

Yellow Group Handbook



Hello, Yellow Group Swimmers!

We're excited to kick off another fantastic season full of hard work, fun, and growth!

- A big welcome to our newest Yellow Group members.
- A warm welcome back to all of our returning swimmers.

We're thrilled to have each of you with us!

This handbook is here to help you understand what the Yellow Group is all about, what we'll be working toward this season, and to provide both swimmers and parents with important information.

If you have any questions, please reach out to **Coach Brandon James**.

Contact Information

- **Yellow Group Lead Coach:** Brandon James – bjames@albanyarmada.com

What is the Yellow Group?

The Yellow Group is designed for upper elementary and middle school athletes (ages 9–13) who already have a solid foundation in stroke technique and racing skills. Training emphasizes refining stroke mechanics, building endurance, learning about training cycles, and applying these skills in races.

Our ultimate goal is to help you grow as swimmers while enjoying the fun, teamwork, and rewards that come with training and competing together!

Group Objectives:

- Master detailed stroke techniques and build strong mechanical habits
- Build a solid endurance base through moderate volume training
- Learn how to analyze splits and develop race strategies
- Begin to understand the mental aspect of swimming, including race visualization and preparation
- Develop body awareness and practice basic strength training, applying these skills to swimming
- Embrace and live out the core values of Albany Armada Aquatics



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Practice Overview:

- **Age Range:** 9-13
 - **Swim Practice:** 5 times per week
 - **Dryland Training:** 1 time per week
 - **Goal Setting:** 1 time per week
 - **Practice Duration:** 1 hour 15 minutes
 - **Yardage:** Approximately 2000-3000 yards per practice
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Requirements

Attendance:

- Yellow Group swimmers are expected to attend at least 60% of the available practice sessions (3 out of 5 per week), including goal-setting and dryland sessions.
- If you want to move up to the Junior Group, it's recommended to attend all available practices (100% attendance).
- If you're missing practices for any reason, please communicate with Coach Brandon, especially if it's due to illness, injury, or long-term conflicts.

Communication:

- If you need to miss a practice (due to a school event, doctor's appointment, etc.), please email Coach Brandon in advance.
 - Feeling sick? If you're not feeling well or have an injury, let Coach Brandon know, and we'll work together to adjust your training accordingly.
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Meet Participation:

Yellow Group swimmers are required to participate in all practice meets and time trials. For race events, swimmers aged 11-14 should be competing in 100s and 200s, not just 50s and the 100 IM. Coach Brandon will help you choose your focus events for each meet.

Before and after each race, all swimmers need to fill out pre-race and post-race worksheets.

- Be sure to purchase a **team suit**! We'd like all swimmers in a **team suit** for all Armada swim meets.

Equipment List:



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You'll need the following gear for every practice. Since there is limited storage on deck, please bring your equipment with you to and from practice each day.

- **Fins**
- **Kickboard**
- **Snorkel**
- **Pull Buoy**
- **Water Bottle!**
- **Swim Folder or Binder** (for goal-setting documents)

If you don't have all the required gear, let Coach Brandon know, and we'll work together to make sure you're set up for success!

Yellow Group Glossary

Here are some key terms that will help you understand the drills and techniques we'll be practicing:

- **Catch:** The part of the stroke where your hand grabs the water and pulls you forward.
- **Championship Finish:** No breath from the flags to the wall, finish deep, kick hard, and reach for the wall!
- **Decompression:** Expanding your ribcage to take a big breath and engage your core.
- **Early Vertical Forearm (EVF):** The key part of each stroke where you catch the water early by popping your elbow up.
- **Gear-Shifting:** Changing your speed at different points in a race or set to push yourself to the next level!
- **Negative Split:** Swimming the second half of your race faster than the first.
- **Race Pace:** Your goal speed for each distance.
- **Recovery:** The time outside the pool that you use to take care of your body (rest, hydration, stretching).
- **Sculling:** Using small hand movements to find the best catch position in the water.

Drill Index

Butterfly:

- **Body Position Kick:** Focus on keeping your hands in the "11" position while practicing the roll-snap kick rhythm.
- **Underwater Recovery:** Focus on pressing your chest and snapping your feet back to the 11 position after each pull.

Backstroke:



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- **Rotation Kick:** Rotate your body with each stroke and use your kick to help with that rotation.
- **Teacup Drill:** Focus on having good technique during the backstroke recovery by imagining you're holding a cup of tea!

Breaststroke Drills:

- **Separation Breaststroke:** Pull with arms while keeping legs straight, then kick with legs while holding the arms in the "shoot position."
- **Double Kick Breaststroke:** Glide after a full stroke, then add an extra kick before the next stroke. This drill emphasizes power and propulsion.
- **Breaststroke with Dolphin Kick:** Focuses on chest pressing and proper hip movement.

Freestyle Drills:

- **Fingertip Drag:** Drag fingertips along the water during recovery while keeping your elbow pointed upward.
- **10-Count Freestyle:** Break the arm stroke into segments with short pauses, focusing on technique and control.
- **6-Kick Switch:** Kick six times in the side position, then perform a crossover kick to switch sides.

Yellow Group: Expectations Agreement

For Coaches:

We will always come to practice prepared, excited, and ready to help you grow. We will provide you with fun, challenging workouts and give feedback that helps you become the best swimmer you can be. We're here to listen, support, and celebrate your progress every step of the way.

For Athletes:

You will come to practice ready to work hard, have fun, and be a supportive teammate. You'll communicate openly about your training, be prepared with the right gear, and give your best effort every day. Remember, each day is a new chance to learn something new and improve!



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