

Feeding Frenzy – Issue #6

The Building Blocks of Swimming Excellence

Every swimmer who improves, whether they're 7 years old or chasing Sectionals, builds success on the same foundation. Excellence in swimming is not built in one workout. It is built through consistent habits, clear communication, and a shared commitment between swimmer, coach, and family.

This month's Feeding Frenzy focuses on the four building blocks that support growth at every level of our program.

1. Dedication: Swimmer & Family

Swimming is a commitment sport. Progress requires time in the water, attention during instruction, and consistent attendance. **When practices become optional, progress slows.** Dedication does not mean perfection, swimmers will miss practices for school events, illness, and family obligations. That's normal. What matters is that practice is treated as a priority, not as something squeezed in if nothing else is happening.

For younger swimmers especially, dedication is a family effort:

- Arriving on time
- Being prepared (proper equipment and practice attire)
- Supporting healthy routines (Nutrition & Sleep)
- Encouraging effort over outcomes (Personal Bests v. Winning & Losing)

When swimmers know their family values the process, they tend to value it too.

For our Bull and Blue Sharks, Friday and Saturday practices are an important part of the training week. These workouts are highly encouraged, as they often reinforce technical themes, aerobic development, and race skills introduced earlier in the week.

Consistency across all scheduled practices, including Fridays and Saturdays, plays a significant role in steady progress. Attendance on these days is something we do take into consideration when evaluating readiness for group move-ups, as it reflects commitment, reliability, and engagement with the full training plan.

2. Cooperation: Respecting the Pool Deck

The pool deck must remain a focused learning environment.

At AquaKids, we operate with a closed deck during practices and lessons. This means parents should not approach swimmers or coaches during practice time. There are two reasons for this:

- First, safety. Coaches need full attention on the group.
- Second, development. Swimmers grow when they learn to listen, problem-solve, and respond to coaching independently.

You wouldn't walk into your child's classroom and interrupt the lesson, so why would you interrupt their lesson/practice? When swimmers look at the stands for reassurance or correction, it divides their attention. When coaches are interrupted mid-set, it disrupts flow and focus. We deeply value parental involvement, but during practice, the deck belongs to the swimmers and coaches. Respecting that boundary helps everyone do their job well.

3. Information: Communication the Right Way

Questions and concerns are normal. Swimming is complex, and every athlete progresses at a different pace. If you need clarification about group placement, meet selection, attendance expectations, or your swimmer's development, the best step is simple: Send an email to schedule a time to talk. Practice time is for coaching. Conversations deserve focus and privacy, not rushed poolside exchanges.

When communication is clear and structured:

- Swimmers feel supported
- Coaches can give thoughtful feedback
- Families get complete answers

We are always willing to talk; we just want to do it the right way. As always send us an email to aksharks.swimteam@gmail.com, and we can coordinate.

4. Rest & Relaxation: Growth Happens During Recovery

Improvement does not happen only during practice. Throughout the season, we intentionally schedule lighter weeks and time off. This is not a step backward, it is part of the training plan. Recovery reduces burnout, supports physical growth, and keeps swimmers mentally fresh.

We also encourage:

- Consistent sleep routines
- Time away from screens
- Unstructured downtime
- Multi-sport participation at younger ages (Blue Sharks & Lower)

Pushing year-round without breaks often leads to fatigue, frustration, and stalled progress.

When it comes to our Mako & Great White Sharks group, time off is scheduled around the competitive calendar. Usually our scheduled breaks from practice come in March, August and December, right after the conclusion of our championship meets. We encourage families to plan time off and vacations during these periods so our athletes are primed and ready for the competitive calendar.

Coach's Corner

When swimmers thrive long-term, it is rarely because of one magical workout, it is because the environment around them is aligned: Dedication, Cooperation, Communication, Recovery. When these four areas are strong, improvement becomes predictable. Our goal is to have confident, resilient, self-motivated young athletes.

For Parents: Your Role Matters

You do not need to be a swimming expert. What makes the biggest difference is consistency at home:

- Treat practice as a commitment
- Reinforce coach authority on deck
- Communicate through proper channels
- Protect rest and family balance

Children mirror the tone set around them. When swimming is framed as an opportunity, not a pressure, they tend to enjoy the journey more.

Final Thought

Strong sharks are not built overnight, they are built through steady effort, shared responsibility, and a healthy environment that allows them to grow.

Upcoming Meets

- **Shark Races:** February 27th
- **2026 Florida Gold Coast Age Group Champs:** March 5-8 (Qualifying Swimmers Only)
- **2026 Florida Gold Coast Senior Champs:** March 12-15 (Qualifying 15 & Over Athletes Only)