

**New Parents Meeting  
May 11, 2011**

**"Cultivating Excellence in Academics, Character & Swimming"**

I                    **The team is named Elite. Swimmers know that Elite means best of the best.**

I attend the 1st practice of each training session, and I explain that MY definition of Elite Swimming includes: 1) Academics 2) Character and then 3) Swimming. I expect swimmers on Elite to try to be the best of the best in all three areas in their lives: 24 hours a day/7 days a week/52 weeks a year.

Academics: Elite's highest award, presented at the annual awards dinner, is the Scholar/Athlete Award. There are 4 different levels:

- 1) USA Swimming's Scholastic All-American Award (Elite has had 3 different swimmers win this award in the last 4 years-one was a three time winner)
- 2) Elite's Platinum Award. Qualification: All A's and 1 B; 1 Sectional Qualifying time (Regional Meet from Maine thru Virginia). Elite had 5 Platinum Award Winners this year
- 3) Elite's Gold Award: All A's and 1 B; 1 Junior Olympic Qualifying time (NJ Swimming's highest competition level). Elite had 31 Gold Award Winners this year
- 4) Elite's Teal Award: All A's and B's; 1 Silver Qualifying time (NJ Swimming's 2nd highest competition level). Elite had 35 Teal Award Winners this year

College:

Graduating Swimmers from Elite are attending: Harvard, Princeton, Connecticut College, Bryant University-swimming scholarship, Colby, Stevens, Brandeis, Villanova & Bowdoin

Character: At the 1st practice, we read as a training group Elite's Code of Conduct. I explain that this Code of Conduct is a swimmer's ticket into Elite; if they can not sign it and try to live up to it, they are not welcome at Elite. The Code calls for high standards of behaviour, for a high standard of cooperation when there is an issue & a high standard of respect for our fellow swimmers and our facilities.

At practice, swimmers are expected to follow directions; this is crucial training as at the higher levels of competition, swimmers travel as a team. Last year, Elite swimmers traveled to: Irvine-California, Buffalo-NY (twice), Atlanta-Ga, Tempe-Az, Wash-DC, Rochester-NY. In the past, I have traveled to Great Britain (twice) with a swimmer and I hope this summer to travel to Montreal Canada-as we have a Canadian Swimmer who hopefully will qualify for Canadian Nationals shortly.

I know, literally, I know our swimmers will behave properly on these trips because of the way they behave at practice and at meets. If they follow directions, they will do fine-they will stay in their rooms when we put them there, they will remain on the hotel floor because we have told them to, etc.

Swimming: Out of 60 NJ Swimming Clubs (year round swimming clubs associated with USA Swimming, Elite has placed in the top 10 on a regular basis in the last 5 years at both Winter & Spring Junior Olympics. This past spring, we placed 6th. We had a Sr. National qualifier, 8 individuals qualify for Sectionals in 41 events (previous high was 7 & 31) & at Sectionals, one of our swimmers placed 4th twice. We 50 swimmers qualify for 288 events (our highs are

61 swimmers qualifying in 354 events). Thus, we are a highly competitive swim program and our aim is to improve our swimmers past these numbers. We have developed faster than most clubs in NJ in an environment of very fast development within NJ Swimming.

How do we do what we do?

- 1) Attendance: While there is no attendance policy, a swimmer can come and go as they please, we highly encourage high attendance. We tie attendance to promotion (you are only considered for promotion into the next higher training group if you have 75% attendance during a training cycle).
- 2) Training Competition: swimmers in all training groups except Marlin Teals perform a timed swim. Based on the timed swim, swimmers are placed in the training lane where they placed on the time swim (if 6 swimmers in a lane & 6 lanes, fastest 5-6 in lane 1, next 6 fastest in lane 2, etc.). From there, if a swimmer trains at a higher level than their lane (over a period of time such as 2 weeks), they are moved to a higher lane. If they train at a lower level, they are moved down. Each Swimmer is highly encouraged to train at the highest level of they can.
- 3) Stroke Technique: virtually every practice, one of the two coaches-known as the Stroke Technician- reviews stroke technique with a lane of swimmers. If things go well, the Stroke Technician reviews 2-4 lanes each practice. All strokes, starts, turns and underwater work is reviewed. Obviously, with the Spring Session being about 1/2 of the Winter Training Cycle, we do not get as far. Since we employ technique review on a regular basis club wide, our swimmers are expected to have better stroke technique than other swimmers. Please note that the Stroke Technician does not "fix" a swimmer's stroke; only the swimmer can fix their stroke; the Stroke Technician provides advice and experience. The Swimmer needs to own the changes.
- 3) Conditioning: The body has 3 energy systems: explosive, sprint and aerobic. From the Wavebuster Teals up (and to some degree, at the Marlin Black level), we train each energy system each day, in percentages that Doc Councilman (the Isaac Newton of Swimming) prescribed. We have 6 sub-training seasons within each training season (Sept to March & April thru July). Each sub-training season focuses on one of the energy systems but we still train the other two (just in smaller doses) each day.
- 4) Stars for Stars: At every practice, swimmers compete for "Stars." The coach usually announces what the Star Competition is, and a select number of swimmers earn stars for their performance within the Star Competition. After a swimmer has earned a set number of Stars, they are awarded with a prize (pencils, pens, glasses, silly bands, water bottles). The Stars for Stars program is meant to have each child just a bit more heightened in their concentration on a specific topic (bringing a water bottle and drinking water, streamline off their walls, good behavior such as cleaning up, breathing patterns, etc).

Why do we do what we do?

Attendance/Training Competition/Stroke Technique/Conditioning/Stars are intertwined. to provide a highly competitive program that is positive motivation based.

Younger swimmers grow bigger and stronger. Younger swimmers who grow and train improve because of both development engines. When swimmers get older, they stop growing and thus lose one of their development engines. If a swimmer was not trained to train, they lose their only development engine. Also, a swimmer who trains builds upon the aerobic and anaerobic development already done-so an older swimmer who has learned

how to train has 2 distinct advantages over a swimmer who did not train.

Thus, a swimmer who comes to practice, trains hard every day, works on their stroke technique, trains all their energy systems and has a heightened awareness to what they are doing (and rewarded for this heightened awareness) are more likely to be fast swimmers when they are 13-19.

If they are fast swimmers, have great character and have great grades, it is likely they will receive entrance into such schools as Harvard, Princeton, Connecticut College, Bryant...

Other items:

- II Coach enters swimmers into meets. I view it as my job to enter our swimmer into meets (I am baffled by other swim coaches who leave it up to the parents/swimmers. Even pee-wee soccer & baseball teams, coached by volunteers, have coaches who make these decisions). My method is as follows: get the swimmers into as many different events as possible-rather than specialize. A swimmer who knows they are swimming a particular stroke at an upcoming meet is more likely to work on that stroke. Swimmers grow and change; they may develop different strokes as they grow IF they are encouraged to do so. I actually chart out the events per swimmer per meet so I can see what they have swum and what they need to swim. High level swimmers will swim their best events at the most prestigious meets we attend (I want them to do well at the big meets). But they swim their secondary events at secondary meets.

### III Parental Obligation

Part of having your child train at Elite (and most other sporting events) means that we need your help. We host or co-host 5 meets during the calendar year (one this weekend) where we do most of the work. When we attend meets we do not host, parents from the host team is doing jobs so your child can swim. When it is our time, we need you to step up (or find a suitable replacement) and perform a task (timing, admissions, concessions, marshalling). We can not host these meets without your help.

At meets where other teams host, we will be asked to supply a timer or two to cover a lane. You will be asked occasionally to time at those meets (this is rotated around the parents).

Teams also need to supply officials. Being an official is the best way to give back while participating in the sport. Any functioning person can be an official; there are only a few rules you need to know to start; from there you will learn the nuances of the sport. In addition, you will have the best seat in the house plus you get to interact with the swimmers and coaches on the pool deck.

### IV Questions???