



## Saluki Swim Club

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### NET RESOURCES

**Saluki Swim Club Online**  
[www.swimsaluki.com](http://www.swimsaluki.com)

**USA Swimming**  
[www.usa-swimming.org](http://www.usa-swimming.org)

**Ozark Swimming**  
[www.ozarkswimming.org](http://www.ozarkswimming.org)

### GET THIS LETTER BY EMAIL

Go to [www.swimsaluki.com](http://www.swimsaluki.com) to get this letter sent to you electronically each month.

## Alert

- This newsletter contains an order form for Saluki polo shirts. If you would like to order one of these shirts please fill in the form and return it to the address on the bottom of the form. **Do not return the form to Saluki HQ.** This will only delay your order.
- Are you on the Saluki email list? If not, you're missing the *Saluki Update*. Go to the website and register for the email updates.

## The Tut File #98

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The official journal of the Saluki Swim Club

# The Tut File

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## New group criteria mean changes to some training assignments

by BILL PRICE  
Saluki Head Coach

For the past year the Saluki coaching staff has been redesigning the group structure of the club with two goals in mind. First, identify what swimmers should be learning at each level and therefore what they need to do to move from one group to the next. Second, determine what elements of the current training protocol need to be strengthened or eliminated in order to bring a stronger sense of *team* to our efforts.

In the early 1990s the issue of team vs. service began to take up a lot of think time at Saluki HQ. Was it better to operate the club as a team with all the attendant swimmer/family requirements? or as a service with an array of activities, practices, and meets to choose from? We eventually decided that the club was both; thus creating a *service-team* continuum. Cooking up this idea was easier than implementing it however.

### The service-team continuum

In the *service-team* continuum a swimmer's level of participation is determined by his training group; the lower the group the less that is required—the higher the group the more that is required. We believe this is in line not only with the inherent nature of age group sport but also with what is realistic and necessary for success in any athletic activity. We're not simply talking about performance though. Obviously, the Jedi are not at the same performance level as Group 5 and no one expects them to be. What we're really talking about is commitment to a certain level of training and how that commitment changes as a child moves through our program.

In the Jedi group the commitment level is low. But we know that if a youngster likes what happens at a Jedi practice then he is likely to come back. We also know that overdoing it in terms of training at a young age can douse the spark of enthusiasm before it ever erupts into flame. That is why the 'requirements' at this level are few; the club is offering a service rather than a team experience. This doesn't mean that children don't enjoy team activities, they certainly do, it's

just that individual commitment is not critical to what they get from the program.

This same idea applies to parents of new or younger swimmers. We realize that if the club requires too much from new families they will just find another sport. And why not? They have no real stake in swimming, their child just started. Youth sport has to meet the needs of both the young athlete and the parents who want their child involved in healthy activity. If the club requires too much in terms of family participation at this level then parents will just find another healthy activity. Let's face it, there's lots of them out there.

The opposite end of the continuum (the *team* end) applies to our Group 5 squad. In the *service-team* model the requirements for this group are the highest because this is where the team aspect has the greatest effect. Although the performance level at both practice and meets is higher for our terminal group the *team* requirements have been practically nil in past years; thereby reducing the benefits one would expect to gain by training with this group. The smorgasbord of choice that aids the club at the entry level becomes an 'every man for himself'

attitude at the highest performance level and no one benefits from this.

### Change in focus

Even though the most noticeable changes in the group criteria occur in Group 5 there are changes at every level of the program. It's easy to discuss the changes by comparing extremes but changes affect all levels of the new protocol. Regardless of what the specifics of the changes are, the overall focus of these changes is threefold: (a) create a sound technical protocol that is easily understood, (b) offer progressive challenges to swimmers willing to accept them, and (c) raise the general skill and competitive level of every swimmer as they move through the program.

It will take a while for us to see concrete results but when we do it will signal that the club finally has a scheme that fulfills the three points made above.

### Pending issues

There are still issues that have not been completely solved. The most important being how performance evaluations can be made systematically. Our goal is to keep all coaches on the same page when it comes to stroke technique and answer the question, how good is 'good enough'?

Another issue is offering opportunities to meet the various performance criteria, most notably the T-30s. This is not a problem at the SRC but it is at Pulliam where Group 3 swimmers have to contend with warm water and sometimes crowded conditions. We expect to announce a solution in an upcoming issue of the *Saluki Update*.

The final item pending is, when to make the group changes. Coaches traditionally make seat-of-the-pants calls on this but we should be a bit more organized with it.

## Other considerations in making group changes

**A**long with the performance criteria there are other factors in play that affect the athlete and the team whenever group moves are made. These factors, while outside the scope of the training protocol, must still be considered by the coaches when making changes.

### Athlete considerations

#### Ability to train

This refers to the swimmer's ability to hold repeat times and intervals in all aspects of training. Can the swimmer meet and maintain the work load in the next group?

#### Attendance

As swimmers get older the quality of their training is affected not only by their intensity of work but by how often they attend practice in the first place. The more training sessions they attend the better condition they will be in.

#### Attitude

Moving to another group means harder work and more of it. The question is, does the swimmer enjoy practice? If not, is giving him more of it appropriate? Do swimmers develop the right attitude and then move? or do they move and then develop the proper attitude? The answer is: attitude comes first.

#### Age

This is an important but not overriding factor when determining a group move. It's possible that a talented 10-year-old might be able to handle the work load of Group 4 or 5 but would not fit into the upper groups simply because of age. There is value in allowing a 10-year-old to be a 10-year-old. This is why the group criteria include minimum ages.

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### Team considerations

#### Group size

Although the flow of swimmers from group to group usually takes care of itself there are times throughout the year when group size becomes problematic. This is usually at the beginning of the year when we have an influx of new swimmers. Because of this it becomes almost impossible to move swimmers as soon as we would like. When the groups that swimmers would be moved into are already too large then we have to wait for the natural flow of children from group to group to start. Sometimes this takes a little longer than at other times.

#### Sense of training time

This aspect refers to a swimmer's understanding of short term goal setting, and the kind and length of training activity required to achieve that goal. Jedi swimmers may be encouraged to see if they can accomplish certain skills or goals by the end of a practice session or by the end of a week while a Group 2 swimmer may do this over a period of a month; Group 4, a season and so forth. The more experienced the swimmers, the longer the period becomes.

#### Not a reward

Group changes should not be viewed as a reward. When swimmers are moved to another group it acknowledges a condition that

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## What's a swimmer to do?

**A**lmost everything that happens in a swimmers career is the result of how well they enhance their participation in the program—how they take advantage of what's actually available to them. Dr. Tim Henrich, Ph.D. offers advice to swimmers on how to do this:

1. **Initiate communication** with the coach. You must do your part to establish rapport. This is one way to let the coach know you're involved in the training program.
2. **Accept challenges** from the coach.

3. **Accept leadership opportunities.** Lead the group in activity such as stretching, team cheers etc.
4. **Cooperate with your peers and coaches.**
5. **Make technique and strategy corrections.** Especially in training and meets.

6. **Listen.** Successful training depends on you being involved at a cognitive level.

7. **Learn how to use the pace clock!**

8. **Be willing to try new things.** Including new coaches, new ideas and new swimmers moving into your group.

9. **Support your team mates.**

10. **Know your times** including workout sets, and best performances. You should be **thoroughly familiar** with your own past performances.



### Athlete considerations, continued

#### **Technique**

Has the swimmer mastered the start and stroke techniques we teach at his current level? Will he be able to 'pick up the ball' with the new group or will he become lost?

#### **Competition level**

Groups are set up for training; thus group assignment has little to do with a swimmers success or lack of it in competition. Coaches answer questions about this more than any other aspect of changing groups though. How well a swimmer does in meets is not really a consideration in training group assignments.

### Team considerations, continued

already exists. If the coaches are fairly sure that the swimmer can handle the work load of the next group and if all the other criteria are met then the swimmer is moved.

#### **Not a cure**

Swimmers are never moved in order to challenge them to perform better. Although this is expected at the higher level the change is never used to encourage a swimmer who is exhibiting declining interest or a poor attitude toward training.

#### **Conclusion**

As with any project of this type there will be changes made once we find out where the problems lie. Our objective though will remain that of designing a training scheme that not only serves entry level swimmers; teaching them the skills necessary for full participation but also challenges those swimmers committed to developing their full potential.

## Current Group Criteria

### **JEDI—Introduction to the sport**

- Minimum age: 6 years.
  - Able to swim 25 yards of backstroke and freestyle without assistance. Freestyle should be done with rotary breathing.
- Five practices are offered each week.

### **GROUP 2—Skill development**

- Minimum age: 8 years.
  - Able to swim all 4 strokes, perform flip turns on freestyle and backstroke, and consistently streamlines properly.
  - Is able to perform a forward dive.
- Five practices are offered each week.

### **GROUP 3—Basic training**

- Minimum age 10 years.
  - Able to swim all 4 strokes with proper turns and starts.
  - Has attended meets and has times in the 100 distances of all strokes and in the 400/500 free.
- Six practices are offered each week.

### **GROUP 4—Progressive training**

- This level serves as an introduction to the highest level of training offered by the club.
- Minimum age: 11 years.
  - Has performed at least 2 T-30 swims of 2000 yards or more along with other practice based requirements.
  - Continuous participation.

- Attendance at team meets. Competition becomes an integral part of an athletes training at this level.
- Six practices are offered each week.

### **GROUP 5—Advanced training**

- Highest level of training offered by the club.
- Minimum age: 13 years.
  - T-30 swim of 2350 yards or longer along with other practice based requirements.
  - Continuous participation with 75% practice attendance.
  - Attendance at team meets.
- Up to nine practices are held each week.

## News Bits

### **Are you receiving the *Saluki Update*?**

In early November we began publishing the *Saluki Update*, an Internet only document that deals with the more immediate issues related to club operations. If you did not receive the *Update* in your email inbox then we do not have a valid email address for you. To remedy this go to the club website and register for the *Saluki* email list. You can receive the *Update* at as many addresses as you want.

We decided to go with an Internet only publication for two reasons. First, it can be more timely; it's published approximately every 2 weeks (sometimes more often). Second, it's easier to produce, publish and distribute so our chance of getting important, time sensitive information to those who need it increases.

*The Tut File* will continue to be published but on a less frequent basis. *The Tut File* will also continue to be mailed in the traditional way to every family in the club.

### **Please use Amazon.com when ordering online**

Christmas is coming and another national round of online ordering is about to get underway. The *Saluki* Swim Club operates an online affiliate program with Amazon.com. If you make any purchases at Amazon after having clicked on one of their ads at the *Saluki* website then we get a percentage of your total purchase.



Conceivably you could do all your holiday shopping in an afternoon on your computer! Next time you're looking for books, videos, music, etc. please link to Amazon from Swimsaluki.com.

### **Long sleeve t-shirts available**

You've seen them at the pool. Now you can get your very own "So fast...pieces fall off!" long sleeve t-shirt. Contact the coaches for information on how you can get one. They make great Christmas gifts.

### **Don't forget about meet registration**

After a flurry of activity for the Turkey Trot our online meet registration seems to have gone flat. There are still meets to register for in the Winter session.

# Rufus T Firefly

## Important dates

By the time this newsletter hits the streets the annual Turkey Trot meet will just be getting underway so I bid all Saluki *Good Luck!*...I see that many of the younger sprouts are swimming in the Carbondale 500...good for you...especially since Dr. Gustavo tells me that the 500 will be scored this year...Go Saluki...What could be worse than a T-30 announced weeks in advance?...try the Kobayashi Maru seemingly pulled out of thin air the day after the latest round of T-30s...That's what Jason Sigler, Brad Byars, Alex Halbrook and Bob Byars found themselves faced with and all successfully passed the test...Check out their results on the website...A big *Thank You!* goes out to Nicole Rossi for organizing the annual Halloween party at Pulliam...If Coach Price ever gets his photos pro-

cessed from the bash I'm told we may see a few on the website...we saw some of the best costumes *ever* ranging from Harry Potter to Crayola crayons...Will he? or won't he? the world is waiting to see if Louis Ramirez will make it into his first meet...in 1999 he was entered in the Turkey Trot but never made it to the meet...something about alien abduction...for 2001 we're not entering him and hoping that he will show up...A big Saluki *Bonjour!* goes to Astrid du Petit Thouars, an exchange student from France spending the year in the United States...Group 4 swimmers at AM practices?...it's true...Ryan McDonald was churning up the long course lanes one Friday morning last week...if all goes well we might see a few more '4 Groupers' in the morning...*The reward of anything well done is to have done it.*

...and  
another  
thing...

## Saluki Swim Club

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### Winter Division 1 Championship

Gold times required. Already entered.

**30-Nov-02-Dec—St. Peters, MO**

### Swim Your Own Age

14 & under competition. Swimmers are grouped in 1 year increments instead of the traditional 2 years. 10 Saluki are entered.

**09-Dec—Clayton, MO**

### End of Fall swimming session

Christmas break for Jedi and Group 2 swimmers. Group 3, 4 and 5 swimmers will participate in a modified training schedule over the holidays.

**21-Dec**

### Winter session begins

All groups return to practice under a slightly modified training schedule until the coaching staff is back at full strength.

**02-Jan**

### Paducah Swimfest

This 25 metre competition is a popular one with younger swimmers. 16 Saluki are entered.

**04-06-Jan—Paducah, KY**

### Ozark Senior Championship

A good opportunity for swimmers to compete in a short, senior level meet. Saluki will be taking swimmers 11 years old or older who have an Ozark 11-12 gold time.

**11-13-Jan—Clayton, MO**

### Nike Midwest All-Star meet

This 14 & under meet is an Ozark team competition. 8 girls and 8 boys are selected for each age group (10 & under, 11-12, 13-14). Anyone interested in applying for a spot on the team can get an application from the Ozark Swimming website ([www.ozarkswimming.org](http://www.ozarkswimming.org)).

**19-20-Jan—Lawrence, KS**

### Memphis Tiger Invitational

We are replacing the Bloomington team trip with this meet. It is a prelim/final competition and more suitable to our team trip requirements.

**01-03-Feb—Memphis, TN**

### Great Times Invitational

One of the few "all hands on deck" meets left until the end of the season. Open to all Saluki swimmers.

**08-10-Feb—Cape Girardeau, MO**

### Senior meet

Another opportunity for Group 3, 4 and 5 swimmers to participate in a senior level competition.

**15-17-Feb—site TBA**