



THE ARTISTIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Welcome to the January, 2024 Education Newsletter! Our goal is to share information with you from experts, volunteers, coaches and officials. If you have suggestions to be included in future newsletters, please send them to shari@usaartisticswim.org.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 10-13
World Championships
Doha, Qatar

March 21 – 23
U.S. Collegiate Championship
Lewisville, TX

April 10 – 14
U.S. Junior and Senior
Championships, AWD Invitational and
Junior National Team Trials
Houston, Texas

April 25-28
Youth Championship, 12&U
Invitational and Youth Age Group
National Team Trials

winning is only
half of it



having fun
is the other half!

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SAFESPORT INFORMATION

REMINDERS

- All participants over the age of 18 will be required to complete the training courses regardless of if they practice or compete with minor athletes. Athletes turning 18 in the year will need an Adult membership, but won't be required to complete SafeSport UNTIL they turn 18.
- If you have completed the four course cycle, please contact SafeSport so they can reset your course so you can retake the course cycle.

HOW TO REPORT

Reporting: If you would like to report any alleged sexual, physical, emotional misconduct, or violations of the MAAPP, please utilize the following contact information:

To SafeSport: US Center for Safe Sport's Toll Free Report a Concern Phone Number: 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233) To report a concern to the Center of SafeSport, click [HERE](#).

To USA Artistic Swimming: To anonymously report a concern to USA Artistic Swimming free of cost, please fill out this [HERE](#). For further questions, contact the USA Artistic Swimming Safe Sport team at USAASsafesport@usaartisticswim.org.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

2022 USAAS MAAPP: USA Artistic Swimming's Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

Team Travel Policy: Consent forms are to be filled out for travel and lodging while at a hotel sanctioned by NGB/USOPC event.

Training Session Consent Form: This must be filled out if a minor athlete takes individual training sessions with a coach

Response & Resolution Policy: outlines our approach for communication of policies and our structure for handling reports and investigations of misconducts.

Quality Control System: outlines administrative holds, suspended, and banned member protocols\



SAFESPORT INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION AND HANDBOOKS

For Minor Athletes and Parents:

The Center for SafeSport offers minor athlete and parent trainings. These are audience specific courses that aim to educate everyone to ensure the safety of our athletes in sport.

Information can be found on their website [here](#). Additional MAAPP information for parents: [here](#)



Bully Prevention Handbook for Coaches:

Across the U.S., millions of youth take part in sport each year. Unfortunately, bullying is sometimes part of that experience. This handbook helps coaches of Minor Athletes recognize, prevent, and respond to bullying in their sport. Learn about trauma-sensitive coaching, bystander intervention, and how to create a safe and inclusive space for all athletes. [Download now](#)



TRAIN LIKE A CHAMPION

Body Boost by Anita Alvarez - [here](#)

Fouette Rotation by Anna Voloshyna - [here](#)

Unabridged R7 Drills by Anna Voloshyna - [here](#)

TAKE A LISTEN

Managing Anxiety and Fear Before Competition

Listen [here](#).

How to Control Your Self-Talk

Listen [here](#)

ANNOUNCEMENT

National Elite Camp will be held July 23rd-July 27th.

Arrival on July 22nd, departure on July 27th.

12&U and youth Age Group Athletes will be selected at the 2024 National Team Trials.

INVITATION ONLY

DEVELOPMENT LIBRARY

Check out the Video Development Library for Athletes & Coaches on the SloCoach Platform.

Click [here](#) for some amazing education.

GREAT READS

How to be a Positive Parent of a Young Athlete

Click [here](#)

Age Appropriate Strategies for Coaching Youth Sports

Click [here](#)

AQUA UPDATES

There have been recent updates to the AQUA Difficulty Guide, Hybrid Difficulty Table & DTC Reference Sheet.

Please make sure to keep up to date on the latest information by clicking [HERE](#). 2 important Changes:

Thrust Deviation have changed.

12&U/Youth Acro Safety Limits - now BM instead of 2-point penalty if DD is over limit.



5 EFFECTIVE WAYS PARENTS CAN SUPPORT YOUNG ATHLETES

When it comes to our kids, we know that they all have their own unique and special talents, whether physical or not. For those amazing kiddos with a passion for sports, we have an essential role to play in helping them excel. While pursuing a sport involves the determination and skill of your kids, there are plenty of ways that you can cheer them on and set them up for success. Read on to learn a few ways parents can support young athletes in their journeys to be the next champions.

Encourage a Healthy Mindset and Team Spirit

One of the most valuable things you can do for your young athlete is to instill a healthy mindset and promote strong team spirit. Encourage them to focus on improving themselves and the team rather than winning at all costs. Remember, no victory is worth the price of your child burning out from excessive pressure. Always remind them that there are other things to life than their chosen sport, and encourage them to enjoy themselves with their friends.

Participate in Their Journey

Your involvement in their pursuits can also make a world of difference when it comes to fostering your child's athletic potential. Attend their games, practices, and competitions whenever possible. Provide them with a solid support system that will be there for them through both victories and challenges. Share their successes, help them learn from their failures, and, most of all, let them know that you are their biggest fan.

Be a Positive Role Model

Children learn by example, so it's important to be a positive role model. Demonstrate the value of hard work, dedication, and fair play in the things you do and how you engage with others. You may not be a star athlete yourself, but your strong character can still have an immense impact on your young athlete's development. Emphasize the Importance of Academics

Another effective way parents can support young athletes is by encouraging them to put just as much effort into their schooling. Though your child may have aspirations to become a professional athlete, there is no guarantee it will happen. Make sure that they understand the importance of academics and balance their sports commitments with their studies. This conversation helps ensure that your child can pursue an alternative career path or, generally, grow into a more informed and well-rounded individual.

Provide a Healthy Diet and Adequate Rest

A fundamental part of any athlete's success lies in their diet and rest. Support your child by providing a variety of nutritious meals to fuel their growth and development. Educate them on the importance of proper nutrition and hydration for peak performance. Don't forget about the significance of sleep, either! Encourage good sleep habits, such as consistent sleep schedules, so that they can perform at their best.

By staying involved, you'll give your child the support they need to excel in their chosen sport.

So, take the time to nurture their strength and determination with your love and guidance — you'll be more than proud of the people they become.



THE IMPORTANCE OF JOURNALING

A journal provides an athlete with a place to set goals, reflect, grapple with issues, keep track of training ideas, and record results as well as plan, scheme, ponder, rant, question, draw, and rejoice. As with Team Notebooks, there is no one right way to utilize these books. Athletes may use their journal writing for motivation and focusing, where some may use a journal as a workbook and focus on the technical aspects of the sport.

You can give your athletes prompts or provide them with these ideas to record in the journals:

- Goals – yearly, monthly, weekly and/or daily
- Corrections
- Reflections/Feelings
- Practices/Training Sessions
- Nutrition
- Positivity
- Hopes/Dreams/Desires
- Competition Analysis
- Weaknesses/Strengths
- Pre-Season Thoughts
- Post-Season Thoughts
- Tracking Progress





VISUALIZE SUCCESS

Many elite athletes routinely use visualization techniques as part of training and competition. There are many stories of athletes who have used these techniques to cultivate not only a competitive edge, but also to create renewed mental awareness, a heightened sense of well-being and confidence. All of these factors have been shown to contribute to an athlete's sports success.

Visualization

Visualization has also been called guided imagery, mental rehearsal, mediation, and a variety of other things -- no matter the term, the basic techniques and concepts are the same. Generally speaking, visualization is the process of creating a mental image or intention of what you want to happen or feel in reality.

An athlete can use this technique to 'intend' an outcome of a race or training session, or simply to rest in a relaxed feeling of calm and well-being. By imagining a scene, complete with images of a previous best performance or a future desired outcome, the athlete is instructed to simply 'step into' that feeling.

While imagining these scenarios, the athlete should try to imagine the detail and the way it feels to perform in the desired way. These scenarios can include any of the senses. They can be visual (images and pictures), kinesthetic (how the body feels), or auditory (the roar of the crowd). Using the mind, an athlete can call up these images over and over, enhancing the skill through repetition or rehearsal, similar to physical practice.

With mental rehearsal, minds and bodies become trained to actually perform the skill imagined.

Research is finding that both physical and psychological reactions in certain situations can be improved with visualization. Such repeated imagery can build both experience and confidence in an athlete's ability to perform certain skills under pressure, or in a variety of possible situations. The most effective visualization techniques result in a very vivid sport experience in which the athlete has complete control over a successful performance and a belief in this new 'self.'

Guided imagery, visualization, mental rehearsal or other such techniques can maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of your training. In a world where sports performance and success is measured in seconds, most athletes will use every possible training technique at hand. Visualization might be one way to gain that very slim margin. Golfing legend Jack Nicklaus often used mental imagery to visualize his swing and even the trajectory of the ball before getting ready to play. Mental imagery is a helpful tool that can help athletes focus on their strengths, build confidence and improve performance. Although it's not a substitute for practice and hard work, it can help you achieve your goals and improve your game.

Identification

Visualization, or mental imagery, is a technique in which you imagine yourself in a specific environment performing a specific activity. It can help you familiarize yourself with a mental run-through of a race course or complicated play before an event. You might use visualization to view yourself performing at a higher level. It's also an effective motivation tool, reminding you of your objectives and helping to inspire confidence.

When to Use It

Mental imagery is most successful when it becomes a habit that you practice every day, but you should also use it before, during and after training. Spend time during each imagery session mentally practicing and focusing on proper techniques and skills. Before an event starts during a competition, mentally run through your plan, focusing on any significant plays, skills, movements and reactions or any feelings you want to use during your performance. A study in France, published in August 2005 in "Perceptual and Motor Skills," showed that mental imagery combined with physical practice greatly improves performance even with beginning athletes.

Source: Bonnie, Singleton, www.livestrong.com & Elizabeth Quinn



PROTEIN'S EFFECT ON SLEEP AND MUSCLE RECOVERY

Although the impact of sleep on the body's ability to recover and repair has been established for many years, researchers have only recently begun to examine the role that night-time protein intake can have on the body's typical sleep patterns.

Protein, when taken immediately post-workout, has been long tied to muscle recovery and repair from exercise and training. For example, sports dietitians recommend that athletes consume protein foods containing approximately 2.3 grams per serving of leucine, an amino acid that signals the muscles to recover and repair after a workout. Research shows this amount of leucine can best repair and maintain muscle.

Scientists have begun to explore what happens in the body when protein is provided outside of the post-workout recovery period.

When we sleep, the rate at which the body creates new protein – an essential part of recovery from training and competition – is normally quite low. In general, protein consumed during the post-workout period is no longer available by the time an athlete is settling in for a night of sleep. So researchers are now considering if there are ways to support recovery during this “window.”

Given that the recommendation is for athletes to get 8-10 hours of sleep a night, this means one-third of the day is spent in a state of low protein synthesis. The standard assumption has been that low availability of amino acids – the building blocks of protein – at night is a rate-limiting factor in protein synthesis.

But researchers in the Netherlands in 2012 showed that 40 grams of protein consumed by resistance-trained subjects 30 minutes before sleep could, in fact, be digested and absorbed, which increased the availability of amino acids throughout the sleep period. This increase in available amino acids supported the body's ability to create new protein.

The rest of this article can be found [here](#).

USAAS Members will receive a 15% discount for all Thorne products: <https://www.thorne.com/u/USAAS>





5-4-3-2-1 WORKOUT

5 Minutes:

- 1 min Jumping Jacks
- 1 min high knees
- 1 min butt kickers
- 1 min squat jumps
- 1 min high knees

4 Minutes:

- 1 min squats
- 1 min wall sit
- 1 min squat jumps
- 1 min wall sit

3 Minutes:

- 1 min tricep dips
- 1 min pushups
- 1 min

2 Minutes:

- 1 min walking lunges
- 1 min jumping lunges

1 Minutes

- 1 min Plank

LET'S ROLL

If you roll:

Then do:



20 second jog in place



10 mountain climbers



20 russian twists



10 squat jumps



20 second plank



10 calf raises

SPIN AN EXERCISE

First spin the exercise spinner, then spin the #1-#12 spinner to choose how many times to do that exercise. Repeat and have fun!





ARIANA

This figure requires a lot of flexibility and strength that should be first developed on land. The land exercises should focus on developing range of motion for shoulders, lower back, hips and the 3 Split positions, as well as building strength in the upper back, glutes and legs in order to perform the beginning and end of the figure.

EXAMPLE EXERCISE

On the knees, the athlete arches back all the way to the ground and returns to the starting position. Repeat.



IMPROVING ANKLE EXTENSION

Ankle mobility is not only important for speed swimmers, but for artistic swimmers as well.

The link below has some great videos and tips for improving ankle mobility and ankle extension.

Click [here](#)

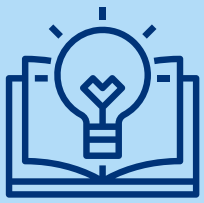
SWORDFISH

Here's an exercise to bring awareness into which muscles are being used to activate the leg apart from the arms and the rest of the body.

Bring the heel as far forward over your head without sinking and hold for 15 seconds.

Coaches should correct the extension of both legs, body posture and focus on separating the effort on arms and body.





CONTINUING EDUCATION



CONNECTION BASED COACHING

Coaches play a pivotal role in the success of Team USA and the development of healthy, happy, and successful athletes across all levels and age groups, both in and out of sport. As part of the Million Coaches Challenge (MCC) the USOPC has developed a self-paced online training course called Connection Based Coaching. In three 30-minute modules, this **FREE** course focuses on social and emotional learning (SEL) skills for coaches to connect better with their athletes. The mission is to build a community of coaches with expertise in youth development techniques, benefiting young athletes both on and off the field.

Connection Based Coaching training course was designed by professionals in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and utilizes the experiences of interviewed Team USA athletes, coaches, and staff to help participants understand how these skills can enhance their coaching.

The free course can be accessed [here](#).

Thank you for your commitment to youth development and coaching excellence. We look forward to your participation in this exciting challenge!

WHY DEI?



Early October USA Artistic Swimming announced the launch of WHY DEI? new DEI training partnership with Guardian Quest. With the vision of advancing diversity, equity and inclusion within the organization, this training opportunity is available to all members of the USAAS community and beyond.

This DEI training has been developed with the primary purpose of helping individuals understand what DEI means and lead to confident and productive conversations. We believe that this will make the artistic swimming community a more inclusive and welcoming space.

We highly encourage you to take advantage of this resource. Please visit the link [here](#) to take the Why DEI training.



ATHLETE GOALS

SEEKING EXCELLENCE

Is perfectionism a positive attribute for athletes?

Have you ever said to yourself “If I fail or make a mistake people won’t like me?” Or “Why should I do tryouts again if I didn’t make it the first time?” The perfectionist cycle of thinking is one of negativity: “I am not good enough,” “this is awful,” “I’ll never be able to do that skill.”

Here’s the secret: no one on earth is perfect!

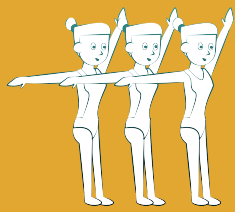
An old saying goes, “Perfectionism is the art of never being satisfied.” So take that burden off your shoulders. Perfect doesn’t exist. Perfection just simply isn’t attainable.

- Perfectionism can hurt your performance and slow your progress.
- Perfectionism strips you of your confidence. Athletes on the hunt for perfection usually fail to accomplish their athletic goals because they get frustrated easier.
- Perfectionism leads to athlete burnout. Social perfectionism – the pressure from those around you to be perfect – can lead athletes to lose their desire to play sport as they feel they are not doing it for themselves but instead for those around them.

Source: Lori C. Eaton, Certified Sport Psychology Coach
Founder + CEO | READY, GO. www.readygolori.com

The full article can be found [HERE](#)





LANDDRILL - MAKING IT PERFECT

What the heck are they doing? That is one of the first things many new to artistic swimming wonder when they see a group of athletes counting & moving their arms around like crazy! But actually, landdrill is one of the most important aspects and skills to master when it comes to improving overall routine execution.

During landdrill every movement and count should be precisely defined and executed by each member. Every move should be perfectly matched. This will take a lot of time in the beginning, but the more it is practiced & enforced the easier the muscle memory will kick in – on land and in the water.

The goal for athletes is to landdrill at a higher level than they would be swimming. If the usual routine score in the water is a 6, the landdrill should be at a 9 or higher. Whether it is done at home by yourself or with teammates, it should be done with the highest level of energy, detail and quality of execution. Full engagement, both physically and mentally is very important.

Remember, landdrill is not just a way to prolong getting in that cold water or to use as a warm-up. It is also a great form of visualization. The visualization works both ways though, if landdrill is “lazy” the muscles will remember that and transfer those moves into the water.

Lastly, it is important that landdrill be done as if the athlete is in the water. This is crucial for important direction orientations, patterns and walls to face in the pool.

Always strive for that perfect 10 – in & out of the water!!!

CHECK LIST

-  Do a proper warm-up before landdrill.
-  Perfect posture throughout.
-  Count out loud and sharp!
-  No need to “walk”, take small steps for pattern changes.
-  Perform full presentation.

-  Count out loud and sharp!
-  Transfer perfect landdrill to the water
-  Take the time to match arms & hands
-  Each movement should be precise and sharp!
-  Perfect landdrill is hard, work up a sweat.



DTC & STC UPDATES

AQUA UPDATES & CLARIFICATIONS

as of December, 2023 and January, 2024

Below you will find just some of the updates & clarifications that have recently been made. Please check out the USAAS Website [here](#) to find all documents.

- T1 - number of legs = 1 or 2
- Twisting/Twirling that don't stay at height = if an athlete descends or rises 2 or more levels per the height chart, this will go to base mark. This only applies to Free Hybrids, not TRE's or figures.
- Twisting/Twirling/Spinning = if athlete(s) do more than half the rotation without any ascending or descending, it is base mark. This only applies to Free Hybrids, not TRE's or figures.
- Unbalanced Rotations = cannot be more than 45° from vertical during the rotation & entire rotation must maintain a visible deviation of at least 10° from vertical.
- R5 & R6 = legs may bend.
- F2 Split & F5 Knight = needs to show hold with no change in position or height at least one (1) second.
- AW5 = Isolated leg must be within the cone.
- AW7 = Both thighs must be 10° to 45° off balance in side, pike or arch positions. Cannot be more than 45° from vertical and must maintain a visible deviation of at least 10° from vertical.
- C1 = is a connection on the surface of the water without one or more legs within the cone for both athletes.
- Travel = athletes must travel at least one meter (3.3 feet) in one direction before traveling in another.
- 12&U/Youth Acro DD Limits = Acro over the limit will now be a BM (previously 2-point penalty).
- Thrust deviation angles have been lowered. Refer to AQUA Rulebook.

Acro updates/clarifications can be found on the posted DTC Reference Sheet, updated January 2024.