Summer League v Long Course
Good for Swimmers & Coaches & Clubs

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Summer League Swimming is good for:

- Swimmers – especially 12 and unders
- Coaches – assistant coaches learn valuable skills
- Clubs – Build your base, great recruiting ground
Good for swimmers:

- Provides a fun learning environment
- Allows kids to be kids, not machines (color of their awards/ribbons)
- Pool length and temperature are relevant to training capacity and attention span
- Builds confidence
Provides a fun learning environment:

To learn something and be happy about it, the learner needs to have motivation to learn, or an unmet need to acquire the skill set.

Kids learn best when they are learning something they are excited about.

In a relaxed atmosphere where young ones are encouraged to play as much as they work, the kids can’t WAIT to get to practice.

This can help to set a strong desire to be at every practice, something every champion needs.
 Allows kids to be kids

6 yo girl: Coach, why are all my ribbons blue? I want a pink one.

10 yo boy: I never miss practice, we play video games in the club house after practice.

7 yo girl: Coach, want to hear the song I made up for you?

12 yo boy: I’m doing long course next year, but I’m scared my friends won’t come with me.

6 yo girl: She broke the city record that summer and is now 17 and almost at junior national cuts.

10 yo boy: Owns his own business making bag tags at swim meets and is 21 and a college senior.

7 yo girl: Is now 12 and regularly makes up cheers for her club team and is friends with everyone.

12 yo boy: Is now 15, going into high school and will make state as a freshman, his friends did come with him.
Pool length and temperature are relevant to training capacity and attention span

It can take 10 minutes for an 8 yo of average ability to complete a 100 m in a 50 m pool

How much can that swimmer remember of what his/her coach told her 10 minutes ago?

Usually a wide variety of ability levels in a developmental group, swimmers at the “back end” of the group are always still under water when the rest of the group is getting instruction

When coaches wait till all are in to go again, the “front end” kids are freezing from standing still so long

Outdoor pools can vary widely in water temps, add weather to the equation and you have frozen “ littles”
Builds confidence

Most summer league programs award each heat with ribbons, candy, prizes, etc.

With a busy meet schedule, swimmers are often racing dual meets 1-3 times a week. This allows kids to see themselves improving rapidly.

If a race doesn't go well, there will be another race, VERY SOON! Timing is critical to younger kids and a month to a 10 yo is more like a year to an adult.

Team work, they learn to work together to win a team victory. Learning it is bigger than themselves is the hardest and most important lesson to learn.
There are some hurdles:

- Once a swimmer reaches a certain age, physical maturity, athletic maturity, or has goals beyond summer league, moving on to long course is important if progression is to continue.

- It can be hard to move up to club swimming long course after several “fun” summers when a kid is young. Clubs need to be aware of this and work to create a welcoming, fun environment while the training begins to step up to meet the maturity level of the athlete.

- The establishment – that one summer league team that families for generations have swam for...clubs need to respect their feelings as they seek to transition swimmers to long course. Relationship development with coaches, families and established summer league team is key.

- High school swimmers are often busy and summer league seems like a good fit for a busy schedule. Then they are disappointed with their high school season results because they had no foundation work over the long course season.
More hurdles:

• Start your own summer league team – USAS Risk Management can help with affordable insurance plans
  

• Many leagues have different rules about who can swim and when – run clinics to help these kids stay in the water and stay legal for their leagues (again Risk Management)

• Overcoming biases – “we never needed summer league before, why now?”

• Overcoming fears – “if we send them to summer league, we might not get them back.”
Good for Coaches:

Assistant Coaches during short course can gain valuable experience –

- Team management
- Meet management
- Staffing & Training
- Working with swimmers of all levels
- How to recruit and fill a team – marketing
- Salaries can be higher for the short term (private leagues) & access to private lessons
Team and Meet Management

Coaches will have to:

• Maintain a meet roster and times, as assistant coaches, they may not have had this duty with their club

• Organize and run meets, including lining up “littles” for events and hundreds of versions of, “Coach, is it my turn to swim?”

• Train parents on how to help run meets, could include but is not limited to: concessions, awards, starter, timers, runners, ready bench, officials, equipment sales, set up and break down

• Educate parents on: team work, not pushing kids too hard, the importance of being at practice, the importance of the statement “There is no ‘i’ in TEAM”

• Manage the pool, coordinate with the organization for pool time, there are many variations

• Fundraise – many teams must fundraise to survive

All of this experience would then be returning to your club during short course!
Staffing & training

Coaches will often have to recruit, interview, hire and train their staff for the summer.

This could include assistant coaches, lifeguards, cashiers and concessions.

These positions will have to be scheduled weekly.

Training will be necessary to get the team functioning as a unit.

Imagine a situation where you have a 20-24 yo assistant coach pulling all of this together successfully, what an addition to your club coaching roster!

Club coaches can mentor and provide support on how to be successful in all of these areas.
Working with swimmers of all levels & marketing the team

Coaches will have to:

• Work with swimmers of all levels, something they might not do during short course

• Develop materials from flyers and handouts to webpages and social media to use in marketing and dissemination of team information

• Market their summer league team to local schools, daycares and other areas of the community
Summer league salaries can be higher short term

- For an assistant coach during the short course season, a head coach of a summer league team can be a big salary increase
- Private leagues tend to pay more than public
- For a college student, this can be a big draw
- They earn every one of those $$, summer league for coaches is HARD work
Good for USA Club Team

Summer league teams we have worked with or had their swimmers join EPAP:

Private League
- El Paso Country Club
- Tennis West
- Socorro Ragin’ Gators
- Vista Hills Country Club
- El Paso Tennis Club
- Jewish Community Center

Public League
- Westside Pool
- Armijo Pool
- Memorial Pool
- Hawkins Pool
- Marty Robbins Pool
- Pavo Real Pool
- Veteran’s Pool
- Cowan Pool

- Proven feeder program
- Placement of your assistant coaches if you can’t afford to keep them over the long course season
- Reach out to many summer league teams, make your team available
Proven feeder program

Your club team is getting:

• Kids who know how to do legal starts, swims, turns and finishes
• Kids who love to race
• Kids who know how to be part of a team environment
• Parents who have helped run meets
• Parents who see their child love a sport and want to support them
Placement for your assistant coaches over long course season

- Some teams change format and/or location over the long course season and may not be able to afford to keep all of their assistant coaches.

- Summer league placement gives them great income and experience.

- USAS Club teams can provide mentoring to coaches, clinics and special events for summer league swimmers to help them identify with Club teams for long course.
Reach out to summer league teams

Make your USAS Club team available:

- Offer clinics pre-season to help kids transition from learn to swim to competitive swimming (USAS can help with insurance for these)

- Offer in-season clinics to make sure kids know how to do strokes, turns, etc., legally so they don’t get DQ’d at their championship meet

- Volunteer officials, timers, console operations, etc., to run championship meets

- Set up information booths at summer league meets

- Feature your short course swimmers in your social media for their summer league successes
Win – Win – Win for all

• This model works! Border Swimming has consistently produced fast swimmers from a young age who go on to do great things. Licon, Grieshop are two who are currently making their mark.

• Finding ways for kids to be connected to the sport at an appropriate level and always leaving something to be added at the next level.

Thanks so much for joining us today!
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