

Swim Strong Aquatic Club Parent Handbook

04 August 2009

Mission Statement

The mission of The Swim Strong Aquatic Club is to develop swimmers who are a credit to their community. The Swim Strong Aquatic Club's swimming experience strives to shape and strengthen character, develop focus and demonstrate the importance of personal commitment and discipline throughout one's lifetime. While the Swim Strong Aquatic Club works to develop champion swimmers, the club measures success not only in ribbons and medals but also in the personal and athletic growth of each swimmer.

The members of the board of directors are:

President: Garner Pogue

Vice President: Paul Kilgore

Recording Secretary: Suzanne McKernan

Treasurer/Registrar: Jennifer Pogue

Head Coach: Karly Black

Section 1: Coaching Staff and Team Structure

All SSAC coaches must meet the high criteria set forth by USA Swimming. Each coach is a certified lifeguard and has first aid and CPR training for the professional rescuer. Coaches are also required to take a safety training class for swim coaches. All the above requirements must be kept up to date for a swim coach to remain in good standing with USA Swimming and the Swim Strong Aquatic Club.

Head Coach - Karly Black

Assistant Coaches – Nancy Mushtare, Michelle Kennedy

Team Structure -

There are four levels of swimming skill recognized in the structure of the SSAC.

The **Green level** is for swimmers who have taken swimming lessons and are comfortable in the water, but need additional help in the water mastering all four competitive strokes. This level is run much like an advanced swimming lesson with the emphasis on competitive swimming. Swimmers are not expected to be able to swim a lap of the pool independently because a coach will be present in the water to teach and demonstrate proper technique.

The **Bronze level** is the transitional level from swim lessons to a more competitive program. At this level there is an emphasis on the basic competitive strokes and skills. Here the swimmers will learn proper body position, breathing and swimming related skills. It is the mission of the coaching staff to insure each swimmer enjoys their introduction to the competitive program. Entry into timed competitions for this level swimmer should be planned through discussion with the coach.

The next or **Silver level** is for swimmers to continue to develop their technique and racing skills with an increased emphasis on aerobic conditioning. At this level more complex training sets are introduced and swimmers become familiar with the pace clock. At this level the swimmer is expected to take an active role in their development as a competitive swimmer. Swimmers at this level are encouraged to compete at the local level and for some swimmers out of district competitions are available.

The **Gold level** is the most advanced and demanding of the groupings. Swimmers at this level have usually chosen swimming as their primary athletic endeavor. At this level the swimmer continues to focus on perfecting skills while increasing their endurance capacity. It is expected that a gold level swimmer maintain a commitment to swimming and demonstrate it at practice on a daily basis. Personal goal setting is an integral part of the gold level swimmer's development. Success at regional and national level competitions is the goal of this level group.

Practice Schedule

The Swim Strong Aquatic Club practices at the pool located in Magrath Sports Complex on Fort Drum. The practice schedule remains consistent throughout the season. Swimmers are encouraged to use the pool's locker rooms to change but are asked to store their clothes and valuables in sport bags on the pool deck.

Accidents or Injuries

The club has a volunteer parent in the role of safety officer. In the event of an accident or injury, no matter how minor, please contact the safety officer and immediately fill out an accident report. Forms are in a folder in the mailboxes. All accidents are subsequently reported to USA Swimming. When a report is filed, you will receive a form from USA Swimming discussing USA Swimming secondary medical coverage. If you have concerns about safety in the swim club, please contact the safety officer or the club president.

Section 2: Swimmer's Responsibilities

Club Communication and Notification

Each swimmer is responsible for communication regarding meets, transportation and changes in practice schedules. The primary means of communication is the SSAC webpage, www.swimssac.org, and the bulletin board found poolside in Magrath. Also, each swim family has a file in the club mailbox that is kept on the pool deck. It is important for parents and swimmers to get into a daily habit of checking the webpage, bulletin board and mailbox for the latest information on practice schedules, schedule changes, meet announcements, newsletters, awards, and so on. The coach and board members will also use e-mail as another means of communication.

Equipment

In addition to a team suit for competitions, your swimmer will need at least one other practice suit. Goggles are needed for better visibility and protection against the irritation of pool water. Be sure the goggles you buy are comfortable and watertight. The equipment sales coordinator stocks swim caps.

SSAC encourages the use of the official team suit and swim cap at all USA Swimming meets. Suits may be ordered by accessing the team apparel link from the webpage. It is recommended that the team suit be worn only for competition to avoid natural deterioration from exposure to pool water. Wearing the team uniform at meets helps create a team atmosphere and enables coaches and spectators to observe and cheer our swimmers.

Lost and Found

You are strongly encouraged to label all of your swimmer's equipment. Labeled equipment found at practice can easily be returned to the swimmer. Unlabeled equipment floats around the pool deck and pool office and generally disappears. Swimmers should keep all swim bags and personal belongings on the ledge on the pool deck (not on the tables and chairs) and not leave anything in the locker rooms during their practice session. The locker rooms may be used simultaneously by others. The club is not responsible for lost items.

Attendance at Practice

Swimmers should be present at the pool at least 5-10 minutes before the start of practice so we can start on time and make efficient use of our pool time. Swimmers should plan to stay the entire practice, unless they have arranged with the coach an early departure. The last minutes of the practice are often very important. Usually announcements are made at the end of each practice.

The club sets no requirement regarding a minimum number of practices, although Coaches may suggest a practice guideline for individual swimmers. The SSAC coaching staff recommends the following:

- Green swimmers: 2 practices a week
- Bronze swimmers: 2-3 practices a week
- Silver: 3-4 practices a week
- Gold swimmers: 5-6 practices a week

SSAC follows the Fort Drum Inclement Weather Plan for Post and Facility Closure.

Practice Behavior

Swimmers should work with and support their teammates at practice at all times. We rely on each other to achieve team and individual goals. Be courteous to teammates and coaches. The

board of directors and coaches want all SSAC activities (practices and social activities) to be safe for swimmers, coaches, families, and spectators. To this end, we ask that all members follow the rules of the facility being used, listen to coaches, and follow directions.

Practice is not a time for fooling around. Swimming can be one of the safest sports available to youth. Yet, just one incident can turn it into a dangerous or deadly activity. Swimmers must act responsibly for their own safety and for the safety of others. Disruptive behavior and not following protocol set forth by the coaches are detrimental to the swimmer and the team. Coaches receive the support of the board of directors in benching swimmers during practice. If swimmers are benched for the evening, they are not allowed to leave practice early. They must participate in any cleanup of equipment their group is responsible for, and they must stay until their group is dismissed. The SSAC board of directors reserves the right to terminate the membership of any individual whose behavior places the SSAC Swim Club in an unfavorable light, jeopardizes our participation in any pool use or sporting event, or is considered hurtful to fellow swimmers and competitors. All SSAC swimmers are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and act as appropriate ambassadors for the club. They should act as role models for other swimmers when wearing the SSAC logo.

Parents, we encourage you to walk your child in, ensure that a coach is present, and not remain on the pool deck. If you must stay during practice, please sit in the observation deck. Please do not interact with your child or the coaches during practice (meet with coaches after or outside of practice). If this becomes a problem we will have to close our practices to parents. If your child leaves practice early, parents are responsible for their swimmer's behavior once they have left the pool. Younger swimmers climbing on the observation deck or running in the halls foyer of the athletic complex is not acceptable. Such behavior can put the child and the swim team at risk. Make sure your younger swimmer is supervised at all times once they have left the pool.

Meet Behavior

SSAC is always striving to prepare our swimmers to challenge themselves both in practice and in competition situations. Respect and modesty in dealing with coaches, teammates, officials, parents, children, and other competitors are behaviors that are expected of all SSAC members. Each team member is expected to support and encourage other team competitors.

It is not healthy or acceptable for an athlete to be upset at a teammate or competitor for having a better race or practice than them. If an athlete is unhappy with their result, they need to speak with a coach on how they may improve their performance. It is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism regarding races and technique, not the job of parents or teammates.

Swimmers should and will be expected to swim all events that the coach feels they are ready for. The coaches will determine which swimmers will participate in relay events. While a swimmer or parent may not agree with this decision, please know that the decision is made after careful consideration and in the best interest of all swimmers and the team. If a swimmer qualifies for consolations or finals, we expect that swimmer to compete in that event, unless excused by the coach.

Locker Rooms

Coaches are not in charge of supervising swimmers once they have entered the locker rooms. Individual families must be responsible for their own swimmer in the changing areas. Locker rooms should be used with expedience and left in the same state in which they were found. Any swimmer caught defacing property at any SSAC related activity will have membership privileges suspended, and the board of directors will review the situation to determine whether the suspension should lead to termination of membership rights.

Section 3: Parent's Responsibilities

As parents, we must respect our swimmers. We cannot forget how hard our children are trying to do their best, and accept that each swim will not result in a best time. We must congratulate them for each and every effort. As swimming parents, we must not forget to measure the true success of our children by the enjoyment, the teamwork, the commitment and the discipline they are developing through their competitive swimming years. It will be these qualities that remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Parent Guidelines

The best way to help your child achieve goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. If your child does make one, remember that this is a learning experience. You and your child should learn to treat success and failure as learning experiences and not as life changing situations. Encourage your child's efforts and point out the positive things. The coach is the one you have assigned to judge a swimmer's performance and technique. Your role is to provide love and support regardless of outcome.

Parents should understand that individuals progress at different rates and to different levels of achievement. There will be times of accelerated improvement and there will be plateaus, where an athlete will go through (sometimes long) stretches without improvement.

Parents' attitudes and models often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your child to practices and meets, fund-raising projects, meetings, etc.

Remember, particularly in the case of younger swimmers, that attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can "win" or succeed all the time. There will always be some disappointment. Every youngster can gain from this experience whether or not he/she ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time. The secret is not only to produce great swimmers but also, rather, produce great young people who swim.

Please do not bribe/reward your swimmer monetarily or materially for time improvements.

We offer the following **10 Commandments for Swimming Parents** to help direct parent's behavior. You are encouraged to read them carefully.

I. Thou shall not impose thy ambitions on thy child.

Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes and don't push him based on what you think he should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do his personal best and benefit from the process of competitive swimming.

II. Thou shall be supportive no matter what.

There is only one question to ask your child after a practice or a competition - "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

III. Thou shall not coach thy child.

You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offer professional coaching. Do not undermine the professional coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to provide love and support. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. Never pay your child for a performance. This will only serve to confuse your child concerning the reasons to strive for excellence and weaken the swimmer/coach bond.

IV. Thou shall only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.

You should be encouraging and never criticize your child or the coach. Both of them know when mistakes have been made. Remember "yelling at" is not the same as "cheering for".

V. Thou shall acknowledge thy child's fears.

New experiences can be stressful situations. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event or meet if your child was not ready. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming experience.

VI. Thou shall not criticize the officials.

Please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can in purely voluntary positions.

VII. Honor thy child's coach.

The bond between coach and swimmer is special. It contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child.

VIII. Thou shall be loyal and supportive of thy team.

It is not wise for parents to take swimmers and to jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer in another team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team find that it can be a difficult emotional experience. Often swimmers who do switch teams don't do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

IX. Thy child shall have goals besides winning.

Most successful swimmers have learned to focus on the process and not the outcome. Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. Does this make me a failure? No, in fact I am very proud of that swim." What a tremendous outlook to carry on through life.

X. Thou shall not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

There are 250,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about .0002%.

The **10 Commandments for Swimming Parents** is by Rose Snyder, Reprinted from USA Swimming Parent Handbook

Volunteering

All parents registering with the SSAC are required to participate in volunteer support services. Throughout the year we attend swim meets where we are asked to be responsible for timing. We need every family's involvement in this so the burden does not fall more heavily on certain parents. We also ask that you participate in fund-raising as it occurs. It is the volunteer efforts of individual parents that allow for the existence of the club.

Section 4: Fee Structure and Fund Raising

Fees:

Green - \$50 monthly

Bronze - \$624 annually

Silver - \$768 annually

Gold - \$912 annually

Plan 1 – Payment in full at registration (10% discount.)

Plan 2 – First payment due on SEP 1, and end on AUG 1, for a total of 12 equal payments. There will be a \$10 late fee if more than 10 days late.

All swimmers are responsible for an annual registration fee of \$110 due on SEP 1, (includes registration with USA Swimming, team cap & T-shirt.) New swimmers pay the registration upon joining the team.

Families with more than one swimmer registered will receive a \$10/month discount on the fees for all successive swimmers.

Swimmers who participate in Modified or Varsity Swimming have two options. Option 1: \$35/month during the school swimming season and attend SSAC practices and meets when possible (Saturdays, school practice cancellations, etc.) Option 2: Suspend monthly payment; resume participation in SSAC after the school swim season.

NOTE: Throughout the season there are additional meet fees for each meet your swimmer participates in, these fees vary from meet to meet. You will receive fee notices prior to each meet. Please pay by the deadline published by the Coach.

Fund Raising is an integral part of continuing and growing the Swim Strong Aquatic Club Swim Team. All members are asked to actively participate in fund raising activities. That could range from car washes, to swim-a-thons. The fund raising program allows the Board of Directors to keep the cost of SSAC participation considerably lower than comparable programs. It also allows us to adequately compensate our coaches.

Section 5: Swim Meets and Philosophy of Competition

By its very name, the purpose of competitive swimming is to compete and that means attending swim meets! Individuals seeking membership in SSAC should understand that besides having a developmental swim program we are a competitive team. Swimmers should be willing to accept the responsibility of membership and participate in meets.

For many new swimmers, taking the first step and going to their first competitive meet is a big undertaking. Our coaches understand this and are happy to share information about each meet and what meets may be good for beginners.

When you are notified of meets, you should read the meet announcement carefully and ask your child's coach whether that meet would be appropriate for your swimmer. If a swimmer is attending a meet, that swimmer must have a parent or guardian in attendance; it is not acceptable to drop off a swimmer at a meet and leave him or her unsupervised.

SSAC participates in the following types of meets:

- Developmental meets

- Invitational meets
- Championship meets

A **developmental meet** is a USA Swimming meet, following all rules and regulations set forth by the governing body. Fastest swimmers are generally excluded. Swimmers who swim faster than the established cutoff time are typically awarded a certificate announcing their achievement. At USA Swimming meets, the swimmers' awards are given to the coach at the end of the meet. The coach will then distribute them to individual mailboxes at the next practice.

An **invitational meet** is for any swimmer, unless cutoff times are listed in advance. Swimmers are placed in heats according to their seed times, swimming slowest to fastest. The swimmers with the fastest six or eight times, without regard to heat assignments, win awards.

At a **championship meet**, events are first swum as preliminary heats for ages 11 and up. Heats are mixed, with the fastest swimmers in the same heats as the slower swimmers. The fastest six or eight from preliminaries will swim in a finals heat later in the day. Often, the next six or eight after those will swim in a consolation finals heat. Younger swimmers participate as in an invitational meet.

Participation in a **district championship meet** is restricted to swimmers who are members of that district. Cutoff times are established for championship meets. Adirondack typically offers a Silver (developmental championship) meet and a Gold (Junior Olympic) championship meet at the conclusion of the short course season in March as well as a championship meet for all swimmers at the conclusion of the long course season in July.

The district championship meet decides which swimmers are eligible to go to the **Eastern States Zone Championship Meet**. USA Swimming divides areas of the country into small units for organizational purposes. The SSAC Swim Club is a member of a Local Swimming Committee (LSC) known as Adirondack Swimming. The Adirondack swimming district is defined as that portion of New York State east and north of Oswego, Onondaga, Cortland, Broome, Sullivan, Orange, and Dutchess counties. The Adirondack district is one of 12 districts in the eastern zone.

Each of the 12 districts conducts a championship meet at the end of the short course season. The fastest two swimmers in each age group, each sex, and each event from each district are chosen to compete against each other at a location within the zone for the Eastern States Zone Championship Meet.

To be eligible for zones, it is necessary to sign up in advance and qualify for the team by meeting all the minimum criteria. In the past, some swimmers have been excluded because they, or their parents, underestimated their ability or rate of improvement. If you think that your swimmer may be close, it is always best to take a chance and apply.

Steps For Sign-Up

Meet sign-up sheets will be posted on the bulletin board with a deadline for signup. If you plan on attending the meet it is your responsibility to take a meet application form from either the bulletin board or your mailbox. If you wish to try specific events, write the events on the meet application. The coach will take your choices under advisement, but will ultimately pick your events. If you only wish to attend one day of a multiple day meet, indicate this on the application.

If you are asked for an entry, the entry time is the swimmer's best previous time in that event from our computer records. Entry Time is used to seed the heats in that event. Each event must have a time to be seeded. Some meets may have a Minimum Qualifying Time such as Gold Championships and Developmental Meets may have a Maximum Qualifying Time such as Silver Championships for entries.

Once entries have been sent to the host team, a master sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. At that point there will be no financial reimbursement available unless a swimmer is cut from an event by the host team due to oversubscription.

Please be sure to meet all deadlines. There is a lot of paperwork involved in meet entries and we also have deadlines. Late entries will not be accepted.

Stuff to Bring to the Meet

SSAC recommends bringing the following:

Swimmers bring:

- Team suit
- Goggles—well-adjusted and leak proof
- Extra goggles just in case
- Team swim cap—or two in case one rips
- Sweatshirt and sweatpants—maybe two sets
- Team jacket, if you have one
- Towels—two or three are needed because the swimmer dries off after warm-ups, between events, and when changing to go home
- Plastic water bottle and/or drinks in containers other than glass
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow (optional)
- Quiet activities: homework, books, Walkman, playing cards, and so on
- Food or money for food (almost all meets sell inexpensive concessions: coffee, juice, soda, hot dogs, pizza, sandwiches, baked goods, and so on)
- For summer meets: sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, sunglasses
- Good luck charms!!!

Parents bring:

- Folding lawn chairs. Some pools do not have bleachers or it can be used in the team designated holding area
- Highlighter to mark your swim program
- For summer meets: sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, sunglasses
- Food or money for food (almost all meets sell inexpensive concessions: coffee, juice, soda, hot dogs, pizza, sandwiches, baked goods, and so on)

- Money for a program (\$3 to \$10)—they're helpful, but you're not obligated to buy them; swim equipment is usually for sale as well.

Some of these items may seem unnecessary, but when you arrive at your first meet, you will soon understand the value of each and be glad you brought them.

Section 7: Understanding Swimming

The Swimming Strokes

There are specific standards set forth by USA Swimming for all strokes, starts, and turns. For details, refer to the publication "USA Swimming Rules." Rules are modified from time to time, and coaches will keep swimmers informed.

In **freestyle**, the competitor may swim any stroke he or she wishes. The stroke most often seen in freestyle events is the front crawl stroke. The alternate overhand motion of the arms and alternating up-and-down flutter kick characterize this stroke. The forward start is used. Any type of turn is acceptable, but when turning, some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall. The swimmer finishes when some part of the body touches the solid wall or timing pad at the end of the pool. A common reason for disqualification is failure to touch the wall when turning.

In **backstroke**, the swimmer swims on the back using an alternating motion of the arms and a flutter kick. Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the end of the pool on turns. The swimmer is not permitted to turn over onto the front during the race except when performing the backstroke front flip turn. The coach will teach this turn to your swimmer when he or she is ready. The coach will let the swimmer know when he or she is ready to use the turn in competition. The finishing of the backstroke occurs when some part of the swimmer touches the solid wall or timing pad at the end of the pool. A common reason for disqualification is failure to remain on the back.

In **butterfly**, the swimmer performs a simultaneous overhand stroke of the arms while doing an undulating dolphin kick with the legs. In the kick, the swimmer must move the legs together and may not use a flutter, scissors, or breaststroke kick. The swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously when turning and when finishing. Underwater recovery of the arms and one-hand touches on turns and finishes are common reasons for disqualification in both the butterfly and the breaststroke.

In **breaststroke**, the swimmer is required to move both arms underwater simultaneously in the same horizontal plane. The kick is similar to the action of a frog. No flutter, scissors, or dolphin kick is permitted. Except on the pullout after the start and on each turn, the swimmer's hands are not allowed to pull past the hip line. On the turn and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously with the shoulders in line with the surface of the water.

In the **individual medley**, the swimmer swims one, two, or four laps of each of the four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

A Glossary of Swim Terms

Age Groups - In U.S.A. Swimming, competition is primarily broken into 2 yr. segments. Events are swum as 8 & under (or 10 & under), 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18. Some competitions may have SENIOR or OPEN levels where swimmers of any age who have met the time standard for a particular event may enter.

Attached - An athlete member who represents a particular U.S.A. club in competition. An "attached" swimmer may participate in relay competition for that club at U.S.A.meets.

Circled Seeding - Where trials and finals are conducted, the trial heats are sorted by time, slowest to fastest EXCEPT for the last three heats. Swimmers who are placed in the last three heats are sorted by lane where the fastest three are assigned lane 3, the next three assigned lane 4, then 2,5,1,6 or in an eight lane pool, 4,5,3,6,2,7,1,8 respectively.

Clerk of Course - The person who is in charge of the area where swimmers report prior to their event. They may simply receive an entry card to provide to the timer or be sorted by heat and lane and remain in that area until they are called to the starting blocks. This process is common for 8 & under competitors to insure none miss their event.

Course - The length of the pool where the competition is being conducted. SHORT COURSE competitions are conducted in 25 yard or meter pools. This is the common course for High School or Collegiate competitions. LONG COURSE competitions are held in 50 meter pools. This is the common course for Olympic competition. In addition, most Short Course meets are conducted during the "Short Course" season (September to March) and Long Course meets during the "Long Course" season (May to August).

Dual Meet - A competition conducted between two teams. Age groups and events are agreed to by both teams prior to the competition. There are many swim "leagues" where dual meets are the primary source of competition.

Event - A specific race at a given distance, stroke and age group.

Finals - Where preliminary / trials are conducted for the purpose of determining the top swimmers in a race or series of races. These "finalists" compete again to determine the final placing in that event. The number of "finalists" chosen will be determined by the number of lanes and the host team. Normally, there are 6 or 12 finalists for meets conducted in a 6 lane pool and 8 or 16 finalists for meets conducted in an 8 lane facility.

Heats - The method used to sort swimmers within an event. The number of heats in a given event is determined by the number of entrants and the lanes available for competition. Swimmers are either grouped by times from slowest (first heat) to fastest (last heat). Where trials and finals are held, circle seeding is used (see Circle Seeding).

Heat Sheets / Program - Lists all events, heats and lane assignments for the competition. In some cases, a estimated "time line" will show the approximate time each heat will be swum. Competitors' names, ages and club affiliations are provided as well.

L.S.C. - Local Swimming Committee is an administrative division of U.S.A. Swimming. This body is responsible for insuring that the rules and regulations of U.S.A. Swimming are enforced throughout a geographical region of the United States. The LSC duties include governing over swim clubs, competitions, competitor, parent and coach members.

Lycra Suit - This type of suit is usually reserved for competition. Close fitting, the fabric is not designed for wear and tear and will get stretched out if worn in practice sessions. Team suits should NOT be worn in practice sessions!!

Negative Split - A swim where the intermediate times indicate that the swimmer is covering equal distance in less time as the swim progresses. Common example: second half of the swim is faster than the first half.

Nylon Suit - This type of suit is usually worn in practice. A more durable fabric than lycra, it is heavier and fits more loosely. Swimmers sometimes wear multiple suits to increase drag for practice sessions.

Officials - Persons in charge of conducting a competition. Usually in white, they are positioned around the pool and are responsible for insuring each race is conducted according to U.S.A. rules and regulations, and each swimmer is performing the start, stroke, turn and finish in accordance with the rules and guidelines established for that stroke. Parents who are interested in becoming an official should contact a board member.

Prelims - See Finals

Proof of Time - A requirement at most regional / national championship competitions to insure that all swimmers have achieved the time standard in a sanctioned U.S.A. competition for a particular event. Should a swimmer or coach be asked to produce a proof of time and can not, the swimmer will be disqualified from competition.

Referee - The U.S.A. official in charge of all officials. The meet referee makes the final decision in all matters related to the competition.

Seed Time - or entry time, the time submitted by a swimmer for a particular event. The time will determine the swimmer's heat and lane assignment for that event. The time should reflect the swimmer's best time in that event at the time of submission. If a swimmer has not competed in the event (in most cases) submission of a no time "NT" is proper.

Split - The time of a particular segment of a race. Split times are used to help teach pace and race strategy. Example: For a 50 yard race, the swimmer's split time for the first 25 might be a 17.85, and the final time 36.63. In a 100 yard event, the swimmer would have 4 split times.

Starter - The U.S. A. official who is responsible for starting each heat, insuring all swimmers get an equal advantage at the start of the race and calling the next heat to the starting blocks.

Stroke / Turn Judge - The U.S. A. official who is responsible for insuring swimmers adhere to stroke / turn rules governing that particular stroke / event.

Team Uniform - The designated apparel worn by all team members. Requirements may vary by club but at least, every team member should wear the designated suit for all U.S.A. competitions.

Time Standards - Established by U.S.A. Swimming, these times help swimmers compare their ability to other swimmers across the country. Some meets will establish qualifying times which must be met in order to compete in that meet. These qualifying times are usually taken from these standards. The standards are broken down by age group beginning with 10 & under and are "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA", "AAAA", from slowest to fastest.

Touch Pad - The part of the electronic timing system which rests in the water, against the wall where the race ends. A swimmer should be trained to "touch" the area of the pad (at the lip of the wall and below) in order to activate the system and insure the fastest race time.

Unattached - An athlete member who does not represent a club in U.S.A. competition. "Unattached" swimmers may not compete in relay competition in U.S.A. Swimming meets. A swimmer must swim "unattached" for a period of 120 days when switching from one U.S.A. club to another. The swimmer must also present to the L.S.C., a signed document from their former club verifying they left that club in "good standing" prior to competing as an "Attached" swimmer for another club. See a club official for details.

U.S.A. Swimming - The national governing body for amateur swimming in the United States.

Warm Down - A process where the swimmer recovers from a race. In this process, the swimmer breaks down lactic acid which builds in the muscles during the race, allow the cardiovascular system to relax and recover, and reviews the race and critique given by the coach to begin to prepare for improvement in that event.

Warm Up - A process where swimmers prepare for a competition. Usually conducted as a team, each swimmer prepares their muscles, cardiovascular system as well as their minds (focus) for the upcoming challenge(s) of the day.

REFERENCES

Adirondack Swimming Main Page <http://www.adirondackswimming.org>

USA Swimming Main Page <http://www.usaswimming.org>

Swim Info - Misc info on swimming <http://www.swiminfo.com>

Swim news online <http://www.swimnews.com>

Arenaswim - Product reviews / interviews tips <http://www.arenaswim.com>

Swim Outlet - Swimming equipment <http://www.swimoutlet.com>

American Swim Coaches Assoc. misc info <http://www.swimmingcoach.org>

Videos, books on swimming <http://www.sportsnationvideo.com>