

10&U February/March Newsletter

DeckPast:

Congrats on another awesome short course season NCA! Between Junior Olympics, Speedo Sectionals and JO MAX, the spirit of green was apparent as ever. A wholehearted thank you again to all our parent volunteers, another short course season is in the books and we could not have done it without you.

Championship season was off to a bang with another 1st place finish at Junior Olympics. We had 94 swimmers attend, with 11 of them coming from our 10&U groups. All of our 10&U swimmers came back for at least one finals swim, many repeated all of their events again in the afternoon, and all 4 of our A-relays scored in the top 3! Way to go NCA!

NCA hosted Speedo Sectionals at Alga Norte for the second year in a row, and it was a huge success. Our parents & families are the bedrock of this team and it could not have happened with your support. 10&U swimmers got a front row seat to the action by participating in Finals Walk Out Ceremonies. Swimmers were paired with one of the top 10 finalists and walked out to the blocks with them, watched over baskets containing the swimmers items, and witnessed how athletes at the top level of swimming prepare for races!

Finally, in arguably our most successful short course meet of the season, NCA brought home 1st place at JO MAX. NCA swimmers made up for 192 of the athlete showing. Beyond the best times, new JO & SWAGR cuts, your swimmers displayed exactly what it means to be a part of NCA. The teamwork, AEF, respect, etc, was abundantly clear. Congrats NCA!

Views from the Deck (Practice Reports):

5 day with Coach Eva & Coach Sierra:

As always, we have continued to discuss and teach the different tenets of the NCA Value Wheel, focusing on a different one each week. Accountability is hugely important throughout Championship season- are kids making their workouts, are they giving 100% every day, are they not only listening to coaches, but are they applying them? We are continuously impressed by the maturity and dedication of these young 10&U athletes!

Championship season provides a bevy of excitement, but also allows us to fine tune & hone in on certain critical race techniques. One of these is the start. The fastest part of any swimmers race is the entry into the water from a dive, thus making the dive the literally launching pad of a great race. With 5 day swimmers we often do "racing" sets from a dive to mimic a meet environment. We constantly remind kids that the habits they practice every day, are the same habits they will race with. Check out this video below on how we are trying to teach kids dives: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWIXUX-k2Ew>

Good luck to all racing at the Southwest Age Group Regional Meet (SWAGR) in Clovis, CA!

3 day with Coach Neily:

Our big focus has been on stroke transitions, turns and breakouts. Turns can be an incredible advantage and a great turn will increase your acceleration coming off the wall, giving you “easy” or what I like to call “free” speed that requires no additional effort. Ultimately with no additional training, practicing their best turns can help drop seconds off their time. We are trying to teach speed in and out of the wall.

These swimmers are finally understanding the fastest part of their swim is the first underwater water off their “ready position” and/or dive. The next fastest part is the underwater following the turn. This requires them staying underwater through streamline using their three dolphin kicks. How good your breakouts are determines how much of that speed you can carry into the swim. The breakout is the final part of the underwater when you transition from kicking into swimming. Those three dolphin kicks (or underwaters) are a big part and when executed correctly, they save you energy by maintaining speed into the swim.

Finally, why do we streamline and make that a focus every day at practice? Like I addressed above, a good streamline is the start of how you create free speed off the walls. It takes focus and care to make it happen. Swimmers often think it doesn’t matter if they do or don’t do something in training but why would you ever want to skip something that will make you faster? What we do in training directly transfers to what we do when in race, especially when we are fatigued or under pressure. When they come to practice we train and training is where we form habit and the point of training is to be sure the habits we form are correct.

San Marcos with Coach Danielle:

The air temperature has been cold, but our swimmers have been heating up the pool with their great AAFP in practice! We’ve been working a lot on improving technique in all 4 strokes, but recently have been putting forth more effort in breaststroke. In the 9 & under group, our favorite drill is “3 kicks, 1 tiny pull”. It’s helping our swimmers learn to not pull down towards their waist, which is a very common mistake and makes their stroke “illegal” per USA Swimming rules. In the 12 & under group, we love the “hands on bottom” kick drill (also known as No-Arm Brst swim). This drill helps them pull their heels up to start the kick and feel how the core muscles are instrumental to building a good breaststroke. Lastly, we’ve been putting fun and teamwork together by reserving the last few minutes to do a flip/open turn relay.

Our San Marcos group is growing. 3 new swimmers have joined our 12 & under group this month – welcome to the team Ashlyn, Matthew and Nicole. We’re happy to have you join us!

Check out the “Scheduling for the Month Ahead” section for dates & info regarding Alga Norte workouts. There are many great reasons to embrace combined practices at Alga Norte. It will give our swimmers the ability to:

- 1.) practice with a larger group, make new friends, and feel like a part of the larger NCA team
- 2.) practice dives off the starting blocks
- 3.) learn to take instruction from other NCA coaches

- 4.) practice in a competitive pool where we sometimes have USA Swimming meets and Green Meets

All 9 & under developmental group swimmers will swim with the 10 & under 3-day group that practices in the warm/instructional pool at Alga Norte. Practice is 6:00-7:00pm. **Most** of our 12 & under group will practice with the same 10 & under group in the warm pool. **A few** of our older kids in 12 & under will practice with the 11-14 3-day group from 5:45-7:15pm. Practice will be in the competition pool. I will notify you if your swimmer will join the 11-14 group.

Boys & Girls Club with Coach Hannah:

We are nearing the end of our winter session and this 10 and under NCA group has made some huge improvements. I am so proud of the effort, attitude, and enthusiasm that these kids have displayed the last 10 weeks. They are truly embracing the mission and values that the NCA program is built on, and I am excited to see how they continue to grow and learn as developing competitive swimmers.

This session we started our focus on breaking down each of the four strokes and learning drills and skills that promote body balance in the water. Coach Sophie and my goal is to promote the importance of an engaged "Core" or "tight bellies" when swimming, as this helps to maintain balance in all 4 of the competitive swimming strokes. As we are moving through the session, my goal is to continue introducing skills and drills that will be used throughout these young swimmers' competitive careers. I hope that each of the BGC swimmers continues to develop a level of comfort and confidence in the water that will follow them as they move to different groups within the NCA program.

As we are nearing the start of a new session, Coach Sophie and I will be promoting the importance of attending meets and hope that every swimmer in the NCA Boys and Girls Club program will attend at least one meet per session. Meets are a great way for coaches to see the improvements that our swimmers are making and what areas may need more attention in a true competitive setting.

Thank you parents for all you do! Your dedication to the program and to your swimmer's improvements and growth is appreciated by our coaching staff every day. GO NCA!

#goNCA:

- Saturday, April 7th: We will be hosting a NCA Fundraiser at the Alga Norte Pool from 5:00-7:00 p.m. The pool will be open and all of the inflatables will be set up for swimmers and siblings to play on. This fundraiser will benefit the Senior 2 Summer Training Trip to Oregon occurring in June 2018.
- Thanks to all who attended last week's Open House. These Open Houses are working toward building transparency between the coaching staff and parents. We will continue to host these and continue to encourage direct communications. Thanks for your support!
- Great article for building independent & accountable athletes:
 - <http://ks.milesplit.com/articles/234394/lighting-the-way-from-behind-a-lesson-for-coaches-and-parents#.WqYH7lr5mR5.facebook>
- The importance of streamlines:
 - <https://swimswam.com/everything-need-know-streamlines-matter-video/>
 - <https://swimswam.com/can-get-streamline-ande-rasmussen-streamlines-25-yards-kick/>

Scheduling for the Month Ahead:

- Stay up to date with all meets via Team Unify or ncaswim.com. Reach out to your coaches directly with any meet sign up questions! All summer meets have now been posted.
- Office Hours: Office hours are a chance for your swimmer to get some more individualized instruction on a skill that they may have been struggling with. Office hours are designed in a manner similar to a semi private lesson, with three swimmers working with a coach for 30 minutes. Cost is \$15 per swimmer, and all swimmers who sign up must be approved by their coach. The next Office Hours will be Saturday, March 17th at both the JCC and Alga Norte March 18th. Both of these sessions are full which is great and why we will continue to add new and future office hours each month.
- San Marcos: San Marcos will be practicing with the Alga Norte group on select Wednesday and Thursdays, beginning March 21. We will do these combined practices on the 1st and 3rd weeks of each month, and will continue through the end of May. We'll look at summer schedules to see if we can continue through the summer. Please put these dates on your calendar:
 - March 21 + 22
 - April 4 + 5
 - April 18 + 19
 - May 2 + 3
 - May 16 + 17

Let's have another great month, NCA!

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