

Chicago Blue Dolphins – Practice Etiquette

The Basics

- Learn the names of the swimmers in your lane
- Pay close attention to the practice schedule and the coach's explanations of the sets – if you are swimming much faster than everyone in the lane, it could be that everyone else in the lane is following instructions and is doing the swims at an easier pace
- Learn to read the pace clock – know your time, your interval, and your next send off
- Use the pace clock, not your watch, so everyone, including the coach, is on the same page
- Stay on the interval and help your lane mates stay on the interval
- Count your laps and stop at the appropriate number
- The slowest person in the lane should be able to make the interval with some rest – if the interval happens to be too slow for you, ask the coach how you can make the swim more challenging (e.g., add in lengths of non-freestyle, swim at a lower count)
- Get in the right order in the lane – fastest to slowest
- Don't swim on the feet of the person in front of you. Either go ahead of them or (if possible) leave further apart
- Don't take it personally if someone wants to go ahead of you. Give the person appropriate lead time and don't punish the person by sprinting and riding his feet for the rest of the set
- Leave at least 5 seconds apart, and, if possible, 10 seconds apart
- Stay to the right of the lane
- Turn in the middle of the lane at the wall – your path should football shaped
- Be AWARE of where others are in your lane. ANTICIPATE when they will catch you, pull over, let them pass, and give them a 5 second head start before following
- Don't push off the wall in front of someone about to turn if they are faster than you
- If you don't know the name of the drill or how to do it, please ask the coach to explain it to you. Spend that part of the practice focusing on learning that drill well for the next time

Finer Points for Better Performance

- Encourage your lane mates in practice
- Count strokes when asked and try to match the requirements of the practice the best you can
- Descend swims when asked
- Negative split swims when asked
- Even split swims if there is no other pacing instruction
- Start, turn and finish with legal push offs
- Finish to the wall on every swim and let your lane mates do the same – finish with underwater touches (two hands for breaststroke and butterfly, one hand for backstroke and freestyle)