair, forthright and thoughtful in each situation - at our pool, on email, at competitions and in our daily life.

**A Successful Environment:** Our progression is first learning the legal strokes and turns, then practicing them, then getting faster. At each level, the day-to-day performance standards, training standards, become more challenging and the expectations of training with integrity and excellence increase. Their default training mode needs to be kept at higher and higher levels. Example: Kids in the C group are expected and rewarded for doing proper side breathers; Kids in the B group are expected to breath every threes and the occasional no breathers; Kids in the A group are expected to do four body dolphins in a streamline off walls on their sprints. Our swimmers putting their focused efforts into meeting & surpassing their practice group expectations are very satisfying for all involved.

**A Competitive Environment:** Structuring our lanes such that they our swimmers have an opportunity to race and push each other through their natural desire to compete, and then keeping it cool with high-fives and "good race" vibes afterwards. Creatively building a healthy, competitive environment which breeds great racing. OCSC swim meets are encouraged in order to learn more about themselves and racing with the support of their teammates and friends. We like to make racing fun!

**A Love of the Ocean:** We sometimes ocean or bay practices in which we acclimate our kids into the ways of the cooler, saltier water of our nearest natural resource. We embrace the ocean, and its challenges and teach our swimmers, little by little, the ways to safely enjoy and thrive in the ocean. The treats the parents bring to our bay practices are a thoughtful reward for taking on this challenge!

**Team Traditions and Spirit:** Our team cheers & songs, our swim meets, parties, beach days and ocean events are all cool parts of our team spirit and traditions. By continuing with these great, spirited moments we build team spirit & golden memories about their experiences with Rocket Fish.

**Coaches, swimmers & parents all working together is TEAMWORK (makes the DREAMWORK!)**