**GC Divers Fall parent meeting – September 18th, 2018.**

**GC Divers team results from last year**:

 2nd in Nation in USA Diving

 2nd in Nation in AAU Diving

\* USA Diving is recognized by the US Olympic committee as our national governing body. Divers must qualify by placing in the top tier of their age groups at qualifying meets. Participation is extremely selective.

\*AAU Nationals- Divers can qualify at any sanctioned competition throughout the year if they earn the minimum score set by AAU for each age group.

**Moving into the new Year:**

Diver’s career path handout: What it means and how do you progress from FC to Novice to J.O

The process for Aging up to a new age group may require stepping back to a lower level of competition. Our goal is to always work ahead to have the divers ready for the new requirements, but there are times when a dive or two is still missing, and a step back is necessary. Divers compete the age they “WILL BE” Dec. 31 of that year. There are a couple of age groups that are “big leaps”. The 11U age group to the 12-13 is one of the biggest leaps as far as dive requirements. Another big leap is from the 14-15 age group to the 16-18 age group because of the number of dive groups a diver must cover in the dive lists and the level of competition.

Beginning the season, we get **back to basics** – During competition season the divers must focus on their competition dives and are not able to make big changes to their take offs or do major strength building. We look forward to the fall for strength building and breaking down mechanics. It may seem simple, but this is a very important part of the season.

**Where it all starts and never ends: Progressions of skills and Patience with the process**

 -Get divers to buy into the learning process and understand the importance of progressions

 -Get divers to have confidence in their coach and trust the process for being prepared.

 -Get divers to understand the importance of drylands to build strength, flexibility and patterns.

**Focus for training – age appropriate**

We schedule around team sports to allow the younger divers time to participate in other sports.

With the older divers, If the expectation is college diving, older divers need to commit to diving most days of the week. Divers starting at 13 or older are playing a bit of catch up. Gymnasts usually do not have a problem using their gymnastics skills to transfer over to a new sport, but they do have to understand that they will not be at the same level initially and that it will take time to develop into a competitive diver.

**Let the coach be the coach.**

For example: As a parent, you may be watching a diver enter the water and wonder why the coach isn’t correcting their entry. If the coach is focused on the start of the dive or the take-off, he/she may only be fixing that part of the dive. Divers need to be able to concentrate on the most important correction. I will often say, “I’m not watching how the dive goes in the water, I want you to only think about your correction on the start.” This allows a diver who is a perfectionist (and many are) to let that go a little bit to make a change. Eventually that change will pay off and the entry will improve naturally by a better start position. If parents comment on other parts of a dive it may slow down progress. Trust the coaches.

Looking up in the stands – It is important for the coach to have the diver’s attention. When a diver is focused on the parent in the stands, the diver is not looking at the coach. Immediately after a dive, the coach is processing whether the previous correction was made and how to best convey the next change. The coach needs to give this feedback immediately and give instructions for the next dive. Teammates are waiting to take their turns and the coach is trying to hold his or her thoughts while waiting for the student to look his or her way. By the time the student is finished looking at a parent in the stands, the coach may have had to move on to the next student or may have to reduce the information. Please encourage your diver to pay attention to the coach and refrain from engaging with your child during practice.

**Games with purpose** – Sometimes you may see divers playing a game.

 We often play “games” with the divers, but the games have purpose. Some examples:

1. Roll the dice – Divers roll a dice to determine the dive they do or how many – encourages mental flexibility and quick thinking.
2. School with bounces or dives – Teaches balance on jumps and mental focus
3. Pop the bubble – team unity, increased focus and creating pressure like a meet.
4. Average score- understanding scoring and trying to reach a dive list average
5. Team diving-Team building and creating a meet-like situation.
6. The clapping game – teaches proper arm position leaving the board and quick thinking.
7. Free dive – reward for good work, encourages creativity, keeps it fun.
8. Synchro practice with new partners – adaptability, cooperation, team building and focus.

**Parent support of divers:**

 Diving is a hard sport both physically and mentally. Be supportive of your athlete’s journey.

 Divers progress differently. Avoid comparisons and please set a good example for your diver.

Athletes come into the sport with very different backgrounds and temperaments – These may change over time!

 Common differences – Fearful vs Daredevil

 Perfectionist vs impatient

 Complimentary sport experience vs new to organized sports

 Confident vs insecure

 Focused goals vs to have fun

**How to help at practice:**

Encourage great attendance. Divers who miss practices fall behind and this shakes their confidence. If you need to discipline your child for poor grades etc, please try to take something else away. Diving is a sport that requires consistency and it not only hurts your child to miss, but it makes it very hard on the coaches who have worked to try to help your child reach his/her goals for the season.

Arrive on time– Divers who are on time are relaxed and mentally ready to start practice.

Make sure bags are packed – Bring running shoes, towel and swim suit every practice.

After practice avoid the urge to coach your child – if you watched let them let them know you enjoyed watching them and appreciate their efforts. Try to find the positive.

Please avoid yelling down to your child during practice**.** If your child is misbehaving, the coach should talk to him or her about proper behavior. If there is a reoccurring problem, the coach will reach out to you. Safety is our number one concern and it is important for the divers to be able to concentrate. Occasionally we get a student that has trouble taking turns and following directions and this is how we normally would handle the situation.

Discipline at practice for misbehaving or distracting teammates: (assuming it continues)

1. Coach may ask the athlete to stop the behavior
2. Coach may give a reminder
3. Coach may ask the athlete to sit with him/her between turns
4. Coach may ask the athlete to sit by him/her and watch practice
5. Diver may be asked to change diving groups
6. Diver may be asked to leave the team and go back to lessons

**Be your child’s biggest fan**

Celebrate their accomplishments when they overcome a fear or show exceptional effort. If your child has trouble behaving in class, celebrate a practice where he or she followed directions and focused. Recognizing the little accomplishments along the way will reinforce those preferred behaviors. Childhood is short and their time in their sport will fly by. The relationship you build with them with your support will last a lifetime.

**Communication is important:**

If a diver is sick or injured, please email gcdivers@msn.com to let us know the situation. If the diver is going to be out for an extended period, we will come up with a plan to keep him/her active. If a diver is in a doctor’s care and has specific restrictions, we need to know and have a doctor’s note before the diver can resume full participation.

If a diver has a fear of a dive, they may be hesitant to attend practice. They would rather skip practice than to admit being afraid. Please let us know if you suspect this, so that we can make sure your child is ready both physical AND mentally. We may do more lead ups or change to a different dive for a while. Most children will run across a dive that worries them.

If you ever have concerns about the training environment, please let me know immediately so we can address any issues you may have.

**How to help your diver at competitions:**

 -Have your diver let the coach know if you plan on attending a competition.

 - Your diver should get the dive numbers and dive recommendations from his or her coach.

 - Enter the meet well ahead of the deadline to allow your coach time to check dives.

- Check the gcdivers.com website for information on practice times and event schedules. Meet estimated timelines are often posted the day before competition.

 -Attend the scheduled practices at the competition – Why these are super important:

* Get used to different boards -they all feel a little different
* Get used to new visuals -divers need to practice diving with new spots etc
* Get the meet jitters out! -divers arrive nervous and tight, they need to get on the boards and relax
* Get use to the noise – some pools are very noisy and can make it hard to concentrate.
* Practice their list – divers need to practice their dives in the new setting to be confident

-Print off your diver’s dive list from divemeets.com and bring it to check into the meet.

-Have your diver check with the coach, when to be back, before you leave the pool area.

-Wake up early enough to get breakfast or a snack before morning practice.

-Have competition bag packed ahead of time so nothing is forgotten.

-Support your coach and encourage your diver to be a good listener and communicator

-Encourage your diver to stay with his or her teammates during competition.

-Be mindful of the meet schedule and always arrive well ahead of the event warmup time.

-Avoid a huge meal right before competition and encourage hydration all day long.

-Try to not use the meets as vacations until AFTER your diver has finish competition

-Get a good night sleep

-Be the smile in the stands -Most divers are looking for approval even when (especially when) mistakes are made. You can make or break their competition based on your expression in the stands.

-Celebrate your diver’s efforts. Try to not compare against other divers. Focus on positives like using a new dive, achieving a best score on a dive, maybe just how they stood on the board and showed a more confident look. Anything to encourage progress. Not every meet will be a good one especially if a diver is pushing him or herself and trying new dives or changing age groups.

-Be a good team parent in the stands. When you support not only your child, but the other children in GC Divers, you bring strength to the program. The cheers in the stands can impact the competition in our favor.

- Avoid blaming judges (even if it is tempting). Planting the seed of thought into your diver’s head that the judges were not being fair can harm a diver’s confidence and willingness to try.

**Please support your coach:**

**Coaches will give feedback and corrections to divers** – this is not criticism, this is coaching. In each dive there are multiple corrections, the coach needs to decide which one he or she feels would make the most impact or is possible for the athlete to make. These corrections get more complex as a diver progresses in ability and age.

**Getting to know your diver** – Coaches must build a report with the diver to be able to “read” a diver. They must be able to gauge a diver’s ability to move forward with new skills or pause for more confidence. With diving being a very challenging sport, there are times where a coach knows a student is physically ready for a new dive and must find a way to encourage the diver to try even when they are scared. The ability to try new things and step out of their comfort zone is key in the diver’s success. The feeling of accomplishment and pride divers feels when they learn new dives is hard to describe but with each successful attempt, it gets easier and easier the next time. It is important for divers to always be working towards at least one new dive.

**Competition dive choices** – Your coach will suggest dives for competition with the input of your diver. Divers need to be able to do their meet dives in practice with confidence and consistency to put them into their dive list. When under pressure in a competition, the dives need to be mostly automatic. Our general rule of thumb is that a dive should score 5’s on a regular basis before used in competition. If you have a question about why certain dives were selected, please email gcdivers@msn.com to get an answer directly from the coach.

**Avoid criticizing your diver’s coach in front of him or her**. It is very important that your diver believe in his or her coach and has a good working relationship. It is hard to undo a negative comment. Our coaches are excellent and work hard to help the athletes achieve their full potential. If you have a concern, please reach out to us directly and let us know so that we can clarify.

**How to plan your competition season:**

Future champion and novice divers are not expected to attend the away meets but are invited when their level is offered. Meets are usually fun for the divers and are boost to training.

All team divers should attend our local meets especially the ones we host in the winter and spring. Everyone is expected to attend the Dick Wilson Memorial meet.

J.O. divers are expected to attend a meet before December, our meet in February and then the championship series.

J.O. divers who are eligible should attend the Regional competition (11U need to ask) and if they qualify they should attend zones and Nationals (USD or AAU). The priority is USD.

Please avoid vacations during the championship series. Wait until after nationals.

**Why should you attend invitationals**?

Invitationals are like quizzes in school. They provide feedback to the diver and the coach and adjustments can be made before the final exam. If a diver has not competed throughout the year and only enters the championship meet, they don’t have much information to go on… Are they ready? How will their dives go in a competition setting? Did they pick the right dives? Just like a college class with only a final for the grade, the student has studied but may not be confident that he or she studied everything correctly and so might have insecurities and nerves going into the big exam. But the student that had monthly quizzes over the subject and was able to score high grades on those quizzes goes into the final with confidence of having mastered the subject and learned how to study for the exam. This is how I view the competition season. Divers need to attend some invitationals for feedback and reassurance to give them confidence at the championship meet. Be prepared!

**How to help the team:**

Please pay monthly fees on the first of the month so that we can pay our bills on time.

 Late fee will go into effect on the 6th.

Support the Parent organization by becoming an active member and helping at meets

Please support their fundraising efforts. They help with equipment for the team.

 **Diver’s role on the team**

 Be a good teammate – learning to lift others up and avoid negative conversations.

 Learn sportsmanship – good or bad day, act like a champion.

 Be coachable – keep emotions in check and focus on corrections to improve.

 Attend meets and learn from results – every meet is an opportunity to learn.

 Give effort at practice and make good choices outside of the pool – be an athlete 24/7

 Develop good time management skills – athletes MUST have this skill.

 Take responsibility for results – benefit of an individual sport.

**Coach’s role**

 Skill development and progressions in drylands and on the boards

 Being aware of growth spurts and when it is time to move ahead or pause progressions

 Safety on the deck – creating a great environment for learning

 Helping a child learn to compete – selecting competition levels and suggesting dives.

 Helping divers set both long term and short-term goals for the sport

Questions or notes:

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