



# Volume MMXXV, Issue I STREAMLINE NEWSLETTER

January 2025

We hope everyone has been enjoying the cold fronts throughout the month of January! Although they are not ideal for our sport, they make for a great contrast to our blistering hot summers!

January's are relatively calm for our team. Aside from the brief chaos that was the snow week, our main event was our AQUA/SPA meet hosted at the Friendswood High School Natatorium. A special thank you to all the parents who participated in volunteer positions. Hosting a swim meet takes a lot of work and it would not have been possible without you help!

Looking forward into February, we have a few exciting events. The Spring Series Champ meets will be hosted near the end of February. If you have not already responded to the email about attending, please do so. AQUASTAR hopes to have more swimmers participate in the Spring Series than the Winter Series!













New High School Prep Group





# Take Your Swimming Performance to the Next Level with AQUASTAR!

- Access to top-notch coaches with competitive experience.
- Tailored training programs to improve speed, endurance, and technique.
- Opportunities to compete in higher-level meets.

**Free week trial**

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday Feb 1st to May 1st  
Location: LaPorte - ClearLake - Friendswood  
Coachcollin@swimaqua.org  
\$275 for 3 months - including the seasonal USA  
Membership - Can set up a payment plan





AQUASTAR is excited to announce a new training group, The High School Group.

The High School Prep Group is a training group that is tailored for incoming High School students and current High School swimmers who would like to try year-round swimming. The target age group is **7th Grade and up**. Take your swimming performance to the **next level** with us!

### Why Join?

1. Access to elite coaches with competitive experience in high school and club swim teams.
2. Tailored training programs to improve speed, endurance and technique.
3. Opportunities to participate in higher-level meets.
4. **Free** one week trial.
5. [Click here for flyer](#)

### Schedule and Locations

The group runs from **February 3 to May 1**. Practices are **Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays** at 3 different pools for your convenience.

**Clear Brook High School Pool** located at 4607 FM 2351, Friendswood TX 77546

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 5:30 - 7:30 pm

**La Porte High School Pool** located at 301 E. Fairmont Parkway, La Porte TX 77571

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 6-8 pm

**OakBrook West Pool** located at 14902 Penn Hills Lane, Houston TX 77062

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 6-8 pm

### Cost

Cost is **\$275** which includes *all training fees and seasonal USA Swimming membership*. Payment plan available. [Click here](#) for registration.

### More Information

Email Head Coach Collin Gray at [coachcollin@swimaqua.org](mailto:coachcollin@swimaqua.org)

## Proper Warm-up - Coach Francesco



Swimmers, we've all been there, standing behind the blocks, heart racing, ready to give your best performance, feelings which I miss! However, what you do before you even approach the water can make all the difference. Warming up isn't just a box to check off; it's a vital part of preparing your body and mind for the races ahead. Sometime I see swimmers arrive late or get out of the warm up at the first opportunity.

Think of your muscles like a rubber band. A cold, stiff rubber band can snap under pressure, but one that's been stretched and warmed up becomes more elastic and resilient. When you warm up, you are increasing blood flow to your muscles, making them more flexible and ready to perform explosive movements. It also helps prevent injuries, improve stroke efficiency, and fine-tunes your focus. As we discussed in last month's newsletter on staying warm, keeping your muscles at an optimal temperature is key. The benefits of staying warm don't stop at comfort, it directly impacts your ability to swim at your best.

**How Much Effort Should You Put In?** Your warm-up should be tailored to both your body and the events you are preparing to swim. Here is a simple guide that most coaches follow:

- **General Preparation:** Start with 20-25 minutes of easy swimming to gradually elevate your heart rate. Focus on long, smooth strokes to get your muscles moving and joints loosened up.
- **Event-Specific Preparation:** Include short bursts of effort to mimic race conditions. For example, if you're swimming a 100 yard sprint, incorporate a few 15-25 yard sprints at 80/90% effort.

- **Cool-Down After Warm-Up:** Finish with light swimming and some drills to maintain your focus and keep your muscles warm without overexerting.

### **What to Focus On?**

- **Technique:** Use the warm-up to reinforce good habits in your strokes, turns, and breathing. Sloppy technique during warm-up will carry over to your race.
- **Breathing:** Practice a breathing pattern that feels natural and sustainable.
- **Race Plan:** Mentally visualize your race strategy during your warm-up.

**Staying Warm After Warm-Up:** Once you've completed your warm-up, staying warm until your event is just as important. Dry off, put on your team gear, and keep moving gently to avoid cooling down too much. As we highlighted last month, wearing a dry swimsuit, a warm hoodie, and deck pants can help maintain your muscle temperature and keep you race-ready.

**Final Thoughts:** Warm-ups are not one-size-fits-all. Listen to your body, adapt to the event, and use the time to prepare both physically and mentally. By putting effort into your warm-up and warm down, you are setting yourself up for success when it matters most.

**Swim smart, stay warm, and show the power of preparation!**

-Coach Francesco

- Brendan Martinez (100fly 4th, 100 Br 2nd)

- Andrew Loe (200 free 2nd, 100 Back 5th)
- Alicia Mellin (200 free 4th, 100 free 4th)
- Shiv Malkani (200 free 3rd, 500 free 4th)
- Brooke Davis (100 Breast 4th)
- Zachary Sakahara (100 Fly 5th)
- Simon Kinsworthy (100 free 5th, 50 free 6th)



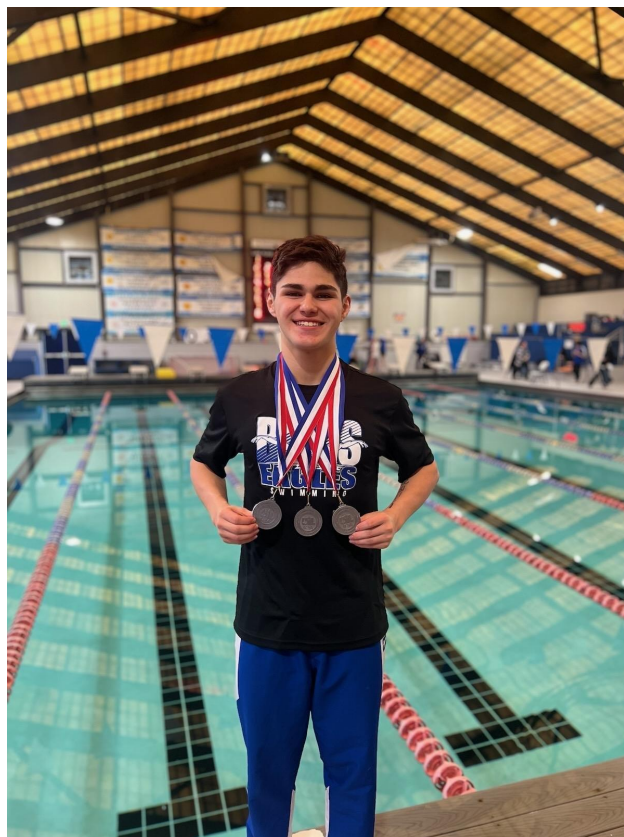
- Emma Brueggeman (100 free 3rd, 100 back 3rd)

We're looking forward to you dominating your regional meets!

Another congratulations goes out to the following athletes for qualifying for the TAPSS State meet!

- Sara McGrady (500 Free 3rd)
- Nadia Dawlett (200 IM 3rd and 100 Back 2nd)

Keep up the hard work and good luck at the state meet! We are proud to see all of you have so much success!



*1 - La Porte High School*



2 - Friendswood High School



Friendswood Swimming  
6h · 🌐



3 - First Baptist Christian Academy









*4 - Lutheran South Academy*

On this edition of swim talk with Coach Collin, I decided to talk about the common problems swimmers have with freestyle! I know my swimmers will get déjà vu reading this article as we have had a heavy freestyle focus this week.

There are several common problems and challenges that swimmers face when swimming freestyle, many of which can be traced back to technique, endurance, and mental focus. Addressing these issues early on is key to building a solid foundation for future success. Let's break down some of the biggest problems!

### **1. Poor Body Position and Alignment**

- **Problem:** Many swimmers struggle with keeping their body in a proper horizontal position. This is crucial for reducing drag and maximizing speed. Make swimming easier!
- **Cause:** Swimmers often lift their heads or rotate their heads too much when they breathe, or let their legs sink, causing increased resistance in the water.
- **Solution:** Swimmers need to focus on keeping their body straight and high in the water. Teaching them to keep their head in line with their spine (not too high or low) and

engage their core to prevent their legs from sinking is critical. Swimmers should feel like they are cutting through the water with their body or feel “smooth” when they swim.

- **Drill:** A great drill to use to fix this is **Body Balance Kicking** with the addition of a paddle on the head to help you know when your body is out of line.

## 2. Inefficient Breathing

- **Problem:** Breathing can often disrupt a swimmer's stroke cycle. Many swimmers either breathe too frequently, rotate their head too much, or they don't rotate their bodies enough to take a proper breath.
- **Cause:** Nervousness, lack of experience, or simply not having mastered the timing of breathing.
- **Solution:** Swimmers need to learn proper breathing technique, typically by exhaling completely underwater and turning their head just enough to take in air. We typically say that only one goggle should be out of the water when swimmers' breath to help limit movement of the head. I like to have swimmers imagine their heads as the steering wheel of the body. If the steering wheel moves too much, the car will swerve. Moving your head too rapidly or too much would have the same affect with your body. Practicing a proper breath with little movement will help as well as breathing every 2, 3, or 4 strokes, depending on the swimmer's ability, will help improve the rhythm and efficiency of the swimmers breathing.
- **Drill:** The same drill mentioned above would work for inefficient breathing. Using the **Body Balance drill** will help create a smooth efficient breath. After using that drill, Practicing breathing every 2, 3, or 4 strokes, depending on the swimmer's ability. This will help improve the rhythm and efficiency of the swimmers breathing.

## 3. Weak or Ineffective Kick

- **Problem:** A weak kick, or the habit of kicking incorrectly (e.g., from the knees rather than the hips), is very common.
- **Cause:** Swimmers often don't realize that the kick should be a **continuous flutter kick** that generates propulsion from the hips, not from the knees or thighs.
- **Solution:** To improve their kick, athletes can focus on developing ankle flexibility and kicking technique.
- **Drills:** **Vertical kicking, kickboard work, or Body Balance Kicking** can help reinforce good habits.



#### 4. Overuse of Upper Body (and Lack of Core Engagement)

- **Problem:** Some swimmers rely too much on their arms to pull, neglecting the role of their core and legs.
- **Cause:** Inexperienced swimmers may not be aware of the importance of their core and legs in maintaining efficient propulsion. They also might not have the strength or awareness to use their whole body effectively.
- **Solution:** Swimmers need to focus on using the whole body in their stroke.
- **Drills:** **6 Beat Kick** or **6 Kick Switch**, would be a great drill to focus on engaging your core and adding the use of the legs and body rotation. This one is a personal favorite of mine.

#### 5. Mental Toughness and Focus

- **Problem:** Swimmer often lack the mental toughness to push through tough training sessions or stay focused during races.
- **Cause:** Younger swimmers might be more easily distracted or discouraged by fatigue, or a mistake made during the race. This causes swimmers to 'take the easy way out' by either skipping sets/reps in practice, by not putting the effort where it matters in practice, or by giving up in a race which will lead to disappointment.
- **Solution:** Mental training is just as important as physical training. Swimmers can work on developing **mental resilience** through visualization of their races, positive self-talk, and race strategy plans. Keeping a growth mindset can help swimmers stay focused on improvement rather than results. My biggest tip to give swimmers is to focus on the effort given not the time. If you give 100% effort when the coaches ask you to in practice and in your races, then you will be successful.

#### 6. Turn Technique and Wall Push-offs

- **Problem:** Poor flip-turns or lack of proper push-offs from the wall can drastically affect a swimmer's overall performance.
- **Cause:** Swimmers may not have developed the technique to execute smooth, fast turns or streamlined push-offs.
- **Solution:** Drills like **Wall Kick Flip Turns**, **Under Water Flip Turns**, and **Mid Pool Turns** can help swimmers develop tighter, faster flips which help swimmers maintain their speed in their races as well as help increase the power off the walls in their turns. The more speed swimmers have approaching the wall and through the flip portion of the flip turn, will increase their momentum into the wall, which helps increase the power/speed off of

the wall. Lastly, you can't forget about every swimmer's worst habit, which is to make sure to push off the wall in a **streamlined position** as this is essential to maintaining speed.

## 7. Proper Catch and Pull

- **Problem:** Some swimmers will drop their elbows during the pull portion of their stroke, which causes their arms to "slip" through the water. This means that the swimmer doesn't properly "catch" the water and will not create much propulsion. This causes swimmers to have to use more strokes to keep a faster pace which will exert more energy.
- **Cause:** Swimmers may not have developed the feeling of a proper catch or leverage in the water.
- **Solution:** Swimmers can work on pressing down with their wrist and forearm while leaving their elbows high in the water at the start of the pull. This what we call a **High Elbow Catch**. Once the swimmer has a proper catch, you want to pull the water to the side of the body, hopefully feeling as much resistance as possible. The more resistance or the heavier the water feels, means you are pulling more water which will increase the amount of power you get from your pull. The more power you can get in your pull the faster you will go.

### How Coaches and Parents Can Help:

- **Focus on Technique:** At the age group level, focusing on **proper technique** is more important than raw speed. The goal is to instill good habits that will lead to better performance as they mature. Encourage your athlete to improve their technique overpowering through their races. This extra encouragement, especially from parents, can help set an athlete on the right path to success.
- **Gradual Progression:** Training should progress gradually in intensity and distance. For instance, younger swimmers might focus on mastering basic skills and technique, while older swimmers can focus on endurance and race tactics. Parents, please understand that practices will increase in difficulty as the season progresses. Sometimes, more commonly in the older athletes, swimmers will be swimming meets not at 100% due to intense training. This is part of the process to make them as successful as possible for their championship meets.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Encouragement and patience are key. Building confidence, especially with mental focus and belief in their abilities, can help swimmers push through challenges. Athletes don't need to hear criticism about their swims from both

the parents and the coaches. The more parents can help support their athletes with words of encouragement, the more likely the swimmers will enjoy the sport of swimming.

### Conclusion:

The biggest problems in freestyle swimming are often related to **poor technique**, **lack of endurance**, and **mental focus**. By addressing body position, breathing, stroke mechanics, and pacing from an early age, swimmers will be set up for success in future competitive swimming. As they grow and develop, swimmers can refine their skills, improve their fitness, and develop the mental toughness needed to succeed in higher levels of competition.

### AQUA/SPA Iceberg Invitational



AQUASTAR,

As everyone is enjoying the Houston winter wonderland, I hope everyone can find time to read about the wonderful swims AQUASTAR had this past weekend at our Iceberg Invite. We had many accomplishments this meet so please make sure to read over everything

#### Team Stats

- We had over 60 swimmers attend this meet with 50 of them finishing with best times in at least one of their events!
- Out of our 264 entries in this meet, over 110 of these events had time drops. Now you may be thinking that this is a low number of events with time drops, but that's only because 70 of these entries were new events that our athletes haven't swam before! We always encourage our athletes to push the limits of their swim abilities and love to see it happen!
- Our swimmers accomplished 62 new motivational time standards, with a couple swimmers reaching Age group champs and even TAGs times!
- Our meet was a prelim/final meet, and we represented well. We had swimmers final in 132 events!

#### Individual Accomplishment

- **Gary Acklen** participated in his first finals session this weekend as he finaled in two events, the 200 free and 50 free. He had a 5 second drop in his 50 free as well!
- **Micah Best** had his best meet of the season as he not only finaled in multiple events but had huge time drops in nearly every event!
- **Emma Brueggeman** swam in nearly all the mid-distance events and shined. She finaled in every event as well as earned two A motivational times in the 500 free and 200 back as well as an AA time in the 200 free!
- **Jacob Cortez** had a huge drop in his 50 backstroke as he dropped over 12 seconds! He's almost at the elusive minute mark.
- **Brooke Davis** raked up the motivational times this weekend as she earned a B time in the 100 fly, 500 free and 200 free, as well a BB time in the 50 free!
- **Nadia Dawlett** had some huge drops in what she would call her 'worst stroke'. She dropped over 8 seconds combined in the 200 and 100 breast and earned BB times in both!
- **Arianna Garza** continues to be adventurous as she swam in 4 new events this meet! Keep pushing those limits, Arianna!



- **Aleksander Halili** swam in his first meet as a USA swimmer this weekend. Not only did he earn B times in all 6 of his events, but he was also the High Point earner for the 9-10 boys age group!
- **Dalan Halili** couldn't let his brother be the only one to shine as he also had a phenomenal meet! Dalan finaled in 5 events, winning one of those events, and had multi second drops in every event.
- **Gregory Haronitis** had time drops in 2 events as well as winning the 9-10 50 back!
- **Zoe Haronitis** had quite a meet. She dropped in nearly every event, ventured out and tried the 400 IM, and earned herself a TAGS time in the 50 Free! Congratulations Zoe, we can't wait to see you get more TAGS times.
- **Whitney Hutchinson** had a dominating meet as she rounded up several achievements. She earned herself an AA time in her 100 back, she swam the 400 IM for the first time, and she placed 1st in 3 of her events!
- **Anthony Dong** had a great meet this weekend earning new motivational times in 4 new events! He earned a B time in the 100 fly and 100 breast, and a BB time in the 100/200 free.
- **Simon Kingsworthy** also had a great meet working on his secondary strokes. He had huge drops in the 100 breast, 100 back and 200 IM. Earning new motivational times in each of those events.
- **Andrew Loe** focused on the tougher mid-distance events this weekend and didn't disappoint. He had massive time drops in the 200 back and 200 fly! He earned an A time in 200 back and an AA time in the 200 fly.
- **Brenden Martinez** had a solid meet! Dropped over 8 seconds combined in his events which included the 100 breast and 50 free. He earned a BB time in his 50 free.
- **Shiv Malkani** showed out as he dropped in every single one of his events! On top of that he earned a BB time in the 100 back and a B time in the 100 breast.
- **Abigail and James McBroom** were some courageous siblings as all their events this meet were new events! Abigail even earned herself 2 new B times!
- **Sara McGrady** took on the mile this weekend and dropped 22 seconds! This earned herself a BB time. She also earned a BB time in her 50 free as well!
- **Alicia Mellin** earned 3 new A times this weekend, but none were more impressive than her performance in the 500 free where she dropped 47 seconds!

- **Caleb Morquecho** swam in his first meet this weekend and did very well! He swam in multiple events and made sure to cheer on his fellow teammates as well!
- **Abigail Nipper** finaled in both of her events and dropped 18 seconds in her 200 Breast!
- **Bella Ragsdale** Swam in 3 new events this meet and earned two B times and a BB time in her 100 free!
- **Jacob Ragsdale** swam in 2 new events this weekend and not only finaled in both but also earned himself a B time in the 100 fly!
- **Joey Ragsdale** showed some serious speed as he dropped over 38 seconds combined and earned an Age group Champs time in the 50 Free! Hopefully he can get that elusive tags time next meet.
- **Scotty Ragsdale** showed his exceptional skill in the breaststroke as he earned a BB time in the 200 breast as well as placing second in the event!
- **Lily Ragsdale** couldn't let the rest of her family show her up as she also swam well dropping 36 seconds in her 2 events!
- **Nico and Carla Rangel** both had great meets as they finaled in all their events and raked up some serious points for us!
- **Lily Redmond** dropped 7 seconds in 100 free earning herself a B time!
- **Victor Romano** had major drops in both of his events this weekend and finaled in the 200 back!
- **Annalise Roper** swam in 2 new events but one were as impressive as her 100 free! She showed she's been training hard.
- **Hudson Roper** also had a great meet as he either dropped in all of his events or swam new events!
- **Tyler Rowlan** earned 2 new BB times in the 100 fly and 200 breast!
- **Ethan Schauss** finaled in all of his events and earned a B time in the 200 IM
- **Anne Marie Schladenhauffen** dropped time in all of her events totaling over 11 seconds!
- **Jordan Sustaita** swam in his first meet this weekend and swam very well in his two events. We hope to see you at more meets!
- **Ryker Swor** took on all the challenging races this meet and excelled! He earned a BB time in the 500 free, 400 IM, 100 back and the mile!

- **Crichton Vandertie** finaled in all of his events and dominated the finals, placing 1st in 5 of his events!
- **Annelise White** finaled in all of her events and earned a B time in her 100 fly!
- **Callie White** dropped huge time in her 100 free this weekend and earned herself a 9-10 B time while only being 8!
- **Jase White** not only dropped time in 4 events and but also was the 11-12 boys high point earner! Congratulations Jase!

We had a ton of great swims this meet which makes picking a swimmer of the meet very difficult! We had two high point earners, two swimmers who qualified for big meets, and many swimmers make some amazing drops!

Our female swimmer of the meet goes to **Zoe Haronitis**! Congratulations on getting your Tags time and we hope to see more success from you soon!

Our Male Swimmer of the meet goes to **Aleksander Halili**! Earning a high point trophy in your first meet ever is a special achievement. Congratulations!



## Upcoming Events

### 2018 Calendar

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- **February 21-23: 12 & Under Spring Championships - Entries are due Monday February 3rd!**
- **February 28 - March 2: 13 & Under Spring Championship Meet - Entries are due February 10th!**
- **March 7 - 9: Aggieland Short Course Invitational - Entries are due February 21st!**
- **March 20 - 23 SSDL National Championship.**
- **March 29th AQUASTAR Swimathon! Super important day!**
- **May 3-4 AQUA/PACE Long Course Meet**



## January Birthdays



Happy birthday to the following New Years Month Athletes!

- 1/18 - Sara Tolba
- 1/19 - Paulina Kovacs
- 1/21 - John Wauls
- 1/30 - Ella Lewis