



## Discover – Challenge - Achieve

### **Our Program**

Cascade's program is designed for an athlete's LONG TERM development, taking swimmers from novice to national as they progress through the three comprehensive phases: DISCOVER, CHALLENGE and ACHIEVE. Teaching and training is IM-based, emphasizing all competitive strokes and distances. Our goal is to develop well-rounded "versatile" athletes with abundant aerobic capacity. At every level, the more an athlete attends practices and meets, the greater the benefit and enjoyment an athlete receives.

### **Training Groups**

Cascade trains in groups structured to ensure that all our athletes make optimal use of their time training with their peers—both in terms of age and ability. Under the direction of the head coach with input from our site lead coaches, group placement is based on what is best for each individual athlete in order to provide proper development and to ensure long term success in the water.

Groups help define what is expected of each swimmer at various levels of their development within our program. Groups provide structure and order to training sessions, they are not meant to be viewed as a benchmark on progress or level of skill. Time spent in a group varies by athlete and their level of commitment. The focus of every group is to develop and challenge each individual athlete, helping them to improve and grow a deeper commitment to the TEAM and our sport.

Not all groups practice at all sites and groups may need to be moved, modified and/or discontinued during the course of a season as determined by our coaching staff. Groups may fill up and close out to new swimmers as needed to maintain a productive and safe training environment. Adjustments to groups may be made at any time to meet the needs of a site and/or in the best interest of the team.

Water time is extremely limited at all our sites and pool closures are occasionally scheduled which may require coaches to shuffle groups and share lanes at our other sites. Cascade members are expected to maintain a positive outlook and to do their part to help out the team during times of unavoidable hardship affecting any of our sites.

### **Group Placements**

Group placements are traditionally done in September at the start of our new swim year and in March after short course season ends; however, coaches may move swimmers from group-to-group as needed.

In general, the criteria for advancing in groups involves the following key considerations:

**TECHNICAL.** Technical aspects are weighed heavily when considering all moves, consistent repetition of healthy habits and good technique is vital for proper development. Swimmers must demonstrate a sustained commitment and effort to improving all their strokes in every group. This includes when tired and during challenging sets. Coaches monitor focus levels and genuine desire to improve and get faster.



**PERFORMANCE.** The racing performances of athletes in competition help provide coaches valuable feedback to track overall progress most accurately. Coaches track times and time improvements from meet-to-meet, season-to-season, measuring against age group time standards set by USA Swimming and other local, regional and national qualifier competitions. Participating in swim meets is essential in evaluating a swimmer's progress and readiness for any particular group.

**TRAINING.** Coaches monitor how well an athlete performs day-to-day in workouts, frequently assessing their ability to meet the training demands, in terms of intervals, yardage, intensity, pace and skill development while remaining injury-free. Coaches evaluate failure rates to ensure each athlete is appropriately challenged by the demands of the group. Swimmers are expected to advance from the back of the lane to becoming lane leaders, understanding time spent in each role has important value. Coaches assess the level of positivity and enthusiasm an athlete brings to practice day in and day out.

**COMMITMENT.** Most important, coaches expect each athlete to commit to a consistent swimming schedule that matches group expectations in order to show improvement and perform their best for the TEAM at our championship meets. As swimmers progress within our program, their level of commitment is expected to grow and become more accountable. Coaches also gauge the personal desire to participate and improve in the sport without any undue pressure from a parent or guardian.

While coaches consider these core components when considering group placement and moves, there will be times when it is simply in the best interest of the individual athlete and the team to make a move based on other factors. When working to move up, each athlete should strive to be placed in the middle of the next group rather than just achieving the minimum standards. We want athletes to thrive in their new group, not just survive.

**INJURY FREE.** All swimmers are expected to seek restorative treatment and physical therapy for any ailments that prevent them from proper training. Swimmers with chronic injuries may be held back or removed from a group until they are able to meet the demands and expectations of their current group.

At all times, it is for the coaches to decide when a swimmer is ready to advance or needs more work.

Parents and swimmers are expected to trust the process and to support the decisions made by our staff. Communication is key with the understanding parent/coach communication will evolve to athlete/coach communication as a swimmer advances in our program. Swimmers are expected to take ownership of their swimming over the course of their swimming careers.

*Focus, effort, positive attitude, passion to succeed, integrity, good sportsmanship, exemplary attendance at meets and practices, setting goals, caring about nutrition, proper hydration, rest & recovery, being respectful of coaches, parents and teammates while being the best teammate possible are all essential ingredients to long term success in our program.*



# Intro

*Intro is our introductory group for our youngest beginners who have advanced BEYOND SWIM LESSONS and are ready to learn the fundamentals of competitive swimming. Swimmers joining Intro must know how to swim already. The swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards of proficient freestyle (front crawl stroke) and backstroke. Additionally, they must demonstrate they are comfortable and safe in the water on their own at both ends of the pool.*

The goal of Intro is to help transition swimmers from lessons to competitive swimming. Coaches set the building blocks of our program and prepare Intro swimmers for TRAINING in the Red Group. Intro swimmers learn important fundamentals for the four legal competitive strokes with a focus on breaststroke and how to train in a fun and safe environment.

**Attendance Expectations:** *There are no attendance expectations for Intro.*

**Competition Expectations:** *There are no competition expectations for Intro; however, swimmers are encouraged to attend Cascade hosted meets with coach approval.*

## **Athlete Expectations**

- Must know how to swim legal freestyle with side breathing (front crawl stroke) and backstroke proficiently
- Focus and commitment to skill acquisition
- Take direction from the coach

## **Group Focus Points**

- FUNdamentals, kicking, streamlining, flipping

## **Group Goals**

- 25 yards/meters of proficient freestyle
- 25 yards/meters of proficient backstroke
- 25 yards/meters of legal and proficient breaststroke

## **Recommended Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins are strongly recommended



# Red

*Red group is for novice swimmers 12&under who have moved beyond Intro skillsets and are ready to become more proficient in all four strokes.*

Red group emphasizes refinement of all four competitive strokes so swimmers become legal and proficient in each with an introduction to more complex drills and extended sets. Red group stresses kicking sets to build up important leg strength. Introductory racing skills are established for all strokes, including learning flip turns and racing starts. Red group goals include transferring technique into conditioning and early development training. Progress in this group is measured by proper technique, improvements of skill and coachability. Red group fosters a love of the sport and introduces swimmers to USA Swimming competitions.

***Attendance Expectations:*** *There are no practice expectations for Red; however, swimmers are encouraged to average 50% practice attendance on a weekly basis.*

***Competition Expectations:*** *There are no competition expectations for Red; however, swimmers are encouraged to attend Cascade hosted meets as deemed ready by the coach.*

## ***Athlete Expectations***

- Ability to demonstrate all four competitive strokes (legally)
- Focus and commitment to skill acquisition
- Be able to complete 1000 yards per workout in productive fashion
- Bring required equipment to every practice
- Compete at meets in all four strokes and 100 yard IM

## ***Group Focus Points***

- Technique, stroke drills, kicking, racing concepts, intro to aerobic sets

## ***Group Goals***

- Legal 200IM
- Be able to complete 10 x 50's @ 1:00

## ***Recommended Equipment***

- Kick Board
- Fins



# Navy

*Navy group is for swimmers who have advanced beyond Red group and are 12 or younger.*

The emphasis of Navy group is to get swimmers more excited about racing and team spirit. Technique and conditioning continue to be the focus, with increased pacing and volume. Racing skills will be refined with an emphasis on speed. Underwater development continues with a focus on fast underwater streamline dolphin kicking. Navy group swimmers learn to use the pace clock for longer sets and how to train at different intervals.

**Attendance Expectations:** *There is a minimum expectation of at least 50% practice attendance on a weekly basis; understanding, the more the athlete attends, the more improvement they will see.*

**Competition Expectations:** *Navy swimmers are expected to compete in a minimum of two meets a season. In addition, any swimmer who qualifies for a PNS Championship meet is expected to compete FOR THE TEAM.*

## **Athlete Expectations**

- Be able to complete 2,000 yards per workout in productive fashion
- Excitement about working toward qualifying time standards
- Compete in 200 yard freestyle, 200 yard IM and 100 yard events for all four strokes

## **Group Focus Points**

- Increased intensity and quantity of training
- Accept and incorporate coach's race strategies
- Increased participation in home and away meets
- Set goals to qualify for championship meets
- Begin developing responsibility for their own swimming (i.e., checking heat and lane assignments without parent assistance)
- Begin to use pace clock and interval training
- Demonstrate good team sportsmanship

## **Group Goals**

- 11-12 year old 'B' times standards or faster
- Be able to swim 10 x 100's @ 1:45

## **Recommended Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Paddles



# Junior

*Junior group is for swimmers who have advanced beyond Navy group and are ages 10 to 14 in 8th grade or under.*

Junior group introduces increased aerobic conditioning with sets of longer distances and durations. Swimmers of this group will focus on developing the strength in their strokes to allow them to become more efficient swimmers and capable of swimming longer distances. Stroke technique with added strength are the key ingredients that will make the difference in the development of these swimmers.

***Attendance Expectations:*** *There is a minimum expectation of 75% practice attendance on a weekly basis; understanding, as the athlete ages and grows attending practice becomes more critical.*

***Competition Expectations:*** *Junior swimmers are expected to compete in a minimum of 75% Cascade hosted meets and 25% away meets. In addition, any swimmer who qualifies for a PNS Championship meet is expected to compete FOR THE TEAM.*

## ***Athlete Expectations***

- Increased commitment and focus to achieving goals
- Be able to complete 3,000 yards per workout in productive fashion
- Continued excitement about working toward qualifying time standards

## ***Group Focus Points***

- Increase quality and quantity of training
- Goal setting and knowledge of time standards/personal bests
- Continued progress in performing stroke technique, drills and turns
- Ability to use pace clock without assistance
- Demonstrate good team sportsmanship

## ***Group Goals***

- 'A' time standards or faster
- Be able to swim 10 x 100's @ 1:20

## ***Required Equipment***

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Paddles
- Snorkel



# Junior Performance

*Junior Performance group is for Juniors ages 11-14 in 8th grade or under who have demonstrated a passion and commitment to year-round swimming as their number one sport of choice and who have achieved notable success in the water, i.e., qualifying for PNS Champs and higher-level meets.*

Junior Performance swimmers are our most committed and accomplished age groupers. Swimmers train for qualifying meets and take pride in scoring points for the TEAM as they implement advanced racing strategies. They have a strong grasp on stroke technique and are ready for more challenging aerobic sets. Workouts include an increase in complexity and density with extra opportunities to train, including practices with the head coach in preparation for Senior success.

**Attendance Expectations:** *There is a minimum expectation of 90-100% practice attendance on a weekly basis and swimmers may be expected to make up missed practices as required by their coach.*

**Competition Expectations:** *Junior Performance swimmers are expected to compete as much as possible, regularly competing in home and travel meets. Any swimmer who qualifies for a PNS Championship meet is expected to compete FOR THE TEAM. In addition, swimmers are expected to compete at Regionals, Sectionals, Zones, Futures, Juniors and above as qualified and required by the head coach.*

## **Athlete Expectations**

- Commit to year-round training program (including all holidays and summers)
- Demonstrate personal responsibility and good sportsmanship
  - Properly prioritizes activities with improved time management skills
  - Communicates with coach about missed practices, illness, injury, etc.
  - Takes full responsibility at meets without parent assistance
  - Is a good sport when winning or losing
  - Keeps up with schoolwork without sacrificing training

## **Group Focus Points**

- More demanding training and meet schedules
- Going for A finals at champs meets
- Exemplary team spirit and support
- Incorporating coach's racing strategies

## **Group Goals**

- 'AAA' time standards
- Swim in A finals at championship meets

## **Required Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Paddles
- Snorkel



# Senior

*Senior group is for high-school aged swimmers ready for Senior-level training who are prepared to make a serious commitment to the sport and the TEAM. Swimmers must be disciplined and dedicated to working towards peak performance at PNS Championship meets and higher.*

Seniors understand the importance of hard work and dedication as they take full responsibility of their swimming. Seniors seek to improve stroke efficiency and aerobic capacity, increasing their range of abilities across all strokes and distances. Seniors develop an excellent grasp of race splitting, pace training and are ready to race their best when called upon. Seniors learn to take great care of their minds and bodies and are expected to train with purpose, adhering to good nutritional and recovery habits while maintaining a positive attitude and disciplined work ethic.

**Attendance Expectations:** *There is a minimum expectation of 80-90% practice attendance on a weekly basis and swimmers are expected to make up missed practices if possible.*

**Competition Expectations:** *Senior swimmers are expected to compete at meets on a regular basis. Any swimmer who qualifies for a PNS Championship meet is expected to compete FOR THE TEAM. In addition, swimmers are expected to compete at Regionals, Sectionals and above as qualified and required by the head coach.*

## **Athlete Expectations**

- Commit to year-round Senior training (including all holidays and summers)
- Identifying tangible goals with focus on taking their swimming to the next level
- To remain injury free, utilizing proper rest and recovery strategies implemented by the coach
- Self-discipline and personal responsibility managing activities, social life and schoolwork
- Communication directly with Coach
- Positive TEAM leaders on the pool and on deck

## **Group Focus Points**

- Increased commitment to training and TEAM
- Set and achieve higher goals and time standards
- Exemplary team participation and support
- Accept and incorporate coach's advanced racing strategies

## **Group Goals**

- Senior Zones times
- Swim in A finals at championship meets

## **Required Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Paddles
- Snorkel





# Senior Performance

*Senior Performance is for high-school aged swimmers who have demonstrated a deep passion and commitment to year-round swimming as their number one sport of choice and who have achieved notable success in the water, i.e., qualifying for PNS Champs meets and higher-level competitions.*

Senior Performance comprises of our most seasoned and advanced swimmers. The dedication, work ethic, time management and goal setting skills required in this group will help swimmers succeed throughout their lives. Senior Performance swimmers are expected to take everything to the next level as they continue to learn the importance of hard work and dedication. Senior Performance swimmers take pride in scoring the most points possible for the TEAM at champs meets and are intensely driven to reach “National” level swimming as they achieve their goals.

**Attendance Expectations:** *There is a minimum expectation of 90-100% practice attendance on a weekly basis and swimmers are expected to make every effort to make up all missed practices.*

**Competition Expectations:** *Senior Performance swimmers are expected to compete as much as possible, regularly competing in home and travel meets. Any swimmer who qualifies for a PNS Championship meet is expected to compete FOR THE TEAM. In addition, swimmers are expected to compete at Regional and National meets as qualified and required by the head coach.*

## **Athlete Expectations**

- Maximum output and dedication
- Advanced pace training, variation of focused training intensities and modalities,
- Dedicated to taking care of mind and body 24/7
- Continued Personal Responsibility – managing outside activities, social life and schoolwork
- Communication directly with Coach
- Role model leaders of the team
- Exemplify sportsmanship in every aspect

## **Group Focus Points**

- Advanced training including “two-a-days” as scheduled
- Continued stroke technique improvement and increased efficiency in strokes
- Chasing and achieving higher qualifying times

## **Group Goals**

- Futures/Sectionals times

## **Required Equipment**

- Kick Board
- Fins
- Pull Buoy
- Paddles
- Snorkel
- Parachute