

ACAC Meet Expectations and Athlete Season Goals

Athletes Goals

- ACAC Coaches expect ALL of our athletes to have an end goal in mind.
- The kids will work with their coach to figure out what are the proper goals for them. Don't be afraid to ask your child or coach what their goals are and talk it through.
- Parents should not pick their goals for their kids. There is a difference between guiding them to what would be an appropriate goal and telling them what they should be achieving. Let them set and achieve their goals. Not yours or the coaches.....
- Coach and Parent interaction towards your child's goals is vital. Ultimately you (the parent) are the expert on your child. You know them in a way we as their coaches could never know. We rely on you to help us understand your athlete and their needs (personalities, fears, habits and what they are dealing with day-to-day). The coaches are not afraid of parent interaction and encourage parents to contact us and work with us towards the end result of your child's success.

Picking Events Meets and Events

- **USE YOUR COACH TO HELP**
- The athlete needs to know what they are swimming before they get there.
- Have the athlete meet with the coach before picking events. It doesn't take long and the coach may be seeing something in workouts that the athlete has been working on and will be good to perform in a meet.
- Athletes need to try different events every meet. There may be a repeat of some events but if they do the same events all the time, time drops may become harder. Branching out into multiple races allows the athlete to be successful in every meet and potentially discover a talent they would never have known they had.... **GET THEM OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE.**
- Do not wait till the day entries are due to contact coach on event sign up. Plan ahead and get it done in advance. Your coaches often do their planning/work during the day. 135 athletes contacting the coaches the night of may not always be possible....

Week of a Meet

- Plan ahead – Don't miss excessive workouts if you can help it. This will result in resting your child in a way that may not be desired. Maintaining a normal training schedule during a meet week is desired. Your athletes are programmed to swim a certain way and on a certain schedule.
- Regular season meets – They are opportunities to swim fast and gain lifetime bests. The expectation is to always go a lifetime best. As your athlete gets older (high school age) time drops may not happen every meet, but the expectation is to show up and gain one. There is no such thing as a "PRACTICE" meet.
- Workouts the day before a meet – ACAC coaching staff is flexible on workouts the day before a meet during REGULAR season meets (STATE/Sectional/Regional are different). If you have homework or need to get ready, we understand. Generally we will focus on small stuff during that workout. The kids will not do a massive work load the day before a meet.

Pre-Meet Preparation

- Know the location
- Know the time of YOUR warm-up
- Team Suit – Not all athletes have one yet. In upcoming seasons, your athletes will be expected to purchase a team suit.
- Cap – ACAC has already started enforcing a team cap policy.
- Goggles – Make sure they are tight and functional
- Clothes – Wear ACAC apparel – If you don't have any wear team colors. Black/Orange we are a team and expect everyone to look the same. Stay warm!! If your feet are cold your body is cold already!!!
- Food/Water – Make sure you eat before a meet. Generally, some carbs are best. At the meet, light foods like bagels or fruit are best. Hydrate with water or Power/Gatorade.

Meet Warm-Up

- Warm-up is vital to your child's success. They train daily to compete and they must activate their muscles prior to their first race. If warm-up is missed, they often end up with a time not desired in their first race of the day (the first race turns into a “Warm-Up” swim)
- Have your child at the meet enough in advance that they can get ready and be behind the blocks **10 minutes prior to START of warm-up.**
- Warm-up is not a time to fix major problems an athlete might have in turns/starts/strokes. They might get something to think about but for the most part they are working with the skills they have gained in workouts.

Event Preparation and Evaluation

- Time management.
 - Giving your athlete a heads up on their upcoming race is a good practice. Managing when to go behind the blocks is something the coach will educate your athlete on.
 - Your athlete may miss a race at some point due to not paying attention or bad time management. This is not necessarily a bad thing.... They learn the hard way and generally will not do it again for some time....Allows them to own the process of race preparation and outcome....
- Athletes need to see their coach before and after every race.
 - It is important for your child to get a GAME PLAN before their race. Attempt to execute it... Then evaluate with their coach on how they did.
 - It can be difficult for an athlete to recall a race if they wait to speak to their coach after they have spoke to Mom/Dad and then coach. Feedback immediately allows the athlete to properly reflect on the race in the moment to give them some perspective to improve in workout.

Parent Role In Competition

- Help your child be more successful in a competition!
- Be supportive – Often parents like to give their kids feedback before and after a race. You have become a “Parent Coach.” This can be confusing to a child, especially if they are getting conflicting feedback from their coach and parent. Allow your child's coach to help the athlete facilitate the race and evaluate it. If you feel you don't understand the approach your athlete is taking to a race, approach the coach and get an understanding. It is our job to create smart athletes and parents.
- Conflicting information - This generally leaves an athlete confused on who to follow and forcing them to approach a race potentially in a way that leaves a coach or parent not happy...Athlete never wins.
 - The athletes generally know when a race wasn't done effectively.
- Parents need to be supportive regardless of the outcome.
 - Allow the coach to be the bad guy and give the feedback needed to the athlete on the attempted race. Ultimately, it is the coaches job to implement changes in workouts. Constructive criticism from the coach can be relayed into a workout situation later on.

Successes – Failures

- Part of life is experiencing success and failures. Allow your athlete to own these both. Don't allow excuses. There is a reason for success and failure.
- Allow your athlete to own both of them with their coach. They ultimately are looking for support from you (their parent), not more coaching. Some feedback like "you went out little sluggish or boy you attacked it" is ok.
- Your athlete knows when they have had a good or a bad swim and if they are getting coached on their less than ideal swim from coach and parent it can be too much. Be supportive and let the coach help them own the process of improving. They will be expected to when they are on their own in the real world, correct?
- The kids need to work through their swims to figure out what they need to do to attain their goals. The coach explains the process and daily workout to get to that goal. The parent should be looking to support the effort instead of constantly critiquing the effort. **LET THEM OWN** success and failures.

Team Environment

- **Your coaching staff is working to create a “Team/Family” culture.**
 - The only way this happens is if, at meets, the kids hang out and get to know each other.
 - Don't allow your athlete to sit in the stands with the parents.
 - The team's success is dependent on everyone. When your athlete's career is over they won't remember the times they swam... They will remember the friends and comradery that went into the success they all shared.....
 - Limit their access to phones and games during meets. You don't see football, soccer or baseball players playing video games and texting friends during a competition. They are invested in each others success and failures. They create their own support system. Only if they are watching though.....

Parent-Team Environment

- T-Shirt Colors
 - Friday: White
 - Saturday: Black
 - Sunday: Orange
- One of the mindsets we are presenting to the kids is that a team united under one common goal and image is one that succeeds together. Individuals may be able to a good swimmer...but to become a great swimmer you need a team of individuals behind them to help them achieve their goals. You as parents can start this trend.
- Sit together at meets...Anyone with same shirt color.
- Push the mob mentality! It's amazing how the success of one person can steam roll the success of the group. We are only as strong as our weakest athlete. We need to progress as a group and it starts in the stands.
- In workouts, I try to be loud to get energy and intensity going in the workout. We need **YOU** in the stands to create the **ENERGY!**