Fall & Winter 2026-2027 Season Information

Welcome to the Fall/Winter Short Course Yards (SCY) season! Core Aquatics is a competitive USA Swimming club offering high-caliber programming for swimmers of all ages and ability levels.

Our mission is to provide athletes with exceptional aquatics skills and year-round programming that promotes sportsmanship, fitness, personal responsibility, and fun. We believe that **with proper technique comes speed**, which is why we prioritize stroke mechanics first and yardage second.

Please review this entire packet carefully prior to registering. Registration confirms that you have read, understood, and agree to be responsible for all material and policies outlined below.

Registration & Evaluation

Current Members

- **Priority Registration:** Opens July 20th and runs exclusively for current members until July 31st.
- **Procedure:** Register for the same practice squad your athlete finished on last season unless explicitly notified otherwise by Coach Drum.
- **Waitlist Status:** Your registration will initially place your child on a waitlist. Coach Drum will review, approve, move them to the active roster, and charge the card on file within 24 hours. *Please ensure your payment card is up to date.*

New to Core High School Swimmers

- High school swimmers looking to join our team will need to fill out this document and Coach Drum will email you directly. You do not need to sign up for an evaluation

New Members (Kindergarten – 8th Grade): **All new age-group swimmers must undergo an in-water evaluation. Registration can be found here.**

- **Evaluation Fee:** $25 non-refundable (applied toward tuition if accepted; can be applied to *Learn 2 Swim* or *Swim Team Prep* if the team isn't a fit yet).
- **Prerequisite:** Swimmers must be able to swim one full length (25 yards) of both freestyle and backstroke without stopping.
- **Evaluation Date:** Sunday, August 23rd at Prospect High School.
- **Registration Deadline:** Monday, August 17th @ 12:00 PM. *No walk-ins accepted.*

Swimmers will complete a typical age appropriate practice while being evaluated by our coaching staff. Completing an evaluation does not guarantee a spot on our team. We will email evaluation placement along with links to our registration page by 5pm on Monday August 24th. The day of evaluation will be strictly an in water

assessment of the swimmers. All questions about our team or practice schedule should be emailed to Coach Drum prior to our evaluations: tara.drum@d214.org. For those who have conflicts on August 23rd, please contact Coach Drum.

Evaluations will run as follows:

Group	Time
8 & under	9:45am - 10:15am
9 - 10 year olds	10:30 - 11:00am
11 - 12 year olds	11:15am - 11:45am
13 - 14 year olds	12:00pm - 12:30pm

The Structure of Core Aquatics

We are a competitive USA Swim club. Our Swim team is divided into four practice squads that are grouped solely on ability level and not age. Swimmers compete based on their age but practice based on their current skills and abilities.

Our coaching staff will decide which practice squad best fits your swimmers current skill level. New members will undergo our evaluation process to determine which practice squad they will register with. Returning members should sign up for the same squad they were previously on unless a coach invites them to practice on a different squad.

Members are not entitled to pick a squad that fits their schedule or that they think they should practice on. Coaching staff is always available to discuss goals for moving to the next practice squad but ultimately the coaching staff reserves the right to decide which squad and lane swimmers practice in. Our practice squads are as follows:

Pre-Competitive: Swim Team Prep (STP)

- **Focus:** Preparing future competitive swimmers for a true swim team environment.
- **Requirements:** Must pass the *Swordfish* level of Learn 2 Swim OR be proficient in freestyle and backstroke for 25 yards nonstop.
- **Curriculum:** Introduces breaststroke, butterfly, starts, turns, and tight streamlines using competitive sets and drills. Coaches provide instruction primarily from the deck.

Orange Squad (Orange 1, 1.5, and Orange 2)

- **Focus:** Mechanical precision, basic racing strategies, and introducing competitive rules.
- **Requirements:** Legal in all four competitive strokes, able to dive confidently from racing blocks, and able to complete a broken 400 swim (100 easy free, 100 kick, 100 pull, 100 IM) with technical ease.
- **Training Balance:** Orange 2 focuses 90% on stroke technique / 10% on endurance. Orange 1 progressively scales up baseline endurance training.

Blue Squad (Blue 1, Blue 1.5, and Blue 2)

- **Focus:** Advanced efficiency, technical maintenance under speed, and foundational endurance.
- **Requirements:** Legally swim all four strokes for 100+ yards, executing legal competitive turns and racing starts. Swimmers must be able to independently read and follow a written set.
- **Training Balance:** 75% stroke technique and efficiency / 25% mixed aerobic and anaerobic endurance. All Blue tiers train together; reps and target intervals scale by group

Silver Squad (Silver 1 and Silver 2)

- **Focus:** Advanced race pace execution, power generation, and high-volume conditioning.
- **Requirements:** Legally swim all four strokes for 200+ yards with excellent streamlines and turns. Must be capable of a continuous 1,000-yard freestyle swim, understanding written workouts effortlessly, and hold prior team racing experience.
- **Training Volume:** 3,000 to 4,000 yards per 1.5-hour practice.
- **Training Balance:** 50% technical mastery / 50% power, aerobic, and anaerobic training. *On-deck dryland training is fully integrated beginning in November.*

Navy Squad (Navy 1, 2, and 3)

- **Focus:** Elite, senior-level training designed for success at the High School, Sectional, and Championship levels.
- **Requirements: Strictly Invitation-Only** by the Head Coach and Lead Senior Staff.
- **Expectations:** High-level accountability, strict punctuality, comprehensive dryland training, and a deep commitment to high-intensity training thresholds.

In some cases we may start new swimmers in our Learn 2 Swim program. This program focuses strictly on learning all 4 competitive strokes in a fun and engaging manner. Our Learn 2 swim program is further divided into 7 specific levels that all have extremely specific primary and secondary skills. More on that program can be found here.

Season Schedules & Pricing Matrix

The Short Course Yards season officially kicks off on **Monday, August 31st** for Navy, **Tuesday, September 8th** for Silver, and **Wednesday, September 9th** for Orange and Blue groups.Our season runs through February 18th with Championship season, for those who qualify, running into March.

For our Navy (High School swimmers) we offer 1⁄2 season options that do not coincide with their high school season. Our high school girls should plan to begin after the IHSA Sectional meet unless they progressed to the IHSA State meet, then they will continue to train with their High School Teams until the conclusion of the State series. Out High School boys should plan on returning after their IHSA season has concluded. Those athletes still qualify for regionals and Senior Champs if applicable. The attached matrix provides pricing:

Group	Dates (excludes champ dates)	Price
Swim Team Prep	Session 1: 9/13 - 11/18 Session 2: 12/9 - 2/17	$279 per session
Orange	Sept. 9 2026 – Feb 17 2027	$410
Blue	Sept. 9 2026 – Feb 17 2027	$475
Silver	Sept. 8 2026 – Feb 17 2027	$599
Navy	Aug. 31 2026 – Feb 17 2027	$699
Boys Navy ½ season	Aug 31 2026 – Nov 19 2027 + return after IHSA season	$385
Girls Navy ½ season	Nov 16 2026 – Feb 17 2027	$385

Required USA Swimming Fees

Core Aquatics is a standard USA Swimming club. All participating athletes must hold a current national membership.

- **USA Swimming Fee:** An additional **$92.00** national fee is required.
- **Important Registration Timing:** If you are a brand new USA Swimming member, **do not register for your credentials until after September 1, 2026**. Registering after Sept. 1st protects your membership standing all the way through December 31, 2027. (Registering prior to Sept. 1st causes your membership to expire early on Dec. 31, 2026). A direct link will be emailed to the team on September 1st.
- **Club Transfers:** Athletes transferring from another competitive club will incur a standard **$10 Illinois Swimming transfer fee** applied directly to their Eleyo account.

Practice Matrix and Information

Please note the attached matrix is just a guide. Please refer to the calendar on our website for the most up to date information. There are several instances where practices might be moved around due to the High School swim team usage. We try our hardest to stick to the original schedule but things do sporadically change and we ask for your patience when those changes have to be made.

Practices will be kept up to date on our website (not the Eleyo website you use to register for the program). When in doubt please check the practice calendar on our team website. Any changes will be emailed and sent out via Remind. We will run a modified practice schedule over winter break. Those dates and times will be released during the first week of December and will also be listed on our team website.

Practice Attendance & Expectations

Like anything else in life, you get out of swimming what you put into it. To ensure consistent developmental progress, swimmers should maintain a minimum of 75% weekly attendance. Missing technical build blocks directly affects an athlete's ability to safely and successfully keep up with the progression of their group.

Below is our tentative schedule:

Group Schedule	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
STP	White & Grey 11:35- 12:35 @ PHS			White: 6:00-7:00pm Grey 7:00-8:00. @ WHS			
ORANGE	11:45 - 12:45 @ PHS	6:30 - 7:30pm @ WHS	6:30 - 7:30pm @ WHS	6:30 - 7:30pm @ WHS			
BLUE	12:15 - 1:30 @ PHS	7:30 - 8:45pm @ WHS	7:30 - 8:45pm @ WHS	7:30 - 8:45pm @ WHS			
SILVER	8:30 - 10:00am @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS		
NAVY	8- 10am @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS	8:00 - 9:30pm @ PHS		11:30 - 1:30 @ PHS or WHS

Tentative Swim Meet Schedule

Included is our **TENTATIVE** Fall/Winter matrix. These dates are based on previous year's dates but are not set in stone. **Please note there will not be practice on meet weekends.** Swimmers on the Orange, Blue, Silver, and Navy squads are expected to compete in at least one session per scheduled meet weekend. *Swim Team Prep athletes do not attend meets unless explicitly invited by their coach.*

Tentative meet dates include:

2026	2027
September 26 - 27 (HPAC) - Highland Park HS	Jan 8-10 - (BSC)- Barrington HS
October 18 (NAC) – Lincolnway East HS (TBD)	Jan 29 - Jan 31 (RISE) – Libertyville HS
October 24-25 (RISE) – Libertyville HS	February 5 - 7 (PAC) – Stevenson HS
November 20 - 22 (HPAC) - Highland Park HS	February 21 - Alligator's Last Chance invite TBD
December 5 - 6 (COHO) – Deerfield HS	

Championship season extends into the following:

Regionals	February 26 - February 28, 2026 - TBD
Senior Championship	March 4 - March 7, 2027
10U Champs	March 6 - March 7, 2027
Age Group Championship	March 11 - March 14, 20267

** Athletes must achieve cut times to participate in the above meets. Cut times can be found here.

Mandatory Meet Entry Guidelines

1. **Commitment Deadlines:** Meet entry windows will be announced via email and posted under the "Meets/Events" tab on our website. Deadlines are strict due to host team limits.

2. **Coach Customization:** Families will commit their swimmer via "Events" or "Sessions." The coaching staff reviews all requests and holds final authority over the exact event selections.

3. **The Relay Policy:** If Core Aquatics enters a relay lineup, **placements are chosen exclusively by coaches**. Swimming is a team sport; if the team requires your athlete to swim a relay, they are expected to participate. Relays may not be opted out of, except under sudden emergency conditions or pre-arranged scratch agreements for major Championship meets.

4. **Outside Competition:** Athletes are strictly prohibited from entering outside meets or independent time-trials without explicit clearance from the Head Coach.

Meets are entire weekend events that are typically separated into 6 or 7 sessions and come with additional fees. Each meet is run a tad differently and the events in the meet are always determined by the host team. There are typically several teams present per meet with somewhere around 600 swimmers competing throughout the weekend. Your swimmer is not expected to be present for the entire weekend, but we do expect them to swim in at least one session of each meet (this is for the orange, blue, silver and Navy practice squads. Swim Team Prep athletes will not swim in a meet until they qualify for the orange practice squad or are invited to swim in a meet by their coach). We plan on participating in one meet per month. Please note, we do not always get accepted into these meets. It really all depends on the space and if our entries are on time – which is why deadlines are crucial. I have linked our Meet FAQ page and encourage you to look through the document to better understand meet procedures; however, Core has created the following meet entry guidelines:

- Available Swim Meets to the team will be posted under the “Meets/Events” page of the website with the meet packet and other available and pertinent information. An email notifying Core members when a meet entry is opened will be sent out to the team.
- Core members will either commit for a meet by “Events” or by “Sessions”. Swimmers can note which events they want to swim but Coaching Staff will approve each swimmer’s events and modify them if necessary. For a video tutorial on how to do this, please click here.
- The preliminary meet entries will be posted on the event competition page on the website sent in a mass email to the team. Parents, guardians, and swimmers will have a designated time to review the entries and email to discuss any potential additions or changes with the coaching staff. Note, however, that although changes to the meet entry may be discussed, the Coaching Staff has final say in what events a swimmer will enter.
- If the team is entered in a meet that has relays, the Coaching Staff will decide on entering those events. The decision on which swimmers will be placed in any entered relay will be made solely by the coaching staff. Members will no longer have the ability to opt out of a relay. Swimming is as much a team sport as it is an individual sport. If our team needs you in a relay you will be swimming that relay. Except for Championship Meets, relays will be decided upon by the Coaching Staff at the time of the meet.
- For Championships Meets (Regionals, Age Group State, and beyond), Core swimmers will be entered in ALL events in which they have qualified. If the swimmer is qualified in more events than they are allowed to swim for a particular day or the entire meet, the Coaching Staff will work with that swimmer to determine which events should be scratched.
- Swimmers are not allowed to compete in a meet or time trial that is not on the meet schedule without approval from the coaching staff.

Equipment

Each practice squad has a required list of equipment that our swimmers should bring to every practice in a mesh equipment bag. Please make sure your swimmer has their equipment by the beginning of the second week of practice. Feel free to purchase your equipment wherever you want, or you can visit our Swim Store through swimoutlet.com. Please follow the matrix to identify what your swimmers practice squad will need.** Practice suits must be one piece suits for girls and jammers or speedos for boys. Please, no bikinis, tankinis, rash guard shirts, or trunks.

[Click here to access our Equipment and Apparel Shop.]

	STP	ORANGE	BLUE	SILVER	NAVY
Mesh Equipment bag	x	x	x	x	x
Goggles	x	x	x	x	x
Swim Cap	x	x	x	x	x
Fins	x	x	x	x	x
KickBoard	x	x	x	x	x
Practice Suit	x	x	x	x	x
Core Competition Suit		x	x	x	x
Pull Buoy		x	x	x	x
Front mounted snorkel & nose clip			B1	x	x
Paddles			B1	x	x
Yoga Mat					suggested
Resistance bands					suggested

Our team suit can also be purchased at Kiefer Aquatics: 830 Setton Ct #8 Wheeling IL 60090. If you do not know your child's competition suit size, we suggest you go into the brick and mortar store to try on your suit prior to purchasing.

Suit Policy: Practice suits must be one-piece traditional suits for girls and jammers or brief speedos for boys. No bikinis, tankinis, rash guards, or loose swim trunks are allowed. **Official team competition suits must only be worn at meets, never during daily practice.**

Pool Access & Security Protocol

To support District 214 safety and security initiatives, external facility doors will remain securely locked.

- **Access Window:** Doors open exactly **10 minutes prior** to practice and close **3 minutes after** practice begins (a 13-minute entry window).
- **Entry Doors:** Door 13 at Prospect HS and Door 5 at Wheeling HS,
- **Late Arrivals:** Anyone arriving outside the 13-minute window must walk around to the school's primary entrance to secure access. There is no guarantee staff will be free to open doors late, so punctuality is mandatory. Parents observing from the stands must follow these exact entry protocols.

Key Apps for Parents

- **The Remind App:** Used for urgent deck alerts, weather updates, and practice schedule alterations. Text @coreaq to **81010** or visit [remind.com/join/coreaq] to join.
- **Go Motion Mobile App:** Connects directly with our Team Unify website hub. Use it to check your swimmer's verified stroke times, submit meet entries, review attendance records, and verify schedules.
- **Meet Mobile App:** A paid third-party mobile app crucial for tracking live meet results, viewing heat/lane psych sheets on the road, and monitoring real-time time drops.

Our Website

Please visit our website and familiarize yourself with it by clicking here. All new athletes will be uploaded into the system prior to practice beginning. You will receive an email from Team Unify asking you to confirm your email address. It is important that you do this. Our website is full of valuable information including our team practice schedule, meet and event sign up, apparel and equipment, and our parent corner that helps break the swim world down to our "new to competitive swimming" families.

Location Reference

We practice at various pools in district 214. Please refer to the practice matrix to identify where and when your practices take place. Our pools are located at:

Prospect High School
801 W Kensington Rd
Mt Prospect IL 60056

- **Pool Location:** When entering the high School parking lot via Kensington, drive around the front of the school heading east. This takes you to another parking lot where the school's main entrance and Natatorium entrance is located. Please use the Natatorium entrance or door 13 to enter.

Wheeling High School
900 S. Elmhurst Rd
Wheeling IL 60090

- **Pool Location:** When entering the high School parking lot via Elmhurst, drive to the southernmost corner of the parking lot. Please use door 5 at the end of the parking lot (next to the softball fields) to enter the school.

Buffalo Grove High School
1100 W Dundee Rd
Buffalo Grove IL 60089

- **Pool Location:** When entering from Arlington Heights road follow the building around to the parking lot. The pool is located at the North end of the school. You drive past the pool when you turn into the parking lot from Arlington Heights road. Enter through the Natatorium doors - door 45.

Contact Information

If you ever have any questions about the programming, registration, or meets please contact Head Coach Tara Drum at tara.drum@d214.org or through our Remind app.