



Team Handbook
2008 - 2009

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to explain to new members just what Ultimate Swimming is, and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers. All families should read it so that they may become familiar with important facts about the team.



MISSION OF ULTIMATE SWIMMING

Ultimate Swimming, Inc. is a year round, competitive, educational swim program for Chicago area swimmers of all ages and abilities. Ultimate Swimming, Inc. fosters the participation of its members in preparing for, and competing in swim meets. Ultimate Swimming, Inc. promotes discipline, responsibility, respect and integrity among its members, and encourages them to realize their full potential as an athlete.



COACHING STAFF

Nothing has a greater influence on the quality of children's sports than the excellence of the coach. Our coach is a member of the American Swimming Coaches Association, which has the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport in the United States.

Head Coach - Pierre Ruffin

Coach Pierre has always believed in starting with the fundamentals: building the best stroke technique. He achieves this by working with swimmers to develop their technique through stages, using continuous feedback. With his no-nonsense approach, he is dedicated and expects the same of his swimmers.

Coach Responsibilities

The coach's job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. Coach Pierre is dedicated to providing a program for youngsters that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself--"to be the best you can be." Therefore, the coach is in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coach is responsible for placing youngsters in practice groups. This is based on the ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging practice group.
2. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the coach. Each group's practices are geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. The coach will make the final decision concerning which meets Ultimate Swimming swimmers may attend. The coach also makes the final decision concerning which events a swimmer enters at each swim meet.

4. At meets, the coach will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coach will give each swimmer feedback regarding their performance.



PRACTICE GROUPS

As each child is different, he/she will progress at his/her own rate. The coach recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental, and emotional level of development.

Beginners

For those new to competitive swimming.
Focuses on developing the four competitive strokes
Expected to attend 2-3 practices per week
Practice is 1 hour

Intermediate

For those are able to do all four competitive strokes, and need to work on increasing endurance.
Expected to attend 3-4 practices per week
Practice length is 1 1/2 hours

Advanced

For experienced swimmers who compete regularly, have good endurance, and are working on building strength.
Expected to attend 4-6 practices per week
Practice length is 2 hours



PRACTICE SESSIONS

Practice sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed to progress swimmers. Therefore it is important that each swimmer attends all practices in order to derive the full benefits of the program.

Practice And Attendance Policies

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the coach's policies regarding practice.

1. Each training group has specific attendance requirements appropriate for the objectives of that group. The least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success.
2. Swimmers should arrive on the school grounds no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their workout time. Swimmers should be ready to swim five minutes prior to the start of their practice. They should leave no later than 15 minutes after their practice is over.

4. In the event that your child needs to be dismissed early from practice, please notify the coach in writing at the beginning of the practice session.
5. Occasionally, a practice may need to be canceled or changed. In this case, every attempt will be made to notify all members. The information will be posted on the team's web site, an email will be sent.
6. During practice sessions, swimmers are never to leave the pool area without a coach's permission.
7. Swimmers are to enter the building at Door 7 and go directly to the pool area. A swimmer found in any other part of the building could damage our relationship with the High School and risks expulsion from the team.
8. The club has an obligation to act as guests while in the high school (both swimmers and parents). Every member of the club needs to do everything possible to respect this privilege. Any damages to school property may result in financial liability of the swimmers' parents. Any damage may also result in the swimmer being asked to leave the team permanently.
10. Parents are welcome to observe practice from the bleachers. Please be considerate and enter and exit the bleachers from appropriately sexed locker rooms located on the east end of the pool. Do not try to communicate with any swimmer from the observation area. This is not only distracting to the swimmer, but can also be distracting to the entire team as well as the coach. When leaving the bleacher area please make sure it is left clean and tidy.

Illness And Injury

The coach should be informed of an illness or injury prior to practice.

If your swimmer will be out of the water over a long period of time with an injury or illness, please notify Ultimate Swimming either via email or by leaving a message on the phone Hotline so the coaching staff is aware of the problem.

Swimmers' Responsibilities

A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her parents, and most importantly to themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for a 100% effort each time they come to practice.

Swimmers will be required to bring training equipment (i.e. cap, goggles, fins/flippers, bottle of water) to all practices, arrive on time and be ready to work. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure all items are properly adjusted and that spares are readily available.

Swimmers should not run on the pool deck, climb on the lane lines, or throw training equipment.

Checking Swimming folders (our communication center) is also a responsibility of the swimmer. Folders should be checked each swim practice.

At all practices, swim meets and team functions, swimmers are representatives of Ultimate Swimming, and their behavior is a reflection of our team. Misconduct of any kind (i.e. horseplay, rowdiness, fighting or insubordination toward any Coach or Meet Official) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with accordingly. When joining the team, swimmers are required to sign a Swimmer Code Of Conduct, and expected to follow those guidelines while they are members of Ultimate Swimming.

Parent' Responsibilities

To have a successful program there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your swimmer makes depends to a great extent on this relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join the Ultimate Swimming and reacquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning to Ultimate Swimming.

Please make every effort to have your swimmers at practice on time. Swimmers should be on deck and ready to swim at the time practice starts. Also please make sure you pick up your child up from the pool on time.

Ask questions. The coach encourages questions regarding swimming or a swimmer's progress and is willing to provide answers. However to avoid disruption of practice, please do not attempt to discuss these matters during practice time. Parents may speak to the coach either before or after practice, may leave a message on the Hotline, or e-mail the coach with concerns and they will respond as soon as possible.

When swimmers are participating at swim meets, all parents are required to volunteer as timers for at least 1 hour during the meet. A timer roster is distributed prior to each meet, and it is each parent's responsibility to time during the time they are rostered.

As mentioned above, the coach is responsible for all aspects of instruction and the training regimen. Please try and support what the coach says rather than coach your child. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and often times insurmountable, confusion as to who the swimmer should listen to. If the swimmer has any questions about their swimming, please encourage them to go to the coach first. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces best results. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact the coach.

Please realize that your child is working hard, and give all the support you can. Have a kind word for all of the swimmers including your own. Encourage them by examples of "good sportsmanship" and "good manners."

COMMUNICATION

Web Site

The Ultimate Swimming website address is: www.ultswimming.org. The Website is updated regularly and is a place where all members can obtain information about the practice schedule, meet schedules, registration, and upcoming events. When you join Ultimate Swimming, you will receive a password to the website via email, which allows you to sign up for swim meets and access your account information online. Members can also update their account information and check invoices online. If there are any changes to the practice schedule, they are posted at the website first, so please check regularly. If access to the Internet is not available, please notify staff to be put on an emergency call list for emergency cancellations and changes.

Email

Email is the primary communication method for the club. Emails are sent regularly to notify members of practice schedule changes, upcoming events, and information about swim meets. Emails are sent to the email address you provided at registration. If your email address changes, please notify a Board member

File Center

There is a file folder box, containing a folder for each child, on the pool deck. These should be checked by swimmers at every practice, as they may also contain information for parents. It is the swimmer's responsibility to check their folder daily. A file labeled "payments" is also available in the File Center if you do not wish to mail your payments. Other folders labeled "Board Members" and "Coach" may also be used for written communications.

Phone Hotline

Ultimate Swimming Inc. also has a phone hotline where you can leave a message for the coach or board members, who will reply as soon as possible. The Hotline number is (630) 928-3498

Mailing Address

The mailing address for Ultimate Swimming Inc. is: P.O. Box 871, Hillside, IL 60162



PROBLEMS

Problems with The Coach

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but this approach often results in new problems being created. Please try to discuss any issues you may have with the coach directly.

Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach:

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with what the coach believes is best for the swimmer and the team.
3. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem. If you feel that after talking to the coach, the problem is not resolved, please contact one of the Board Members.

Problems with board members, parents, or swimmers

All members (swimmers, parents, and Board Members) are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the Mission of Ultimate Swimming.

The coach is authorized to dismiss a swimmer from practice for continuously disrupting others or behaving inappropriately.

When a member behaves inappropriately, an initial meeting will be held between the coach, a board member and the individual (plus their parents if it is a swimmer). The situation will be discussed and steps taken to resolve the issue.

Repeated offenses may warrant expulsion from practice, and/or suspension from the team.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors oversees the administrative functions of the club by :

1. Providing necessary business functions
2. Assisting and supporting the Coach
3. Ensuring smooth communication

The Board Of Directors for 2008 – 9 are:

President:	Maryann Kaufman	Email: maryann@ultswimming.org
Vice President:	Tambray Donahue	Email: tambray@ultswimming.org
Vice President of Ways and Means:	Noah Silverstein	Email: noah@ultswimming.org
Treasurer:	John Railing	Email: john@ultswimming.org
Secretary:	Nicki Griffin	Email: nicki@ultswimming.org

Board Member may also be contacted by leaving a message at the Ultimate Swimming Hotline: ph: (630) 928-3498

Board Meetings are held on a Monthly basis, and are open to all members of Ultimate Swimming.



BYLAWS

The bylaws are provided to all new members, are available at www.ultswimming.org and are available upon request.



FEES

Ultimate Swimming club fees are either billed monthly or you can pay the fees for the whole season at registration. Billing is based on current level of your swimmer. If your child moves in level, billing will reflect the change in fees the following month. Fees cover coaching, pool rental, and equipment costs.

Swim Meet entry fees will be billed to your account when the team enters a meet (approx 6 weeks prior to the met itself). These fees will be invoiced in detail on your monthly fee statement.

Ultimate Swimming is a non-profit, parent run swim team. Please pay your fees on time so that fees can be kept at a reasonable rate.

Where can I find my billing information?

The Ultimate Swimming web site www.ultswimming.org provides a detailed accounting of your current billing and past invoices. You can check your account status by clicking the "Billing and Invoices" tab after you have logged in.

How do I Make my Monthly Payments

Monthly payments can be:

1. Mailed to Ultimate Swimming, Inc. P.O. Box 871, Hillside, IL 60162
2. Placed in the folder labeled "payments" in the folder file at the pool.

Currently, Ultimate Swimming can only accept payments made by check or cash. Please make checks payable to: **Ultimate Swimming, Inc.**

Leaving the Team

It is the responsibility of members to notify the coach and treasurer of their intention to terminate, or cancel a team membership. Failure to notify the treasurer may cause a member to be unnecessarily billed for monthly dues. If a member quits the program or is dropped from the program, account balances are immediately payable in full.

Questions About Your Statement

If you have any questions about any billing you may have received, please contact the treasurer directly either via email or by calling the Ultimate Swimming hot line: (630)-928- 3498.



INSURANCE

It is required of all Ultimate Swimming, Inc. swimmers that they have a current United States Swimming (USS) membership. This membership not only supports swimming throughout the country, it also provides very important accident insurance for every swimmer and every club. Visit www.usaswimming.org for more information on the insurance.

Carrier: Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company

Policy Number: T5MP-SP-35054

Insured's: Members of USA Swimming

Coverage is a benefit of membership in USA Swimming and begins upon receipt of the completed membership application form with appropriate fee and acceptance by the LSC Registration/Membership Chair or its designee.



EQUIPMENT

At each practice your child will need a suit, goggles, fins, a towel, and a cap if they have long hair. **Please label ALL equipment.** It is recommended swimmers bring two pairs of goggles in case one malfunctions, and a bag to hold equipment. Water bottles must be plastic.

A team cap and t-shirt is provided to all swimmers when they register. Swimmers should wear them when they attend swim meets.

A team suit is also available to purchase, and is recommended for all swimmers competing in swim meets.





SWIM MEETS

Listed below are some guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask.

How to enter a swim meet

The meet schedule for each season is planned by the coach at the beginning of the season. It is posted at the Ultimate Swimming website and distributed to all members when it is finalized. Each meet has an entry deadline date. All swimmers are required to indicate whether or not they are planning to attend the meet before the entry deadline, by registering at the website. To register for a meet, click on the “Meets and Events tab”, then click on the “Attend this meet” button for the meet and follow the instructions. Swim meets are usually held over more than one day, so when entering a meet, it is important to type in which days your swimmer will attend. You may just attend one day, or all the days of the meet. After the entry deadline, the coach will select which events each swimmer will swim, and enters the swimmers into the meet using a computerized entry system. Once entries are complete, each swimmer will receive an information sheet containing details of the meet and listing the events they will be swimming.

What To Take To The Meet

Some guidelines on what to pack:

-Team Swim Suit and Cap

-Goggles

-Towels - your swimmer will be there awhile so pack at least two.

-Something to sit on. Often the swimmer area may be located in a gym or cafeteria, so pack a sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmer will be spending a lot of time on it.

- At least one change of clothes i.e. sweat pants/shorts plus a t-shirt/sweater. Swimmers need to keep warm between events and need dry clothes to put on after swimming. Even though it may be hot in the pool area, sometimes the area in which swimmers sit is not as warm, or, swimmers may be walking down draughty hallways to get to the pool.

- Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.

- Food and Drink: There is usually a concession stand at swim meets selling drinks and food, but it is still a good idea to bring snacks.

Before the meet it is also a good idea to **write your swimmers events on their hand in ink.** This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or watch for.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other Ultimate Swimming, Inc. parent for help or information!

Before the Meets Starts

Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information handed out to all swimmers, as well as on the Ultimate Swimming Web Site.

Most meets charge fees for spectators (often five dollars per spectator) and many have concession stands (though you can bring your own drinks and snacks).

When you arrive at the pool, the first thing your swimmer should do is Check In, so look for signs to "**Positive Check-In**". Most meets use a positive check-in process, where swimmers need to check in before they can swim. Check-in is required so that the people running the meet know who is actually at the meet. At the Positive Check-In table, your swimmer will circle or highlight their name on a list of swimmers. Positive check-in usually closes 20 minutes after the start of warm ups. At this time, the meet administrators "seed" the swimmers into heats (i.e. place them into the heat and lane they will swim). If your swimmer hasn't checked in, they will not be placed into their event, and will not be able to swim that day. It is often a good idea to double check that your swimmer has checked in if they are new to swimming.

After checking in, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.

Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles, and a towel, and reports to the coach on the pool deck for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her team is sitting and wait there until his first event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

Psyche Sheets and Heat Sheets. A "psyche" sheet lists all swimmers entered into each event in order of "seed time", and is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. A "seed time" is usually the swimmers best time for that event (at the time entries were submitted). If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

A "Heat sheet" is created after positive check in closes, and lists the actual heat and lane a swimmer will be competing in. Heat sheets are usually posted on the walls around the facility, and are distributed to all coaches close to the start of the meet

During the Swim Meet

It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait a while. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to their lane:

Direct To Lane A swimmer reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before they actually swim. Check with a coach for specific instructions.

Bullpen Area At some meets, swimmers are asked to report to a "bullpen" area, where officials line up swimmers according to their heat and lane, then take them to the pool in correct order. The "bullpen" area can be a gym or an area on the pool deck. Usually an announcement is made over the loudspeaker telling swimmers when it is time to report to the bullpen for their event. Swimmers should go to the bullpen with their cap and goggles, and a towel.

Each meet is run a little differently, so pay attention to announcements telling swimmers when and where to report for their events. If a swimmer is not behind their block for the start of the race, it will go ahead without them.

After each swim, swimmers should report immediately to coach Pierre so he can discuss their swim with them. He may then ask them to do some recovery swimming if a "warm down" pool or lanes are available.

After they have spoken to Pierre, take your swimmer back to the team area and relax. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat. The swimmer now waits until their next event is called and starts the procedure again.

Make sure, however, you check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and she is not there.

The End of the meet

When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events, they are free to leave after checking with the Coach,.

One reason to check with the coach before leaving is to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay on which your swimmer is expected to be swim, be disqualified for not having all of the relay members present.

Swim meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! They get to visit with friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

Special Parent's Note

Because of insurance requirements, parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity (or timing). All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coach. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

Swim meets involve a lot of sitting around and waiting. Each session typically runs 5 hours (1 hour for warm-up, plus 4 hours of racing). In addition to bringing something for your swimmer to do between events, it's a good idea to bring something for yourself too.

The pool area can be very (sometimes uncomfortably) warm, so dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being at a hot swim meet dressed in warm, uncomfortable clothing. It makes the time pass very slowly.

Feel free to bring folding, or stadium seats chairs to sit on.

Lane Timers

Finally, at each meet, each team usually needs to provide parent volunteers to act as lane timers. Meets cannot be run successfully without help from volunteers, and acting as a lane timer is one of the volunteer duties that is usually shared among parents. If you have a swimmer competing in a meet, you may be required to act as a timer. Usually we know about a week before the meet how many timers we need to provide, and the parents will be assigned to time for one hour. If you have never timed before, do not worry. There is always a meeting for timers on the pool deck before the meet starts, where officials explain the procedures.

Benefits of being a timer include:

- you are on the pool deck where it is often cooler,
- you are close to the action, and get to be with the swimmers
- free drinks and snacks
- often free admission
- the meet goes much faster
- plus, you may even get to time your own child (they'll love that)