

Junior Group Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to another exciting year for the Junior group! If you're new to the Junior group, we're glad to have you with us; to all our returners, congratulations on your successes last season, and we can't wait to see what you do this year. With the beginning of a new season, we want to take this opportunity to define what the Junior group is, describe the expectations for the group, and explain some of the key terms we use. If you have any questions (parents or swimmers) please don't hesitate to contact Coach Jesus.

Contact Information:

Email: jsalcedo@albanyarmada.com (preferred mode of parent-coach contact for detailed communication). Swimmers writing by email must cc a parent, as per USA Swimming's MAAPPS policy.

GroupMe: Junior group chat or direct message (preferred mode of swimmer-coach contact, especially to communicate absences). Please note that current MAAPPS hours for swimmer-coach contact are from 5:00am to 9:00pm.

Description: Junior group is designed for middle-school and early high school athletes who prioritize swimming and are committed to their training and long-term goals. Junior group athletes are committed to training all four strokes disciplines, IM and distance free events; ; are fully independent in their understanding of times, paces, intervals, and meet preparation; and strive for complete ownership over their sport.

Group objectives:

- Understand and develop correct stroke biomechanics and mechanical habits
- Build an exceptional aerobic base
- Analyze splits and race strategy at an advanced level
- Dial into the mental aspect of training and race preparation, including visualization
- Learn the basics of Foundation Training and other senior dryland equipment, and memorize the warm up stretching routine
- Develop and embody the ideals and values that shape Albany Armada Aquatics

Age range: 11-14

Times per week: 5x-8x per week, depending on the season

Yardage: approximately 3000 yards per 1.5 hr practice

Qualifying times: at least one USA Swimming BB time achieved during most recent age group



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Challenge sets: 25 x 100 @base +10, 8 x 200 IM @base +5, 5 x 100 base for one non-free stroke, 20 x 100 best average, 400 Kick for time.

Requirements

Attendance: Junior Group swimmers are expected to attend 100% of available practice sessions, and at minimum 80%, including goal-setting, drylands, and Sunday mornings. This is our most important requirement, not only because each session has a purpose within the week, but also because your teammates depend on your presence to become better. A swimmer-parent-coach meeting will be initiated should a swimmer begin to accumulate high amounts of excused or unexcused absences across swimming, dryland, and goal-setting.

- **Unavoidable one-time conflicts:** If there is an unavoidable conflict with practice time, such as a school meeting or doctor's appointment, please communicate your absence and the reason why to Coach Jesus *in writing* the day before. If you will be missing a goal-setting meeting, please check in with Coach Jesus about what was covered.
- **Illness or injury:** If you are actively ill, have a fever or stomach problems, or some other infectious disease, please stay at home and send a message about your absence to Coach Jesus. If you have the sniffles, it's generally okay to come to practice (unless you suspect it to be COVID-19). If you have any injury that you feel might hinder your dryland or swimming performance, such as a twisted ankle, please communicate with Coach Jesus; it's likely we'll be able to find a substitute exercise so that you can still participate.
- **Long-term regular conflicts:** These present a serious issue to the Junior group attendance policy. If you anticipate having a long-term regular conflict for any duration of time, please have a parent set up a meeting with Coach Jesus.

Lastly, please remember that stretching is a non-negotiable part of our practice--all Juniors swimmers are expected to arrive fifteen minutes early to each session to complete the founders training stretching routine.

Individual Meetings: Periodically throughout the season, there will be mandatory individual goal-setting and video review meetings. Meeting slots will be available on Sign Up Genius, and the link to sign up will be sent out in the Junior GroupMe chat. If you need to switch the time of your meeting, please do your best to reschedule meetings no later than the night before.

Meet Participation: Junior Group swimmers are required to attend all of the practice meets and time trials we offer. When signing up for events, please check in with Coach Jesus about focus events. Note that 11-12 swimmers in Juniors are expected to sign up for 100s and 200s, not 50s and the 100 IM. All swimmers in attendance must fill out a pre-race worksheet and a post-race worksheet. The pre-race worksheet can be found in Swimmers Corner [here](#), and is due no later than the night before the meet. The post-race worksheet is available [here](#), and is due by



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Sunday at midnight the weekend after the meet. All worksheets must be titled with your name and shared via Google Docs with editing access.

If you do not fill out the pre-race worksheet, you will not be allowed to swim in the meet. If you do not fill out the post-race worksheet by the following Sunday, you will not be allowed at practice until you have filled out the worksheet.

Compliance forms: All swimmers and parents must comply with the AAA Code of Conduct at all times (swimmers linked [here](#), parents linked [here](#)). Code of Conduct breaches can result in suspension or immediate dismissal from the team.

Equipment List:

Swimmers are required to have a mesh bag with the required equipment at the pool every day. Mesh bags can be left on the hooks provided at the pool. Equipment includes:

- Mesh bag--recommended one linked [here](#)
- Fins--recommended pair linked [here](#)
- [Paddles--recommended pair linked here](#)
- [Snorkel--recommended one linked here](#)
- [Pull buoy--recommended one linked here](#)
- [Kickboard--recommended one linked here](#)
- Swim notebook/journal
- Plastic workout sheet (provided)

Swimmers are required to own the following dryland items:

- 15-20 lb kettlebell--recommended one linked [here](#)
- Lacrosse ball (provided--please order [here](#) if you did not receive one in the fall)

Please order all gear from the team store when possible. If you do not have the required gear, please order any missing items as soon as possible. If that is not feasible for your family, please communicate with the coaches and we will figure out a way to get you the missing gear. If a swimmer is consistently coming to practice without the required gear, a swimmer-parent-coach meeting will be called to understand the issue.

Junior Group Glossary

Acronyms:

BP: Body position, usually body position kick. Body position kick for fly is head down, hands in 11-position; side-kick for backstroke, working on pressing the shoulders into the water; head down, hands at side for breaststroke; and side-kick for freestyle, working on pressing the chest down.

CH: Stands for choice, i.e., 200 ch(oice).

DK: Stands for dolphin kicks.



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DPS: Stands for distance per stroke. The least amount of strokes you can do per lap without having an abnormal kick pattern.

EVF: Stands for early vertical forearm. The initial catch phase of every stroke where the shoulder, lat, and bicep muscles are activated and the elbow pops up, allowing the forearm and the hand to get into a 90 degree position to push water behind you.

FPSO: Stands for fastest possible send-off, referring to your fastest possible interval for 5 x 100s. FPSO + 5 is your fastest possible interval plus 5 seconds per 100, and FPSO + 10 is your fastest possible interval plus 10 seconds per 100. See chart on page 8.

HR: Stands for heart rate. You get your heart rate by counting the beats of your pulse for 6 seconds and multiplying by 10. Start by counting the first beat as 0.

Primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary: Neutral words used in place of calling strokes “best” or “worst.” Not placing value judgments on your strokes allows you to have an open mind about working on less intuitive strokes.

NFR: Stands for non-free.

RIMO/IMO: Stands for reverse IM order (RIMO) or IM order (IMO).

SC: Stands for stroke count, the number of strokes you take in one lap.

SKDS: Stands for scull, kick, drill, swim.

Terms:

Catch: The pull; the part of the pull that happens against the water.

Championship finish: Four-step finish. 1) No breath from the flags into the wall. 2) Finish deep, don't gutter grab. 3) Extend into the wall. 4) Kick hard.

Crossover kick: The kick in freestyle and backstroke that occurs at the same time the hand is pulling. In freestyle, the left arm is pulling while the right leg is kicking, and vice versa, which creates a crossbody connection. In backstroke, the left arm is pulling while the left leg is kicking, and vice versa.

Decompression: Opening up the ribcage--moving the ribs away from the pelvis--to take a breath that allows you to engage more of your core.

Engage/activate/turn on: Synonyms for flexing muscles, i.e., engage your core, activate your legs, etc.

Foot touch: Finishing with a turn instead of with your hands. All race pace work is done to a foot touch.

Foundation Training/FT: Our mobility and strength training program that trains your posterior chain muscles, specifically your shoulders, back, butt, and legs, to shift the burden of supporting your body to where that burden belongs: the large posterior chain muscle groups. Foundation Training teaches all those muscles to work together through specific full body movements and breathing patterns. Every exercise in Foundation Training is designed to add as many muscles into a given movement as possible, disperse more force throughout



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your body, and take friction away from your joints by placing that tension into the proper core muscles instead.

Gear-shifting: Changing speeds at different points in a set, distance, or race. You gear-shift by rotating faster in freestyle in backstroke, initiating your roll sooner in fly, and lifting your heels quicker in breaststroke. You can also accelerate into the wall to use the turn to gear-shift.

Negative split: Last half of your race is faster than the first. Even split means both halves of your race were the same time.

Progressive scull: Little sculls that outline the shape of the catch underneath the water. Can be done for any stroke. Takes about 12-20 sculls to outline the catch.

Race pace: Your goal splits for any distance, usually expressed as a 50 or 100 time.

Recovery: The part of the arm phase that happens outside the water.

Splits: The pace it takes to go your goal time in any given race. Splits can be any distance--25s, 50s, 100s, 500s.

Drill Index

Butterfly

Body position kick: Hands in 11 position. Kick in the roll-snap rhythm.

Underwater recovery: Start with hands in 11 position. Chest press, then catch with the hands and snap the feet. Hands slide under the water back into 11 position.

Flutterbutter: Flutter kick with butterfly arms. Work soft landing with hands and X-shaped pull pattern.

1-arm: One arm at side, one arm straight out in front. Chest press, then pull with front arm, snap legs, and recover. Use arm at side to get the chest deep during the press; having both arms in front makes the chest press more shallowly.

2-2-2: Two right arm strokes, two left arm strokes, two full strokes. Notice if the connection point of the pull & snap breaks down during the arm-switching.

Backstroke

Rotation kick: Hands at side. Five kicks on side and then a crossover kick. Use the crossover kick to initiate the turn of hips and shoulders. Shoulder should finish underneath chin. Don't forget to engage core.

2-beat/4-beat kick/6-beat kick: 2-beat kick is one kick per arm stroke. 4-beat kick is two kicks per arm stroke, with kicks 1 & 2 coming from one leg and kicks 3 & 4 coming from the other leg.

6-beat kick is three kicks per arm stroke, alternating one kick from each leg. If you're doing 2-beat, both kicks will be crossover kicks; in 4-beat, kicks #2 and #4 are the crossover kicks; in 6-beat, kicks #3 & #6 are the crossover kicks.



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1-arm: Start in side position. Lift and pull with one arm, making sure to connect the finish of the catch and the crossover kick. One shoulder should come out of the water as you begin the catch, and then the other shoulder should come out of the water as you finish the catch.

Backstroke w/ a dolphin kick: Works on connecting the hand and the foot and establishing tempo.

Kickboard drill: Kickboard between legs. Touch the part of the board that's underneath the water as you finish the catch. Make sure you are rotating your hips and shoulders.

Teacup drill: Recover with your fingers making the "ok" sign, as though you're holding a cup of tea with three fingers out. Land with pinky in the water first, rotate shoulder up to chin.

Breaststroke

Separation breaststroke: Arms pull while the legs stay straight and together, then legs kick while the arms and head remain in a "shoot position."

Breaststroke w/ a dolphin kick: Works on getting chest to press after shoot, and hips to come in towards the hands during stocks position and then out of the water after shoot.

2-kick breaststroke: Done with two breaststroke kicks or one dolphin + one breaststroke. First variation works on a streamlined shoot position, second works on establishing hip movement.

Casting drill: Start in shoot position. Move hands up over the water toward head, then slam them through the water as hard as you can, trying to use the momentum to get the hips out of the water.

Breaststroke pull on a kickboard: Works stocks position and EVF.

Breaststroke w/ a flutter kick: Six kicks in the shoot position, six kicks through the outswEEP position, and six total kicks through the catch and shoot. Works the fast shoot.

Freestyle

2-beat/4-beat/6-beat kick: see same entry for backstroke.

Kickboard drill: Kickboard between legs. As one hand enters the water, the other finishes the stroke and then taps the part of the kickboard that's above the water.

Fingertip drag: Drag fingertips along the surface of the water during the recovery, keeping elbow pointed to sky.

10-count freestyle: Start in side position. Two counts with elbow slightly lifted out of water; move elbow between side and head and hold for two counts; move elbow directly over head and hold for two counts; move elbow in front of head and hold for two counts; then allow hand to enter the water and pull with the opposite arm.

6-kick switch: Start in side position and kick six times. Seventh kick is a crossover kick and a stroke.

Pendulum drill: Move elbow directly above head, then bring the hand back towards side without moving the elbow. Then move the hand back out in front of the elbow and enter the water.



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Training Keys

Endurance/Sprint Training Levels Guide				
Abbreviation	EN1 = Endurance Level 1	EN2 = Endurance Level 2	EN3 = Endurance Level 3	SP1 = Sprint Level 1 SP3** = Sprint Level 3
Color in season plan*	EN1: White & Pink	EN2: Red	EN3 = Blue	SP1/3 = Green
Relation to threshold speed	2-4 secs slower per 100 than threshold	anaerobic threshold or max effort over distance	1-2 secs per 100 faster than threshold pace	SP1 = as fast as possible SP3 = maximum explosive speed
Maximum duration and yardage of pace	50 mins or more, 5000 yds	30-40 mins, 4000 yds	20-30 mins, 2000 yds OR 8-10 mins, 500 yds	SP1 = 5 mins, 600 yds SP3 = 10 mins, 200 yds
Rep distance	50 & up	50 & up	50/100/150/200	SP1 = 25-50 yards SP3 = 10-25m (10-20 reps)
Rest between reps	:10-:20 secs	:10-:20 secs	:15-:30 secs OR :05-:15 secs OR :30-:90 secs	SP1 = 1:00-2:00 mins SP3 = :30-60 secs
Heart rate	120-150	160-170	180-190	SP1 = 190-200 SP3 = 160-170

*Only describes the level of the main set, not the entire practice.

Breakdown by week					
Monday pm:	Tuesday pm:	Wednesday pm:	Thursday pm:	Friday pm:	Sunday am:
<i>Introduce concept Aerobic/anaerobic threshold Pull day</i>	<i>Kick day</i>	<i>Challenge set</i>	<i>Jrs recovery (Mechanical focus, pull)</i>	<i>Sprint day Kick day</i>	<i>Aerobic/anaerobic threshold</i>

Breakdown by cycle			
3-week cycle 1	3-week cycle 2	3-week cycle 3	Taper week
50% recovery or EN1 35% EN2 15% EN3/SP1	50% EN1/2 35% EN3 15% SP1	50% EN3 35% SP1 15% EN1/EN2	85% EN3/SP1 15% EN1/EN2



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Links & Literature

Important links:

albanyarmada.com. The team website. Use the AAA Schedule tab to see the practice schedule; use the Events & Calendar to find out more information about meets or team events, including meet sheets and job sign ups.

web.groupme.com. GroupMe chat for Junior group. All urgent communication passes through there first. Ask Jesus to be added to the chat.

[Swimmer's Corner](#). Shared Google Drive where the pre-race, post-race, and goal-setting worksheets live. Meet and practice results are also there, as are meet and time qualifying standards. Swimmer's Corner is organized by year (i.e., 2021-2022) and then by season (Fall 2021). Ask Jesus to be added to the GDrive.

[USA Swimming Individual Times Search](#): Search engine that pulls up all the times you've ever swum at sanctioned meets. Click "Show only fastest by event" in search tool to show only your best times ever.

[PacSwim.org](#): Great resource for seeing news from the LSC, as well as top times and time standards.

Recommended reading, if you're interested:

Four Champions, One Gold Medal by Chuck Warner: The best book about distance swimming ever.

Swimming to Antarctica by Lynne Cox: One of the most accomplished female open water swimmers of all time. If you think the Albany pool is cold, read this.

Young Woman and the Sea by Glenn Stout: Inspiring story about the first woman to swim the English Channel while setting both women's and men's records in the process.

Why We Swim by Armada parent Bonnie Tsui: A bigger picture look at what the water can be for us beyond goals and times.

The Inner Game of Tennis by Timothy Gallwey: How-to guide to being nonjudgmental about your performance, which unlocks your brain's ability to learn and grow.

Mindset by Carol Dweck: Growth mindset bible.



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Junior Group

Expectations Agreements

For Coaches

1. We will be prepared for practice. We will be on time and have a thoughtfully prepared workout for you each day. We will be mentally present, excited to share and learn with you all, and actively search for opportunities to help you improve.
2. Using your thoughts and experiences as our guide, we will provide individualized feedback.
3. We will listen to you with an open mind to understand the whole picture, and be committed to finding solutions to help us move forward.
4. We will strive to find ways to connect the group and create a fun, positive environment for all swimmers.
5. We will work with you as a partner to achieve your competitive swimming goals and support you in any way you need outside of the pool.

For Athletes

1. You will be physically prepared for practice. You will be on time, with all your equipment and a fueled body; and you will have done your best to recover from previous practices. You will have stretched prior to entering the water.
2. You will be mentally prepared for practice. You will be prepared to give your best effort and learn no matter what.
3. You will actively communicate with us about absences, how training is going, and if we do or say something that you feel isn't benefiting you.
4. You will be a supportive teammate to each and every person on Armada, and understand that being the best teammate you can be makes the whole team better, including yourself.
5. You will receive feedback from us *and yourself*, and do your best to have a growth mindset by understanding that each day is a new chance to learn and be better than the day before.

Please detach the following page from your packet and return to Jesus. If you have questions or concerns about the document as a whole, please reach out to me individually.

By signing here, you are indicating that you have read the 2023-2024 Junior Group Handbook and understood the expectations for Junior Group.

Coach's Name (printed)

Jesus Salcedo

Coach's Signature:

Jesus Salcedo

Date:

08/23/2023

Swimmer's Name (printed):

Swimmer's Signature:

Date:

Parent's Name (printed):

Parent's Signature:

Date:

**Please sign, detach this last page of the handbook, and return to Coach Jesus on Monday, October 1, 2023*



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