

UCSC Fall Start Up 2024



RACING SEASON BEGINS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19

Parents, swimmers and spectators made their way to MNP Saturday morning after a vigorous team champs to participate in the annual Fall Start Up swim meet. This one day meet provides opportunity to assess training, set some realistic goals, connect with old rivals and prepare for the rest of the season.

ESTABLISHING A BASELINE



TESTING THE WATERS

While racing at team champs provides swimmers with the opportunity to race, it really is the Fall Start Up where swimmers get opportunity to assess where their training is at. It is the first competition that allows our swimmers to race rivals from another club. Dino pride is on the line and swimmers often lift their performances. Senior swimmers come into the meet knowing a best time maybe difficult to achieve, while the younger swimmers are determined to set a personal best. Regardless, the swimmers are eager to see where they are at, evaluate their performances, and determine what the next steps are.

I call this setting the baseline. Senior swimmers have their many years of experience and work with their coaches to evaluate their performances. Discussions often have swimmers reflecting on what elements of their training are working and use this information to guide their next steps. They understand that this meet is a starting point on which they will build upon. With the junior swimmers it's often managing early season expectations and guiding the swimmer to evaluate the process over the outcome. Coaches are constantly identifying weaknesses and figuring out the direction of training... "Where do we go next?"

This meet establishes that baseline, determines what needs to be done next and helps the swimmers figure out what is possible.



GOAL SETTING

Many swimmers come into the season with goals they want to achieve. This could be anywhere from perfecting a racing tactic, a technical skill, or achieving a personal best time. Most swimmers understand that they cannot control the time on the clock, they can only control what they do in the moment to achieve that time. Executing a race to the best of their ability is what

determines the outcome. We often get caught up in the final time and use that to determine how well a performance was. In the early season performance should be measured on how well you executed your skills or your predetermined tactics.

The unique thing about Fall Start up is that peak performance is not being targeted. Simply stand up, execute your race to the best of your ability. When it's all said and done you understand where you are at with your training and it allows you to set realistic goals. The goals start with training. What needs to be done in training to move you towards that ultimate goal?

Set practice goals to move you towards your racing goals. Practicing and perfecting the skills necessary for a peak performance start in workout. Standing up on the blocks and executing those practiced goals indicate whether or not you are on track. It's important to set realistic and short-term goals as you work towards your long-term goal. The process is continually being adjusted, it's not static and evolves!

Take your Fall Start Up performances and set some realistic goals to keep you motivated and on track to improve.



RACING YOUR RIVALS

With the cheers and encouragement from your team, it's fun to mount the blocks and represent your club. With your dino cap firmly wrapped around your head, your goggles pressed firmly to your eyes, and the stillness of the water make your heart race. You want to be first at the finish. This is competitive swimming after all. As you enter the water, you are focused on executing your race plan... then it happens...you notice out of the corner of your eye a competitor slightly in-front of you, your body swells with dino pride, and all of a sudden find that second gear, adrenaline surges and you race eager to get your hand on the wall first. You have no friends in this moment and that old primal instinct kicks in "eat or be eaten." When the race is over and you turn to look at the clock and your satisfied that you gave it your all. You turn to your rival in the next lane and give them a high five on a job well done. Your rival has now become your friend, as you walk back to discuss your race with you coach, you joke and laugh. It's these friendly rivalries that you crave, you appreciate them and know they bring out the best in you.

It was a fantastic start to the season. Swimmers and coaches had a wide range of experiences, lots of information was gathered and will be used to guide training. Train hard, make smart choices and stay positive There's no telling where this season is going to take you... However, based on the Fall Start Up results, it's going to be an outstanding season!

Go Dinos!