



SPECIAL SETS

AGE GROUP WARM-UPS

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

A summer league coach with 300-PLUS swimmers, a six-lane pool and 15 minutes for warm-up has several options.

One is to divide the team into two or three groups by age and ability level in five-minute increments. That brings the population to about 17 athletes per lane—hardly ideal.

Another is to forego warm-up altogether, which is what Mike Peters does with his Southampton Recreation Association squad in Richmond, Va., when swimmers attended morning practice.

Across town, David Schreck faces different issues as he organizes warm-ups for various NOVA of Virginia swimmers. Once a very successful summer league coach himself, he is one of the Middle Atlantic's most decorated age group coaches. He has produced numerous individual and relay state champions, national top 10 finishers and national age group record holders. He has been recognized as Age Group Coach of the Year six times (2001-06 and 2016). In September, he was a Top 10 Fitter & Faster/ASCA Age Group Coach of the year finalist.

Following are sample warm-ups that Schreck employs at meets for four separate age groups:

8-10-YEAR-OLDS

"A typical meet warm-up for my **8-to-10-year-old developmental group** might be:

- 1 x 200 50 free/50 back 3-count rifle drill/50 free/50 breast 3 count glide drill
- 4 x 75 (one of each stroke IM order: 25 kick/25 drill/25 swim)

"I will usually give them a particular drill to do so they are all doing the same thing."

- 6 x 50 (odds IM switchovers, evens free)

"The main focus here is building speed into the turns. Depending on space and time, I might simply have the swimmer do turns from the middle of the pool instead of these 50s for five to 10 minutes, giving them a chance

to do turns at both ends of the pool. I am more likely to do this in a long-course pool.

“If allowed, I will have the swimmers do two to three 25 sprints from a dive, climbing out and walking around.

“We do not normally allow or think it is necessary for a 10-and-under to do any more warm-up during the meet.”

11-12-YEAR-OLDS

“My **11-to-12-year-olds** may do something like this:

- 1 x 300 (50 free/50 fly/50 free/50 back/50 free/50 breast) (fly, back and breast choice drills)
- 4 x 75 (one of each stroke IM order: 25 kick/25 drill/25 swim)

“This is the same as the 8-to-10-year-olds, but I will allow them to choose their drills.”

- 8 x 50 (odds free, evens choice) (non-free, 35 fast through the turn/15 easy free)

“If I have a pace clock available, I may do these off 1:00 and have them descend the 50s free. If there is no clock, I want swimmers to at least feel like they are getting faster each 50. They should be sprinting the fourth 50 free.

“If allowed, I will have swimmers do two to three 25 sprints from a dive, climbing out and walking around. In Virginia Swimming, we usually have team lane assignments and are allowed to do one-way sprints for the last five minutes or so of warm-up.

“If there is warm-up/cool-down water available, we will likely ask our 11-to-12-year-olds to do a quick warm-up again prior to each event—especially if they have been sitting around for an hour or so. This may entail a 100 loosen up, 3 x 50 kick/drill of the stroke they are swimming and two-to-four x 25 build to fast. Following an event, we may have swimmers do a little recovery swim just trying to create a good habit—nothing real specific here.”

13-14-YEAR-OLDS

“A warm-up for the **13-to-14-year-old age group** may look like this:

- 400 (200 free swim/200 IM kick/swim)
- 4 x 100 (one of each stroke, IM order) (kick/drill/kick/swim)
- 8 x 50 (odds free descending, evens choice) (25 FAST/25 easy free)
- 2-4 x 25 from a dive

“We definitely want our 13-to-14-year-olds to warm up and cool down before and after events.

“Warming up before an event will be specific to that stroke and/or event—for example, 150 choice loosen up, 3 x 50 kick/drill, 4 x 25 build to fast.

“If the event is a 200 and above, we would like for the swimmer to do a couple 50s, getting to race pace.

13-14-YEAR-OLDS & HIGHER-LEVEL 11-12-YEAR-OLDS

“If we have more time or space and a pace clock during warm-up, we may have our **13-to-14-year-olds** and **higher-level 11-to-12-year-olds** do something like this:

- 4 x IM order or reverse IM order
- 1 x 100 K/D/K/D @ 1:40
- 1 x 75 S/K/S @ 1:20
- 1 x 50 build-up swim @ 1:00
- 1 x 25 FAST swim @ :30

“We may follow this up with turns from the middle and starts 12-1/2 fast/12-1/2 easy.”