

Elgin Blue Wave Lane Etiquette Tips

Here's the deal, gang: we are all in the pool to get the same thing – a great workout. Even with the crowding there's no reason we all can't get a good workout in as long as we work together. We've had some tension this year, so I went online and pulled up some of the more relevant tips for lap swimming etiquette, as Corinne has been discussing this year. **Remember, it takes effort from every swimmer in the lane to make the lane flow well.** Personally, I know in lanes 6-8 we typically follow these rules and we never have any issues in the lanes. Even with a big crowd the practice goes pretty smoothly. I didn't write these, but I did modify a few due to our practice style and lane capacity so they are more relevant to the Blue Wave. If you have any questions just write it on the team FB board and I'm sure there will be good discussion on it. – Drew

Tips During a Set

- Before starting the set adjust the lane order based on who is the fastest at that set's particular stroke. For example, if the set is a distance free set, allow those who are faster distance swimmers to go first. Or, for a stroke set, let those who are better at the particular stroke go ahead. This helps lane spacing by avoiding bunch ups, and also minimizes the need to pass or tap feet.
 - Drew's Note: It's okay to adjust your lane order during sets as well, if you have multiple swimmers who are comparable speeds. Sometimes what we'll do on a distance set is to agree before we start who is going to lead for what length. Maybe I'll lead for the first 500, then Sarah will lead the second 500, and maybe Jen will finish the last 650, and we just pass as we go along.
- Allow swimmers doing faster strokes on choice sets to go ahead. For example, those swimmers doing breaststroke, stroke drills, or a using a kickboard should give way to swimmers doing freestyle. Or, if you decide to do IM and someone else is doing straight backstroke, either have them go ahead of you or ask they give you a little extra room so they don't catch you on your breaststroke leg.
- When performing a set on interval, you may need to slightly adjust the interval from time to time to avoid bunch ups. Drew's Note, examples:
 - If you're a faster swimmer and you're on the wall waiting to start a rep, and the slower crowd is coming to do a turn, you have two options. You can either cut your interval short and push off early, leaving ahead of the crowd (preferred method), or you can lengthen your interval to let the slower group go, but then you need to leave them more "running room" before you push off. The first option usually tends to be best, because the second option requires you to pass when you catch the slower group.
 - Slower swimmers starting a rep should wait to push off the wall until faster swimmers have passed (i.e. don't push off right in front of a faster swimmer who's coming into the wall about to turn, as this blocks the faster swimmer). Slower swimmers should push off almost immediately behind a faster individual or group.
 - These two might cut your interval a little short or add time onto it, but it's worth it the one or two times you may need to do it during a set in order to ease the lane flow.
- Swimmers resting or otherwise waiting at the wall should stay far to one side of the lane. Resting swimmers should specifically avoid standing or floating in the middle of the lane as this interferes

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with swimmers "swimming through" who need to tag or flip at the wall. If the lane is crowded, other swimmers may need to rest out away from the wall along either side of the lane.

- Don't ever stop in the middle of a length (e.g., to adjust goggles), as this may cause a trailing swimmer to run into them.
 - Drew's Note: what's that? You want to know what to do if you have a cramp? Tough it out and make it to the wall, Sally! Just kidding – wanted to make sure you're still paying attention.
 - Really though, don't stop in the middle. Pull yourself in to the wall on the lane rope if you are really cramped up and incapacitated.
- Pushing Off of the Wall - when you leave the wall to start swimming be sure to give the swimmer ahead of you adequate space. Don't push off immediately after they do or you will be hitting their feet, which is no fun for anyone and is a signal that you want to pass them. If you want to pass them that soon, you may have picked the wrong lane. Start conservatively, give yourself time to get into the flow of the lane and to get into your workout before trying to pass.
 - Drew's Note: typically we try to leave a full 5 seconds in between each person, but when the lane is really cramped you may only be able to leave 3 seconds apart MINIMUM. This is why adjusting your lane order is so critical, to ensure that you're not bunching up even if you have to leave only 3 seconds apart.
 - Drew's Note (2): If you're leaving 5 seconds apart and you are catching the person in front of you quickly, ask to go in front of them on the next rep.
- Turning – make sure, especially when the lane is crowded, to move over to the left side of the wall (from your perspective) to do your turn. Try not to flip directly in the middle or on the right side of the lane, as it will stop up everyone behind you. Remember, every swimmer needs to move to the left to turn, or else everyone behind will be stopped up down the chain.
- Finishing – EVERYONE SHOULD FINISH ON THE WALL. [OK I admit, that's a Drew rule.] The lane being crowded does not create an exception to this rule; treat this as a golden rule. The last thing we want is to be out touched at the State meet because we're not finishing sets all the way into the wall. Here's how to improve this:
 - Get out of the damn way once you finish! [Just kidding – still paying attention??]
 - Really though, finish at the wall and move over to the left – every rep. This goes for all swimmers in the lane if you have someone behind you – finish and move over to the left so the people behind you can also finish at the wall. Once everyone has finished you can spread back out.
 - If you are bunched up coming in to the wall, try this instead: the lead person finishes, moves to the left. Everyone who finishes after the leader moves over to the left, and then lines up along the lane line. The leader then, when they need to start, can start on the wall without anyone being in the way, and the rest of the snake-line behind can then move up to the wall and push off when it's their turn.

Tips for Passing

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- An overtaking swimmer should gently but distinctly touch the feet of the swimmer being overtaken. It may take two or three touches, but overtaking swimmers should not need to repeatedly slap or grab at the legs of a slower swimmer to politely make their presence known (see tips for the person being passed, too).
- Swimmers enjoying a draft behind a strong lead swimmer, but who are just barely able to hold that pace, should think twice before tagging the leader's toes and requesting to move ahead. In such situations, it's highly unlikely that the (formerly) trailing swimmer will be able to hold the same pace for very long when leading without the draft. This can lead to repeated "leap-frogging" and unnecessary contact, which can be annoying and disruptive for everyone in the lane.
- Drafting swimmers not wishing to pass should swim far enough back from a lead swimmer that they don't inadvertently touch the lead swimmer's toes.
- Overtaking swimmers should not attempt to swim 'wide' past a slower swimmer since in most cases this presents a hazard to other oncoming swimmer(s). Instead when passing stay in the middle of the lane and get cozy with the person you're passing to ensure that you won't crash into oncoming traffic [yeah that second part is a Drew note].

Tips for Being Passed

- During a distance set or other lengthy set when passing is likely, you should always stay aware of where the faster swimmers in the lane are and try to anticipate when that swimmer is likely to overtake you. This is easily accomplished by looking back just before or during each turn.
 - Drew's Note: when I know I'm going to be passed, I watch after each flip turn to see where the faster swimmer is, and monitor how much a gap there is between us. When they start to get close and I need to see if they are going to pass me on a turn, I duck my head down and look back under my armpit when I'm swimming to see where they are, and whether they are close enough to pass on the turn. Typically we don't even need to touch each other's feet because we all know where everyone is and when we're going to get passed, so we anticipate it.
- A swimmer who feels a touch on the feet from an overtaking swimmer should continue to the next wall, then stop in the right corner of the lane (from your perspective) to let faster swimmer(s) past. A single light touch may be accidental and can be ignored, but two or more distinct touches should be regarded almost universally as a request to swim through.
 - Drew's Note: okay some lanes like to stop at the wall when being passed, but we [lanes 6-8] frequently will both flip on the wall at the same time during passing. See my notes at the end.
- If more than one faster swimmer is bunched close behind and wanting to pass, the swimmer being overtaken should allow the entire group of faster swimmers to pass before pushing off the wall again (i.e. don't push off right in front of someone else who's also obviously faster.)

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- Drew's note: hopefully this doesn't happen often, and it sucks to have to stop, but it's just easier for you if you're being passed by a group to let them all go at once so they're not impeding you for the several lengths it would take to have a group all pass you.
- Swimmers being overtaken should not attempt to speed up (or slow down) once 'tagged', nor should they jump in and 'tag back' the new lead swimmer on the next lap. You don't have to slow down, but just don't speed up when someone taps your feet! Move close to the lane rope and let them pass you in the middle of the lane.
- Drew's Note: passing with both people doing a flip turn. I've talked to a lot of you, and know that in some of the lanes you're uncomfortable with two people doing a flip turn at the same time on the wall when passing. There are a few ways to do it, and as long as everyone is alert to other people in the lane (which everyone should be doing), then this isn't a problem. And, the more you do this, the better you'll all get at it, which means the lanes flow better, and everyone gets a solid workout with minimal stopping. Okay dual flip turn passing methods – assume you're the one being passed:
 - If the faster swimmer is already passing you on the left, and you both come up to the wall, the faster swimmer flips on the left side, and you (slower swimmer) flip in the center. You both push off the wall at the same time (faster swimmer on the lane rope, you in the center), and once the faster swimmer is completely past you, you move over to the lane rope. Anyone behind you should see that you were passed on the wall, and should approach the wall more on the right side to avoid a collision (but you should also be watching in front of you when you push off the wall in the center). **Again – it takes every swimmer in the lane to make the lane flow well.**
 - If you know the faster swimmer is coming up on you to pass, but they haven't gone around you on the left yet: move all the way over to the left, so that you flip on the left and they flip in the center. Then when they push off on the center they are in a prime position to just swim by you off the wall.
 - If there's no one behind you, and you're not in a hurry: follow either of these methods, but instead of pushing off at the same time as the faster swimmer, just do your flip turn and hang out under water on the wall, ready to push off. Once they've flipped and pushed off, then you can go. But again, this is only if no one is behind you, otherwise you're now holding up the whole lane.

And as always, TOUCH WITH TWO HANDS ON BUTTERFLY AND BREASTROKE. ☺