

Gold Age Group Standards

Stroke/Swim Side:

The Gold age group program (14-under) should strive towards increasing competitiveness by having all swimmers (through discretion of their coach) swim IM X events, and try to qualify for the IM X meet in mid November in Mesa, Arizona. If swimmers are not ready for IM X events and/or is a novice/first year club swimmer, then they should (through discretion of their coach) strive to swim all the IM R events at least twice a year.

The IM X and IM R program was created by USA Swimming to create more well-rounded swimmers that could swim a wide range of different stroke types and distances.

IM X or formally The IM Xtreme Games, consist of list of events that swimmers must swim during the qualifying period (September 1st to November 1st the following year) and earn a total of 1500 points. Each age group has a different list of events that are more befitting the swimmer's age. The points awarded are based off of best times in the listed events, and swimmer's age and gender.

IM R or formally IM Ready is a scaled back version of IM X that has no points or meet attached to it. IM R is a great way to introduce IM X to swimmers and act as a benchmark for for beginner/novice level swimmers.

The IM X events are as follows:

10 & Under: 200 free, 100 back, 100 breast, 100 fly, 200 IM

11 - 12: 500 free, 100 back, 100 breast, 100 fly, 100 IM

13 & Older: 500 free, 200 back, 200 breast, 200 fly, 200 IM, 400 IM

The IM R events are as follows:

10 & Under: 100 free, 50 back, 50 breast, 50 fly, 100 IM

11 - 12: 200 free, 50 back, 50 breast, 50 fly, 100 IM

13 & Older: 200 free, 100 back, 100 breast, 100 fly, 200 IM

Mental/Psychological side:

In addition to strive towards further competitiveness, the Gold Age group program (14-Under) should strive for swimmers to obtain personal growth, learning and using good sportsmanship behavior, and developing life skills (ie accepting challenges, attention to detail, discipline, goal setting, hard work, organization, sacrifice, follow directions, teamwork, time management).

Furthermore, swimmers should develop a sense of ownership in their sport making it their own.

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Life Skills Learned at the Pool, by Karlyn Pipes-Neilsen

Help Wanted: Disciplined, organized, hard-working, goal-oriented person with good time-management skills. Must pay attention to detail, like to be challenged, make sacrifices, take direction and work well in a group setting. All applicants please apply at the nearest swim team.

We all know that swimming offers many benefits: it's a great form of exercise, you meet like-minded people of all ages and from all walks of life, and competitive swimming is a great way to challenge yourself.

However, there is a lot more going on - both in and out of the pool - than meets the eye.

Bottom line: lessons learned at the pool teach us valuable skills we use in everyday life. Better yet, the skill-set developed through swimming is what colleges and corporations look for in a desirable applicant.

That's pretty cool stuff.

Following is only a small sample of the many characteristics it takes to be a swimmer. While reading, ask yourself this question - would you hire this person?

- **Accept Challenges:** Swimmers face new challenges every race, every training session and throughout the season. How a swimmer deals with challenging situations help define them as an athlete...and as a person.
- **Attention to Detail:** Swimming, like life, is all about the details. Swimmers know that even a small change in technique, training habits or attitude can add up to big time drops at the next meet.
- **Discipline:** Swimming is a demanding sport and it takes discipline and commitment to show up day in and day out, especially during hard training.
- **Goal-Oriented:** Swimmers are some of the most goal-oriented athletes on earth. On a regular basis, they set both short and long-term goals and learn to re-establish goals once they have been met.
- **Hard Work:** The sport of swimming requires strength, stamina and the willingness to work hard-all the time. In swimming, there are no shortcuts to the top.
- **Organizational Skills:** Forget your suit, cap and goggles, and you are probably not going to swim. Fail to pack the clothes you are going to wear after practice, the food you plan to eat and the report that's due today, and you are in big trouble. Boy Scouts have nothing on swimmers when it comes to the motto, "Be Prepared."
- **Sacrifice:** Early morning swim practices, turning down social engagements due to swim-related commitments and delaying gratification are just a few of the many sacrifices swimmers make to be able to achieve in the sport.
- **Take Direction:** Swimmers must have the ability to listen well, process information, take direction and be led even when the destination is not clear. A relationship based on trust and respect between swimmer and coach is a crucial ingredient to swimming success.
- **Teamwork:** Swimming is considered an individual sport, but when you are sharing a lane with seven people or trying to win a duel meet, you are working together as a team to achieve a common goal.
- **Time Management:** Swimmers are busy people juggling swim practices, meets, jobs, school, family and a whole host of other activities. Whether it's getting to the blocks on time or getting dinner on the table, swimmers are great meeting "deadlines."

So, the next time you head to the pool to work on your swimming skills, consider the life skills you are learning as well. Swimming truly does teach us to "suit up for life."