

NSAC Member Handbook



Home of the Mako Sharks

(Revised 7/23/2014)

Welcome to the North Suburban Aquatic Club

“From Novice to Champion, One Stroke at a Time”

NSAC website: www.nsmakos.org

Team Colors: Black, Gold, and White

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Introduction

North Suburban Aquatic Club (NSAC) welcomes you to the world of swimming as an amateur competitive sport and lifelong activity. Amateur competitive swimming has had a strong presence in the northern Twin City suburbs for more than twenty-five years. Those clubs from which we came date back as far as 1982 and were originally designed to provide quality year-round training to develop young competitive swimmers to feed into the local high school swim teams. Since their beginning, the northern suburbs have produced not only high school champions, but collegiate champions and have sent swimmers to the highest level of United States swimming competition. NSAC was created out of this excellence and commitment. Our mission has also evolved over time from a high school focus, into a broader forum for all levels of swimmers, from beginners to accomplished competitive amateurs. To serve our community in the best possible way, NSAC offers instructional programming and training designed for various levels and ages of swimmers, beginning around the age of four and extending well into adulthood. Those interested in competing on an amateur level will find that our programming blends with the established structure provided for by state and nationally recognized swimming organizations, while offering instruction and training for those wishing to compete in other swimming-related competition such as triathlons, etc.

NSAC is a member of the USA Swimming family. USA Swimming (www.usswim.org) is the national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States. Based at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA Swimming is comprised of the national organization, 59 Local Swimming Committees (LSC's), more than 2,000 individual swim clubs, 20,000 coaches, 200,000 athletes, and countless volunteers. These numbers grow each year with the increasing popularity of the sport. The LSC that governs NSAC is Minnesota Swimming, Inc. (MSI).

To promulgate our mission, NSAC organized into a corporation named North Suburban Instructional Aquatics, Inc. (NSIA) in 2003. Through NSIA, we have become a recognized 501c-3, tax exempt organization and broadened our mission, making it more consistent with our current identity. NSAC remains a competitive swim club and yet, a place for anyone interested in the sport to thrive and any level. With the increasing popularity of triathlons, adult competitive swimming events and overall general personal fitness at all ages, NSAC continues to broaden its purposes to serve the whole family. NSAC has also become philanthropic; supporting the sport of swimming for all in our community, making it possible for the underprivileged to participate and continuing to seek out how best to serve our swimming community through organized participation.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the regulations, guidelines, policies/procedures and philosophies involved with being a part of NSAC. The information provided here serves as the foundation of our programming, operations, and expectations we have for

both our swimmers and their families. Understanding the contents of this handbook is the best way to guarantee each member has the most rewarding experience possible within the framework of our club. All members are expected to read this handbook and are encouraged to discuss this handbook to better understand our organization and each member's role in the maintenance and future success of NSAC. Parents are expected to explain the relevant sections to their swimmers who are too young to read the handbook (i.e. Swimmer's Code of Conduct).

It is very important to understand that NSAC is administered and managed by adult volunteers, most of whom have children enrolled in our programs. Volunteer support for organizations like ours is vital to its success and economic competitiveness. Our volunteers serve on the Board of Directors, on various committees, and take on special assignments for the necessary tasks required to support our operations. Meanwhile, the Board employs professionally trained and certified coaching staff to run our programs. The Board is extremely interested in providing high quality programming with professional staff in the most cost-effective way possible for our members. We would like all of our members to have an enriching, satisfying experience with our club, but would like all members to also realize that joining our club comes with some level of volunteerism expectation. The Board recognizes that each individual has a varying ability to commit to volunteering time and efforts; however, any volunteerism that our members can provide serves to make our organization even better able to succeed in its overall mission, while providing a cost-effective venue that promotes our swimmers' success.

Choosing NSAC for your personal or family swimming venue is a wise choice. We welcome you with open arms to our aquatic community! Most of your questions should be answered within the text of this handbook; however, should you require more specific information about our corporate structure or the Board of Directors, this can be found in the respective corporate legal documents which can be provided to you upon request from the Board Secretary. Please do not hesitate to introduce yourself to our Program Representatives (one is assigned to each program we offer, see page 50) and/or a member of the Board with any questions you have.

Welcome Aboard!

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide high quality programming that inspires each individual swimmer to reach their greatest potential.

The Importance of Swimming

Swimming is a multi-dimensional sporting activity that is able to provide multiple benefits to individuals at any age and level of participation. It is an individual sport, a team sport, one that provides both physical and mental growth, and a life-long activity that provides for general physical fitness. Swimming offers many unique advantages over other sports or activities that make it an ideal choice for people of all ages. These advantages include:

- The use of all the body's major muscle groups, promoting complete development.
- Offering the most complete aerobic fitness possible.
- Enhancing flexibility while building strength.
- Development of improved coordination skills because of the complexity of the four primary strokes and various techniques.
- Being a low-impact sport and therefore enjoying a low rate of serious injury.
- Developing a psychological maturity in competitive swimmers through recognition of individual vs. team strategies, while also teaching time-management, goal-setting, cooperation, and independence.
- Developing self-discipline and building self-esteem through measured success in a relatively less stressful environment than other activities.
- Adaptation to aging individuals making it possible to enjoy the activity for a lifetime.

Practice Groups

NSAC features eight basic training groups or programs: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Junior, Senior, National, High School Maintenance, and Masters. These programs are offered in every session except for High School Maintenance which is offered as deemed necessary. All of the programs are run by professional, certified coaches who instruct the participants on everything from the basics of swimming for those new to the sport, to stroke development, and all the way to amateur competitive swimming on a national level. Each group represents different goals and emphases, but the coaches remind the swimmers that the focus is on a team concept. Each swimmer is an equally important member of the Club, regardless of level or ability. To the swimmer, the different training groups provide recognition and an opportunity to achieve a higher level of excellence.

When making grouping decisions, the coaching staff considers many factors including a swimmer's age, physical and emotional maturity, meet performances, practice performances, stroke development, and the long-term plan for the athlete. All swimmers progress at different rates, so the coaching staff moves swimmers from one group to the next based on an individual swimmer's abilities and desires. All move-ups are at the coaches' discretion and usually take place after the conclusion of a season. Parents should keep in mind that abilities, skills, and ages will overlap between the groups. All swimmer group placements and advancements are recommended to and approved by the Head Coach.

During the first week of each session, there is typically a parent meeting at the Bronze, Silver and Gold pools explaining the training group format, advancement criteria, goals, and in which group each swimmer will be swimming.

Bronze

Bronze is our entry-level program for stroke development and is designed for those children five to ten years of age who can swim at least one-half length of a 25-yard pool independently. The emphasis of this program is on technique and proper execution of the four competitive strokes, flip turns, open turns, racing starts, and streamlining. The coaches stress having fun while developing skills that will allow the swimmer to succeed as he/she progresses. Success with simple skills leads to development of positive self-esteem. Games will frequently be played incorporating a skill to be learned while the swimmer makes new friends and has fun. The beginnings of team dynamics, social interactions and management of a competitive atmosphere are introduced.

A typical Bronze practice starts with learning and executing appropriate dry-land stretching. This is followed by practicing skills in the four competitive swim strokes, flip turns, and the open turns unique to the breaststroke and butterfly. Grab starts are most commonly used during practice while dive starts are taught at times arranged by the coach when lanes can be set aside for that purpose. Finally, swimmers learn to read and use a pace clock. Meet competition is limited, but there are several opportunities each

season for new swimmers to get their feet wet in Novice (or “Mini”) Meets and sanctioned “C” and “Open” meets (see Types and Levels of Swim Meets, page 27). These meets enable swimmers to compete against others of similar ability.

Practices are held four to five days per week for one hour with the expectation that swimmers attend at least three practices per week. Advancement to the next group requires a swimmer to complete a 50-yard freestyle, a legal 25-yard length of one of the other competitive strokes, and possess the listening skills necessary to take instruction at the next level.

Expected Character Development Progression for Bronze Swimmers:

- Understands the team concept
- Respects teammates and coaches
- Listens to coaches
- Demonstrates respect for the facility and equipment
- Knows team name and colors
- Begins to develop sportsmanship behavior at practice and meets

Silver

The Silver group is for swimmers 8 to 12 years old who are able to complete 25 yards/meters of all four competitive strokes. Swimmers in this group have a basic understanding of swimming skills. Swimmers concentrate on developing a solid technical background while learning consistent interval training and endurance work. There is a major focus on the techniques of each of the four competitive strokes as well as turns and IM (Individual Medley) transitions. There is intensive work done on starts, turns, finishes, stroke drills, and techniques. Swimmers are also introduced to goal-setting. Attention, retention, listening skills, and concept-attainment are encouraged at all times.

The Silver group swims year-round and offers five practices a week. Four practices a week are recommended for this group. Swimmers are highly encouraged to compete in one competition per month. Advancement to the next group requires a swimmer to demonstrate proper technique including starts, turn, and IM transitions as well as demonstrate a readiness to train on intervals. Swimmers must also show a desire to compete in swim meets on a regular basis.

Expected Character Development Progression for Silver Swimmers

- Understands the team concept
- Respects teammates and coaches
- Listens to coaches and tries to make appropriate changes
- Demonstrates respect for the facility and equipment
- Knows team name and colors

- Understands levels and goals established by coach
- Develops sportsmanship behavior at practice and meets

Gold

Our Gold program is our basic program for competitive swimmers. It is designed for those children ages 9 to 14 who have the basics of the competitive strokes but need to work on refining their skills. Understanding proper stroke technique is vital at this level. Swimmers in the Gold group strive to understand how the sport of competitive swimming is structured and how to set goals according to and within the team structure. Gold swimmers work to perfect basic skills such as kicking, proper timing, streamlines, proper breathing, and they become introduced to more advanced techniques such as head and body position, balance, alignment, and proper pulling. As swimmers advance through this program, they can expect to gradually develop a greater understanding of how to move through the water efficiently.

The focus of the Gold group is to improve cardiovascular fitness, refine stroke skills, and gain competitive experience. Gold swimmers will be introduced to advanced workout skills such as interval training, clock management, and race strategy. Swim meets are an essential part of the development process for a Gold swimmer. Meets are frequently attended with participation in as many as possible being highly encouraged, but swimmers at this level should not be overly concerned with speed or time. It is important that a swimmer learn proper technique while they are young so they can set the groundwork for successful, fast swimming as they get older. The motto for this program is “First we learn to swim correctly, and then we learn to swim fast”.

A combination of skill demonstration and competition times is used by the coach to determine appropriate lane assignments during practice. Gold swimmers compete for ribbons at meets that are typically given to those who have a best individual performance (beat their own best time) and those who place in each event (best overall in each level: A/B/C, see page 26). **Any ribbon is worthy of parental recognition** and this recognition helps make your swimmer even better. Some swimmers may never place in an event for a best overall ribbon (see page 36, “If Your Child Has a Disappointing Race”), but if they are lucky enough to ever do so, a parent’s reward is the big smile on their swimmer’s face when they get handed the big fluffy ribbon!

Practices are held six days per week for 1½ hours a day. Swimmers are expected to attend four to five practices per week. Advancement to the next program requires perfection of the skills emphasized as well as a demonstration of the maturity and commitment required to handle an increased workload.

Expected Character Development Progression for Gold Swimmers:

- Respect for teammates, coaches, and parents; treats others as they would want to be treated
- Continue to develop sportsmanship behavior that includes cheering for teammates, congratulating teammates, remaining humble, and not having tantrums
- Develops a communication link with the Lead Coach (i.e. talks/listens to coach at practice, voices concerns or problems, and talks to the coach before/after a race)
- Understands the importance of doing quality work at school and completing assignments
- Self-management; learning about nutrition and taking care of oneself
- Forms positive work ethic; developing an understanding of how practice performance relates to meet performance
- Understands the need to start and finish sets at the wall and to swim each set completely
- Understands time standards and basic race strategy
- Learns how to develop realistic goals

Junior

The Junior group is for swimmers in junior high and/or ages 12 to 15 years old. The primary focus of this group is to transition the technically and aerobically advanced Gold swimmer to the Senior level. Swimmers in this group begin to demonstrate a commitment to the sport that goes beyond recreation. Swimmers focus on aerobic development and mastery of all four strokes. Maintaining proper stroke technique while developing an advanced aerobic capacity is very important to Junior swimmers.

In this group, swimmers begin to see the link between consistent practice attendance and steady improvement. In addition to time spent in the water, swimmers are encouraged to set goals, focus on their nutrition, and learn to manage their time away from the pool.

The Junior group swims year-round and offers six practices per week, including dryland. A minimum of five practices a week is recommended for this group. Swimmers are expected to compete in one meet per month. Advancement to the next program is dependent on maturity, commitment and aerobic endurance.

Expected Character Development Progression for Junior Swimmers:

- Demonstrates good sportsmanship behavior
- Has established effective communication link with the Lead Coach (i.e. talks/listens to coach at practice, voices concerns or problems, and talks to the coach before/after a race)

- Understands the importance of doing quality work at school and manages time well away from the pool
- Has established good nutrition habits and understands the relationship between nutrition and performance
- Understands how practice performance relates to meet performance
- Demonstrates commitment to the sport through practice and meet attendance
- Develops realistic goals

Senior

The Senior program is where swimmers transition from the technique-based swimming of the Junior program to the training-based swimming required to advance as an older athlete. Technique remains the central focus of the Senior program, but advanced skills are taught and perfected in the background of elevated training. Along with perfecting advanced techniques such as head and body position, balance, alignment, proper pulling and correct starts and turns, swimmers in the Senior program can expect to learn detailed race strategy and psychology, basic strength training, advanced workout management, as well as develop skills of self-motivation, independence, and leadership.

Meet participation is an essential aspect of the development of a Senior swimmer. Practices are held six days per week for two hours a day with the expectation that swimmers attend as many practices per week as possible. An extra half-hour of time is devoted to dryland training three times per week as facility schedules allow. Seniors are encouraged to make a commitment to achieving certain goals at the beginning of each session. The goals set here are both short-term and long-term. At this level the coaches encourage swimmers to fulfill their goals, but the emphasis is on the swimmers taking responsibility for their own success.

Not every swimmer will advance beyond the Senior program. Whether or not a swimmer does advance is purely a question of abilities, needs, and commitment. Only those swimmers who have perfected the skills emphasized in the Senior program as well as demonstrated that their commitment and emotional and physical maturity are such that they require and can handle an increased training load should expect to advance beyond the Senior program.

Expected Character Development Progression for Senior Swimmers:

- Is not influenced by the negative behavior of others
- Displays a higher level of sportsmanship behavior
- Is respectful and encouraging to others
- Has achieved a balance between quality schoolwork, other outside activities, and swimming commitment
- Develops short- and long-term goals
- Maintains open communication with coach

- Self-management; incorporates good nutrition and self-care
- Displays leadership qualities and mentors younger swimmers
- Possesses a good work ethic; understands and is responsible for attendance, practice performance, and how they relate to meet performance
- Displays pride and team spirit for NSAC

Special Note

Of special note is that in 2004, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) who controls rules concerning high school athletes, changed its rule prohibiting high school swimmers from swimming with private clubs during the swimmer's high school season. To broaden the practice opportunities available to coaches and their swimmers, in-season high school swimmers can now swim with their private club provided the attended practices do not interfere with the swimmer's responsibilities to their high school team. In-season high school swimmers can also compete at USA Swimming meets provided the events they enter are not sanctioned high school events. NSAC has adopted a Registration and Fees policy to accommodate these swimmers (see page 45).

National

The National program is open to swimmers 12 years of age and over who successfully complete a swim try-out set and who are deemed ready for the program following an interview by the age-group or senior lead coach. This program requires an identified level of commitment, in terms of attendance and meet participation.

High School/Collegiate Conditioning

The HSCC program is for those high school and current college swimmers wanting to stay in shape while participating in other activities or for those not swimming year-round wanting to prepare for their high school or college swim season. Practices in this program are primarily based on building and maintaining endurance. Stroke instruction is provided. This group practices three times per week for 60-90 minutes and swimmers in this group cannot participate in club meets.

Masters

Our Masters program mirrors the national USA Swimming Masters Organization and is open to all adults (18 years of age or older and out of high school) who want to continue competing in sanctioned events beyond high school, want to compete in triathlons, or are interested in general fitness through their participation in swimming as a life-long activity. Practice is typically three times per week for 60-90 minutes per session. Like all our other programs, this is professionally coached to whatever level our adult swimmers need.

Moving Up

Although swimmers are assigned to a program based on age and ability, within each program exists a spectrum of skill development. Swimmers are usually assigned a lane in which to swim by their coach where they will be swimming with other swimmers whose skills are most similar to their own. As the swimmer progresses in developing their own skills, they are moved into the lanes with more advanced swimmers.

Coaches have various methods for determining when a swimmer is ready to make a move up to the next lane. Many factors play into the coach's decision, but skill development, practice discipline, and demonstration of skills mastered are primary considerations. Sometimes coaches will move swimmers during a session because they can see a marked progression in skill during practices. A "challenge set" is sometimes used in the Bronze program to determine skill development and appropriate lane assignment as Bronze swimmers have few opportunities to demonstrate their skills at meets than do more experienced swimmers. When utilized, challenge sets usually occur once or twice during a session, and consist of a number of skills the swimmer needs to demonstrate before they are allowed to move up. Because move-ups within a program are not as obvious as graduating to the next higher program (i.e. Bronze to Silver), coaches will make every effort to keep you informed of your swimmer's accomplishments. Swimmers that graduate from one program to the next are usually those swimming in the highest skilled lane in their program who demonstrate they are ready to be moved up. While swimmers may advance to the next lane at any time determined by their Lead Coach, advancements into the next higher program generally takes place at the beginning of the next session.

This system is not flawless. Even though skill development is the primary factor in determining placement and move-ups, there is more to it than that. Safety for our swimmers and maintaining the quality of our programming are two other key factors. NSAC attempts to maintain coach-to-swimmer ratios that are within the recommended guidelines for safety and quality set forth by our governing swimming institutions. Variability in the number of swimmers who register each session, facility limitations, and the number of personnel on staff all play into these two factors and affect whether or not a swimmer can move up at a given time. Additional minor factors that our coaches need to consider when placing swimmers include practice behavior and interpersonal relations between swimmers (i.e. swimmers who interact in a way to be disruptive during practice may not be placed in the same lane).

The bottom line is that swimmers should be recognized and praised for their accomplishments. Coaches will make every effort to keep parents informed of their swimmer's successes whether or not they are moved up. While the initial decision regarding placement, intra-program move-ups, and graduation to the next higher program is the responsibility of the Lead Program Coach, the final decision rests with the Head Coach. Any questions or concerns you have should be addressed to the Lead Program Coach first and pursued through our normal channels of communication as outlined in our Grievance Procedures (see page 40).

Transitions

Occasionally, a swimmer may be moved to the next higher program during the swim season. This means they may be required to move to a different NSAC pool and may have a different practice time. To ease inter-program move-ups during a session for both the swimmer and parents, these swimmers may enter into a transitional phase in which they swim one or two practices every week with the next higher program while swimming the other practice days as usual with the program from which they are moving. The transitional phase, if utilized, usually lasts two to four weeks before the swimmer is moved completely into the next higher program, and is primarily dependent on the swimmer's adjustment. Other considerations with regard to the length of the transitional phase include available space, distribution of personnel, number of children transitioning and parent preferences.

Generally speaking, swimmers in transition are not pro-rated registration fees to the next higher level until they complete the transition and the move-up is complete. More information about registration, fees, and payment policies can be found later in this handbook (see page 42).

Facilities and Schedule

The registration material for each session specifies where and when each program trains, as well as how many practices you may attend (some programs will have multiple times during the day or week to swim depending on the session...minimum/maximum number of practices per week is dictated by the program description above and your registration). The weekly schedule for all programs is on the hotline (see page 38) which is updated every Sunday evening for the upcoming week. Our website also contains the program schedule; the daily schedule is on the homepage and the weekly/monthly schedules are available on other pages (and they're printable!). The website contains links for locations of and directions to the community pools we use for our programs on the practice schedule page. The pools we commonly use and their addresses are:

- Chippewa Middle School, 5000 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, 55126
- Edgewood Middle School, 5100 Edgewood Drive, Mounds View, 55112
- Highview Middle School, 2300 Seventh Street NW, New Brighton, 55112
- Irondale High School, 2425 Long Lake Road, New Brighton, 55112
- Shoreview YMCA, 3760 Lexington Avenue North, Shoreview, 55126
- Richfield Outdoor Pool, 630 E. 66th St., Richfield, 55423

While we try to maintain a set schedule for each session, schedules can change month-to-month, week-to-week, and even day-to-day for various reasons beyond our control. Generally, when changes are known more than a day in advance, the website is updated appropriately. Last minute schedule changes (those occurring with less than 24 hour notification) are also put on the website, but e-mail notifications will go out to the membership as well. **Please make sure to keep your online account updated with your current email and phone contact information, and that you check your e-mail and the NSAC website every day before practice to avoid unnecessary trips due to re-scheduled practices.**

Equipment: What Every Swimmer Needs

All the equipment listed below and any other equipment not listed that your swimmer needs is available through the club at reduced prices from our team vendor. NSAC currently carries a TYR contract and has a relationship with a specific vendor to obtain just about anything our swimmers need. Our vendor and contract information is on our website with a link to our “team store” on their site so you can order online. Standard equipment including team competition suits and team-logo clothing are usually available at our Fall Potluck, hosted meets, and Spring Banquet. You may contact our Team Clothing Coordinator (see page 50) or our Head Coach with any questions you have about clothing and equipment, respectively. If contacting our vendor by phone directly, please identify yourself as a member of NSAC.

Practice Suits/Drag Suits

Suits worn by swimmers during workouts are generally made of nylon or lycra. These suits can be any color or style. Many swimmers swim with multiple suits or larger sizes for additional water resistance or drag. Multiple suits or a larger suit at practice make the experience of swimming with just one suit at meets more dramatic. Practice suits can wear out due to excessive time in the water, so be frugal! Suit longevity is increased by rinsing them in cool fresh water after exposure to chlorine. Many styles of suits are available through our vendors that are acceptable for practice and cost-effective. Periodically, these suits are available through the club at discounted rates for special promotions. Girls are generally expected to wear standard one-piece suits while boys can wear either the jammer or brief styles.

Caps

A latex, lycra, or silicone swim cap is used while swimming to cut down resistance and to keep hair out of the eyes or mouth. While caps are not mandatory, they are recommended for practice and strongly suggested at meets for both boys and girls. Any standard swim cap can be worn at practice; however, at a meet, the swimmer must wear a team cap. All swimmers participating in

meets will be issued one free cap per season (Winter/Summer) to be worn at the meets. More team caps as well as other caps are available through the club for a low fee (ask you Lead Coach if in need). After wearing, caps should be dried inside and out and sprinkled with baby powder or corn starch. This helps to extend the life of the cap, as does keeping them out of the sun and wet bags.

Competition Suit

A team suit for competition is available through our team vendor and is specifically chosen by our coaches for high performance, cost-effectiveness, and a professional team appearance. Having and wearing the team suit at meets is required. Questions or problems with this requirement should be directed to the Head Coach. When ordering, please keep in mind this suit should fit snugly. Do not buy suits that swimmers will “grow into”. Smaller is better: less resistance equals faster (and easier) swimming.

Fins

Flippers worn on the feet during practice are used for technique, speed, and strengthening. Please see the coaches before purchasing this item.

Goggles

Protective eyewear is a necessity for competitive swimmers. They must be able to see the walls and their competition clearly. In addition, hours of exposure to pool chemicals can irritate the eyes. Have a spare pair ready at all times.

Towels

While a single towel may be all that is necessary for practices as swimmers are in the water most of the time, we encourage swimmers to bring two or more large, thick towels to meets to dry off between events.

Warm Clothes

Sweats or other warm clothes are used constantly at meets (between events) and can be used before and after practice in the cooler months to keep the swimmer warm and healthy. Our team-logo wear is excellent for this purpose!

Water Bottle

A swimmer’s water loss during practice is easily underappreciated by the fact that sweat is washed away in the pool and is not physically apparent like it is in other sports. Combined with water loss from respirations, swimmers can become

significantly dehydrated during practice. A water bottle filled with water, or a sport drink of choice, at the pool-side is highly recommended.

Other Items Used by Swimmers, but available at most pools:

Hand Paddles

Made of plastic and rubber tubing, these devices are worn on the hands to assist proper hand entry into the water. Hand paddles are often used in conjunction with pull buoys to increase upper-body strength and stroke efficiency.

Kick Board

This device is made of Styrofoam and is used to work the legs exclusively.

Pull Buoy

Made of Styrofoam, this device is placed between the legs to keep them afloat while the swimmer isolates the arms. This strengthens the arms and helps technique.

Coaching Staff

North Suburban Aquatic Club prides itself on having a staff consisting of knowledgeable, professional, certified swim coaches that run our programs. All of our coaches have had individual experience as a competitive swimmer in the past and understand the sport from multiple perspectives. This helps our swimmers achieve their individual goals while providing a positive, collaborative relationship between coach and swimmer.

The hierarchy of our coaching staff starts with our Head Coach as the top. The Head Coach is responsible for overseeing all the programs offered by NSAC. He/she is responsible to the Board for providing professional insight and guidance which assists the club to provide high quality swimming programs in a cost-effective manner. In order to be a Head Coach, one needs to possess special knowledge regarding the philosophy of coaching and the art of competitive swimming. While the duties of the Head Coach are multi-faceted, he/she is the professional leader for the rest of the coaching staff, acting as a mentor and resource regarding the practice and theory of the sport of swimming.

Each program offered has a Lead Coach who is responsible for the management of that program (the Head Coach may serve in this capacity for one or more of the programs). The Lead Coaches work directly with the Head Coach and with each other to provide quality instruction with continuity between programs as swimmers perfect their skills and graduate to higher levels. Any number of Assistant Coaches work with and are under the direction of the Lead Coaches. The number of Assistant Coaches needed on the pool deck varies from time to time dependent on the number of swimmers enrolled in each program. The American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA) has suggested standards for the appropriate ratio of swimmers to coaches dependent on the swimmers' ages and abilities. NSAC strives to adhere to these standards as guidelines for staffing to ensure each swimmer receives the appropriate attention and that safety standards are followed.

All of our coaches are trained and regularly tested for their knowledge of First Aid, CPR, and Water Safety. First year coaches are required by USA Swimming to pass the ASCA Level One certification before beginning their second year of coaching. NSAC encourages our coaches to progress to higher levels of ASCA Certification in subsequent years.

Supplemental support for our coaches may be provided from time to time by high school "coach interns" for the younger children in our programs. The interns are usually currently enrolled, or have been enrolled in our Senior program.

Profiles of our coaching staff can be found on the club website.

Coaches' Responsibilities

The coaches' roles are to develop each program in the best interests of the team. The coaches' two main goals for each swimmer are: (1) each swimmer should consistently improve and move toward fully realizing his/her potential, and (2) each swimmer should enjoy the process. To meet these goals, the coaches must be able to coordinate several factors affecting training and competition such as level of activity outside the pool, amount of sleep, diet, etc.). The coaching staff will do everything within their ability to maintain a healthy training and learning environment.

- The coaches decide which practice group will best suit each individual. While the Club has suggested guidelines for desirable qualities and skills in each program, the coaches always have final word on a swimmer's placement.
- The coaches supervise and plan practice sessions according to current competitive swimming philosophy. All decisions relating to training styles, stroke instruction, and other sport-specific areas will be determined solely by the coaches.
- Each coach will maintain current certifications in coaches' safety, CPR, and First Aid.
- The coaching staff, in conjunction with the Meet Committee, will put together a meet schedule; however, final decisions on which

meets NSAC swimmers will attend as a team will rest with the Head Coach.

- While parent and swimmer preferences for meet entries are usually honored, the coaches reserve the right to decide which events swimmers will or will not enter based on the swimmer's needs and circumstances. Relay teams are at the sole discretion of the Head Coach.
- At meets, coaches will conduct and supervise team warm-ups. After each race a coach will provide constructive feedback and offer positive reinforcement regarding the swimmer's performance.
- Coaches will be available fifteen minutes before each practice and fifteen minutes after each practice for parents' questions, comments, and concerns. The Board and the coaching staff encourage open dialogue that promotes clear understanding and a strong three-way relationship between coach-parent-swimmer.
- Coaches are not required, but are strongly encouraged to develop a practice plan for each swimmer with defined long-range goals for that swimmer.

Practice and Attendance Policies

The following guidelines allow coaches and swimmers to gain the most from every practice session. The coaching staff feels strongly about getting maximum return on the time spent on practice as asks that all swimmers and parents of swimmers understand these policies:

Each training group has recommended attendance expectations (see Training Groups). From experience, the coaches know those who faithfully fulfill workout expectations typically have the best results. The staff encourages younger swimmers to have outside interests, but also expects their commitment and focus will increase as the swimmer matures.

The Lead Coach of each program should communicate the weekly work-out plan ahead of time that includes any special instructional days, "clinics", or challenge sets that should not be missed. While everyone has to miss a practice now and then, parents should be cognizant of important practices not to miss.

For the swimmers' protection, please note that coaches are not required to be at the pool earlier than 15 minutes prior to or 15 minutes after each practice.

Parents should escort younger children to and from pools. Due to regulations, coaches must be **ON DECK** the entire practice time. This means locker rooms, hallways, and parking lots are beyond coaches' supervision most of the time. Please take responsibility for your child's safety.

Coaches are not baby-sitters! Any swimmer not picked up **15 minutes** after the end of practice may result in the family being charged **\$5.00 for each five minutes** of extra time our coach needs to provide supervision. Since our practices are mostly not during normal business hours, our coaches do not want to leave any child in an unsafe situation, but also have other commitments outside of their coaching jobs they need to attend to. **Please pick up your child in a timely fashion at the end of practice.** NSAC wants every one of our swimmers to be safe, but cannot ensure this outside of the pool deck which is the coaches' main responsibility. NSAC needs parents to be timely and help provide this supervision for their own children and act as Good Samaritans for others.

Practice starts promptly at the specified time. Swimmers should be on deck, stretching, no later than five minutes **prior** to the announced start time. Tardiness is highly discouraged as late swimmers miss warm-up time, which can lead to injury and/or poor performance. In addition, late swimmers distract teammates, hold up practice, and may miss vital information. The coaches reserve the right to refuse pool entry to any late swimmer for any reason.

Practice also ends at a specified time. Coaches often save important sets and/or announcements until the last part of practice. Swimmers leaving early miss valuable workout time and often leave without proper cool-down time. Coaches understand that sometimes swimmers must leave early, but the coaches need to know **BEFORE** practice and prefer that a parent communicate this need personally. Coaches reserve the right to refuse early exits to any swimmer who does not have parental permission or a responsible adult to accompany the swimmer away from the supervised pool area. Swimmers leaving early are still responsible for information distributed after they leave.

Expectations of every swimmer's behavior at practice and meets are outlined in the NSAC Code of Conduct (see below). Swimmers should only be in areas designated for their use in any building we occupy. Failure to comply with this will risk our relationship with our practice sites and/or meet venues.

Parents are NOT allowed on the pool deck for any reason without coaches' approval barring the event of an emergency, in which case the trained coaches will direct any parent involvement. Not only are parents on deck an insurance violation, but it can be very distracting to both coaches and swimmers. Most of our facilities have observation areas where parents can locate themselves. All practices are "open" and parents are welcome to stay in the designated observation areas during practice.

Parents should refrain from talking to coaches and swimmers during practice. Discipline on-deck is the coach's responsibility. Please do not intervene unless asked to do so. Coaches will be available before and after practice for questions and comments.

Any special equipment (e.g., goggles, kick boards, pull buoys, and especially, inhalers) should be at the end the lane prior to practice. All swimmers should bring fluids (water bottle) to practice.

USA Swimming/MSI regulations require a feet-first, slip-in entry unless instructed otherwise by a USA Swimming registered official or coach. This means the swimmer must sit on the edge of the pool and slowly slide into the water. MSI implemented this safety rule and will be enforcing it at any meet NSAC attends. We would like our swimmers to follow this rule at practice as well.

In addition, each coach may impose any reasonable rules she/he deems necessary for any training group. These guidelines are critical in maintaining a safe and efficient practice. Failure to adhere to these expectations will meet with whatever consequence the respective Lead Coach sees fit, including, but not limited to, oral warning, written warning, removal from practice, suspension from team, or expulsion from team. In addition to the aforementioned practice rules, each swimmer must follow a code of conduct regarding behavior while representing NSAC.

North Suburban Aquatic Club

Swimmer and Parental Responsibilities, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy

An athlete receives many benefits from participating in training and competition: physical fitness, mental discipline, self-understanding, communication skills and friendships. The following code of conduct was created to ensure that we provide the best environment for a swimmer's development. The conduct of NSAC swimmers and their parents shall always reflect positively and respectfully toward others and the NSAC team. As a member of NSAC, I accept the following responsibilities and agree to the following:

1. As a NSAC Swimmer I agree to:
 - Respectfully comply with the instructions of NSAC Coaches. They put forth maximum effort to help me succeed.
 - Arrive on time, and conscientiously and enthusiastically apply myself to all practices, swim meets, team functions and meetings I attend, as late arrivals and bad attitudes are very disruptive and detrimental to our team.
 - Conduct myself in an honest and respectful manner and with good sportsmanship towards coaches, officials, administrators, parents and fellow athletes.
 - Always maintain and display a positive and supportive attitude toward the NSAC program, team, coaches, and my teammates.
 - Refuse to participate in any behavior that could be considered detrimental to

NSAC, NSAC Coaches, or my teammates and refrain from any activity that could tarnish the positive reputation of NSAC

- I care for my body and maintain a lifestyle to enable my body to operate at its maximum performance.
- Show team spirit and make an effort to participate in club activities as the club's success depends on the involvement of all of its swimmers and their families.
- Obey all pool and locker room rules. Remember, we are always guests at pools.
- Not leave practices or swim meets early without the coach's permission.

2. At swim meets as a NSAC Swimmer I agree to:

- Arrive 15 minutes before warm-up is scheduled.
- Report to my coach upon arrival at meets.
- Perform all warm up and warm down assignments as directed by the coaches.
- Check-in in a timely manner and keep track of my heat/lane assignment and the meet progression.
- Report to my coach *before* and *after* each of my events.
- Show support for my teammates.
- Enthusiastically participate in team cheers.
- Willingly participate in relays when possible.

3. Swimmers are prohibited from:

- Using alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Using profanity or obscene gestures
- Inflicting physical abuse, sexual abuse, fighting, bullying, or hazing
- Destroying or stealing the property of others, including athletic facilities
- Engaging in any illegal activity or behavior

NSAC Swimmer Disciplinary Policy

At NSAC, we strive to provide a safe, healthy, and positive environment so that swimmers can focus on their swimming. Above the Line behaviors are necessary for this to occur. Swimmers choosing to continuously engage in Below the Line behaviors may be asked to sit out in practice or, depending on the situation, be asked to leave practice for the night. Consequences will be designed to fit the problems of individual swimmers and they may be different even when the problems appear to be the same. Equal is not always fair. Consequences for Below the Line behaviors will be up to the coach's discretion as each swimmer and situation is unique.

Engaging in Bottom Line behaviors will result in the removal of a swimmer from practice for three days and the swimmer will not be able to return until a meeting with the coach, swimmer, and parent takes place.

Above the Line Behaviors	Below the Line Behaviors	Bottom Line Behaviors
Give RESPECT	Being DISRESPECTFUL	Fighting

Be RESPONSIBLE Build RELATIONSHIPS	Being IRRESPONSIBLE Being UNCOOPERATIVE	Vandalism Possessing a Weapon Chronic Misbehavior Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco Other Criminal Acts
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Parent’s Responsibilities

NSAC’s success also depends on the support and commitment of NSAC parents. Remember, children swim for their own enjoyment, not yours. As the parent of a NSAC swimmer you are responsible for:

- Reinforcing the NSAC Code of Conduct with your swimmer. Respectful and obedient swimmers allow our coaches to focus on assisting your swimmer(s) rather than disciplining them.
- Maintaining focus on what’s best for your swimmer's maximum potential. Encourage and praise their hard work and accomplishments.
- Maintain reasonable expectations and foster a positive, supportive, and productive relationship with NSAC coaches and staff.
- Being punctual regarding picking up and dropping off your swimmers. The coaches are neither responsible nor liable for swimmers left at the pool more than 15 minutes prior to and 15 minutes after practice times.
- Conducting myself in an honest, respectful manner and with good sportsmanship towards coaches, officials, administrators and other swimmers.
- Refuse to participate in any behavior that could be considered detrimental to NSAC, NSAC coaches, or NSAC swimmers and refrain from any activity that could detract from a positive image of NSAC.
- Refrain from disrupting practices by: arriving late, staying on the pool deck, or talking to NSAC coaches during practice. The coaches have limited time with swimmers so they need to maximize their scheduled time by staying focused on their athletes. Although it may appear that a quick question or comment is not disruptive, it detracts from the coach’s and swimmers’ focus during practice.
- Bringing issues and concerns to lead coaches in a timely manner before or after practices or via email.
- Always maintaining and displaying a positive and supportive attitude towards the NSAC program, team, coaches, and NSAC swimmers.
- Ensuring that your swimmer(s) are wearing team gear at all meets (i.e. team suit, team cap)
- Providing your swimmer(s) with appropriate nutritional meals, snacks and beverages.
- Ensuring your swimmer(s) are well rested for optimal performance at all meets and practices.

I have read and agree to comply with the above guidelines.

_____ (Swimmer's signature), _____ (Date)

_____ (Parent/Guardian's signature), _____ (Date)

_____ Swimmer's printed name

_____ Parent/Guardian's printed name

Meets

Competitive Strokes

The four competitive strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. In addition, the individual medley consists of one swimmer swimming all four strokes. In an individual medley, or IM, the order of strokes swum is fly, back, breast, and free, which is different from the medley relay (see below). Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age group of the swimmer. Meets also offer relays. Four swimmers in the same age group swim either all freestyle (free relay) or one stroke each (medley relay) in the order of back, breast, fly, and free.

Swim Seasons

The swimming year is divided into two seasons, of two sessions each. The short course season runs from September through March. The long course season runs from April to early August. The difference lies in the type of pool in which the majority of the meets are held. Short course implies a 25-yard (or 25-meter) pool. Long course swimming is conducted in a 50-meter pool.

Competition Philosophy

The coaches do not see the first place swimmer as the only swimmer. They look to see who behaves like a winner, who works hard to achieve their goals and celebrate and individual's accomplishments. Every swimmer is a winner if they work hard in practice and continue to improve themselves on an individual basis regardless of what place they finish in a race.

Swimming is about more than just a sport. Swimming is a means by which we teach life skills to children. Winning without learning has little value. In competition, the important measure is not who earned the most medals or improved by the largest margin, but who learned the most in the process.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals and records, but do remember the interpersonal skills, the discipline, the time management skills, the goal-setting, and the enhanced self-image that occurs in a dedicated swimmer. These attributes make swimmers more successful people, not just faster ones. That's why our motto is: "We Build Skills for Life, One Stroke at a Time".

Levels of Achievement

There are six different age group classifications recognized by Minnesota Swimming, Inc. (MSI): 8 (years old)-and-under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-and-up (Senior). The Senior classification includes any registered swimmer who has achieved the qualifying time for an event as specified for this group. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. A swimmer's age on the first day of any meet is the age they swim for the entire meet.

Within each age group there are different state recognized levels of achievement based on times which are labeled from lowest to highest: "C", "B", "A", "Champ", and "Zone". The times required for each ability level are published each year by MSI. This permits fair, yet challenging competition at all levels. A copy of the current MSI time standards can be found on the MSI website (www.mnswim.org) or from one of our coaches. In many cases, swimmers will have different level times for different events. For example, one may have an "A" time in breaststroke, a "C" time in freestyle and a "B" time for the individual medley. Some swim meets set certain qualification standards. To swim an event at those meets, the swimmer's seed times must fall within the range specified for that meet.

As the swimmer enters sanctioned meets (meets recognized by MSI and USA swimming), their times for each event entered are stored in a database. The swimmers best time in any event is then used as a "seed" time for future entries. Your swimmer's best times and meet results can be found through the Minnesota Swimming and USA Swimming website databases at mnswim.org and usaswimming.org, respectively.

If a swimmer does not have an established time in an event either because they never swam that event before, or haven't done so in a long time, they will be given a "seed" time in that event for the purpose of the meet. This "seed" time is usually established by the swimmer's coach.

Types and Levels of Swim Meets

All swim meets recognized by the governing bodies of swimming (MSI and USA Swimming) in which all criteria are met for an official meet, are sanctioned meets. Times achieved in sanctioned meets are recorded as official times and can be used for qualifying in future meets at higher levels. Non-sanctioned meets can be held by a club for various reasons which may include: promoting sportsmanship, to gain experience, fund-raising, community-building, and simply for the fun of it. Times achieved at non-sanctioned meets are not official time, can rarely be used as “seed” times, and cannot be used as qualifying times for sanctioned meets.

Our local governing body, MSI, determines a sanctioned meet schedule for the entire state and releases it before each swim season. Clubs are expected to host at least one sanctioned meet during the year to promote the sport of swimming, but may opt to host additional meets for various reasons (i.e. club exposure/promotion, fund-raising, etc.). NSAC tries to host one sanctioned meet per season.

Once MSI releases the meet schedule, NSAC puts together its own club meet schedule out of all the meets available to us, both “Open” and “Invitational”. The club schedule is then posted on the website and on the pool-side bulletin boards. The schedule includes those meets we are committed to attending, taking into account several factors: ability to send our staff to the meet, traveling distance and competing meet opportunities. The club tries to take advantage of all opportunities to compete and at times, may even attend two meets in the same weekend; however, it is not always possible to attend every meet available to us.

- Mini-Meets: These meets are non-sanctioned meets held by our club for our swimmers to gain some experience with the mechanics of a meet and to have some fun. While any of our swimmers can attend, these meets are held especially for swimmers with little or no meet experience. NSAC generally has one Mini-Meet per session.
- Level-Specific Meets: These meets are sanctioned and are for swimmers with specified qualifying times. The most common meets are A, A/B, B/C, or A/B/C. Swimmers can swim in the meet if they have times at the specified level. They can swim only the events for which they have the specified times. Swimmers can, however, swim different levels at the same meet. For example, at an A/B/C meet, a swimmer could enter the 50 free with an “A” time, the 50 breast with a “B” time and the 50 fly with a “C” time. Meets can also be designated as “Open” which allows all swimmers to compete, regardless of previous swimming times.
- A/B/C Finals: These are championship-style sanctioned meets for swimmers who have achieved the specified qualifying times. Finals are usually divided into A, A/B, B/C, or C, depending on the number, ages, and levels of swimmers currently involved in the sport. They are held at

the end of the season and are viewed not only as championships, but also as the last chance to advance to (qualify for) a higher level championship. Swimmers can earn spots on relay teams advancing to State competition by doing well in Finals.

- State Championships: At the end of each season, a State Championship meet is held by MSI in March and August. The State meets host swimmers who have achieved a “Champ” time or better. In addition, a relay team may be entered if the club has at least one state qualifier who will swim in the relay. If so, other swimmers from the same club may be entered to swim on the relay whether or not they also have a “Champ” time. The March State Meet is generally split into 12 and Under one weekend and 13 and Over (Senior State) the following weekend.
- Zone Championships: After the summer State Championships, qualified swimmers (those with “Zone” times) are invited to participate in the Zone Championships. This is a regional competition and is one meet where NSAC swimmers will not only represent NSAC but also Team Minnesota. Team Minnesota is composed of those swimmers around the state who qualify and collectively represent several different swim clubs. At Zones, Team Minnesota swims against the best swimmers from other State Championships in the Midwest. During August, when most of us have a month off, Team Minnesota swimmers generally practice, travel, eat, and lodge together for this meet.
- National Meets: Beyond the Zone Championships is competition at the national level which has its own time qualification standards.

How to Sign Up for a Meet

In order to attend a meet with the club, the swimmer must indicate their desire to participate in an upcoming meet by using the online sign-up system on our website before the sign-up deadline. Log into your family’s online account at www.nsmakos.org and go into the “meets/events” tab. Find the meet you wish to enter; you can view the order of events and general information before signing up by clicking on the name of the meet. When you are ready to sign up, click “sign up for this event”, then click on the name of the swimmer you wish to enter. You’ll then have options to enter or decline entry to that event/meet next to the appropriate swimmer. You do not have to decline every meet you do not plan to attend as your swimmer won’t be entered if you do nothing. Most of the time the available events will appear as you scroll down the page after you commit to a meet and you can click in the check box for the events you wish to enter. You can also leave a note for the coaching staff with any helpful instructions (eg: “only able to swim on Saturday”). The coaching staff has final say in events entered and will verify your entries before they are sent to the host club. It is a good idea to check back on the meet entries page to view the final list of entries (listed in a document attached at the bottom of the meet information section) the day after the entry

deadline. Once the coaches have sent the entries to the host club, changes may be very difficult if not impossible.

Some clubs leave the event selection entirely in the hands of the swimmer's coach as he/she knows what the swimmer's strengths are and what challenges are appropriate for them at that particular time. Most of the time at NSAC, you will have the option of doing this, or selecting the events yourself with your swimmer for the meet. If you decide to leave the event selection to the discretion of your swimmer's coach, just let them know you want your child entered for one or both days of the meet and they will take care of the rest of the entry process. You may find that by doing this your swimmer will be stronger and progress faster overall. Even if you select the events yourself with your swimmer, occasionally the Head/Lead Coach will intervene and place your swimmer into certain events they may not want to swim. When the coach does this, support their authority and have faith that he/she is presenting a challenge to the swimmer that will make them a better swimmer in the long run even if they have a disappointing race.

As soon as the relevant meet information is available (approximately two weeks before a scheduled meet), a *fact sheet* will be put together that includes all important information regarding the meet such as dates, location, directions, eligibility, times, fees, sign-up deadline, etc. This fact sheet will be posted on the "Meets/Events" page on our club website. You must sign-up before the posted deadline or your swimmer's entry into the meet is not guaranteed. All the information necessary for the meet (type of meet, directions, cost, and schedule) should be on the fact sheet.

Additionally, all entry times are determined either by the times database kept by the club or by the coaching staff. No times need to be reported by the swimmer or parent. Outside times such as high school swims cannot be used as entry times.

While the process works most of the time, it is not flawless. Miscommunications and mistakes happen. When they occur, **all problems with the meet entry process should be addressed to the Head Coach.** The Head Coach has the ability to communicate with the Host Club, or MSI, and attempt to correct any meet entry mishaps. In general, meets are over-booked and over-crowded as the demand is high. The Head Coach may or may not be able to correct a problem after the entry deadline has passed, but is in the best position to receive information from the Host Club regarding cancellations, no-shows, and open heats. Parents are forbidden to contact the Host Club, or MSI, themselves because of the political ramifications that could negatively impact the whole club. The proper chain of communication must be followed. If parents have an issue that was not resolved to their satisfaction, please follow the Grievance Procedures outlined later in the "Communication" section of this handbook.

Parental Permission for Out-of-Town, Overnight Meets

In order for a minor to attend a meet or other event with our team that is out-of-town (outside the Twin City Metro Area) that involves an overnight stay without their parent or guardian present, the parent or guardian must sign a permission slip for the child to attend. This permission slip must either identify another adult who agrees to be present and take responsibility for supervising the child during the meet/event as a parent or guardian would, or must be conditional on whether or not NSAC can provide adult chaperones. Permission structured as described can be submitted in writing (in letter format) prior to the event, may be submitted on an NSAC Parental Permission for Out-of-Town Event Attendance Form (found on page 58 of this Handbook), or may be incorporated into the meet/event registration form by the Head Coach.

If there are “unsupervised” swimmers wishing to attend one of these meets, parents who are attending may be asked to be NSAC chaperones and will need to fill out a Background Check form found on page 57 of this Handbook).

NSAC attends several meets each year outside the metro area and some of these are across state lines. Although car-pooling arranged privately between families is common, it is understandable that all swimmers may not have or be able to arrange their own transportation. NSAC cannot take responsibility for transporting swimmers and has therefore adopted the following general *Transportation Policy* for this circumstance which is applicable for all transportation situations:

It is hereby the stated policy of NSAC that transportation of swimmers and/or coaches to practices, meets, or any other event considered to be a club function by any non-public conveyance, as defined to include privately owned vehicles, is recognized by NSAC as a purely private agreement between the parties involved and that neither NSAC, nor its Board of Directors, separately or as a group, except for the parties directly involved can be or will be considered as a party to such arrangement and that any liability in any form arising from such arrangement is purely and completely the responsibility of the parties involved.

Overnight stays in hotels are common practice at these meets. NSAC has a general policy that no swimmer is allowed to enter a coach’s room without another adult present.

Meet Fees

Swimmers are usually charged a daily use fee (or session fee) for every day (or session) attended at the meet, and a separate fee for each event entered. Most meets are two days long with two sessions each day, but can be as many as four days long with one to three sessions each day. Sessions are divided by age (and sometimes level) so that each swimmer typically swims only one session per day.

NSAC has adopted several policies regarding meet fees. The first of these is that our club will not include any surcharges on top of the regular fees charged for entry by the host club. Many other clubs add a surcharge onto both the daily use fee (session fee) and individual event fees to help cover the administrative costs associated with attending. NSAC feels the competitive aspect of swimming is an important part of every swimmer's involvement in the sport and in order to promote attendance by as many as possible, NSAC wants to keep our swimmers' costs to attend as low as possible.

Secondly, unless your Lead Coach is told your swimmer does not want to participate on a relay team, our coaches will assume your swimmer is available, if present, to be part of the team. NSAC will charge swimmers the normal event fee (without surcharges) for a relay if they are asked to swim and participate on a relay team. Relays are normal parts of most meets, they are fun, and promote team spirit. There is usually a Medley Relay during one session and a Free Relay during another session. Relay teams are put together by our coaches based on times recorded in our database of all those swimmers attending the meet. Since relay teams are finalized at the meet, it is difficult to anticipate the exact total cost of the meet for each swimmer on a prospective basis. Swimmers in attendance at the meet who are designated to swim a relay but for some reason do not get to swim the relay will not be assessed the relay fee; swimmers who are signed up for the meet and who are designated to swim a relay but who do not attend the meet for some reason, will be assessed the relay fee. Most relay fees are minimal, like other event fees. State relay teams are extra-special. They are generally pre-selected one week prior to the State Meet at the end of each season as those swimmers are asked to continue to attend practice for 1-2 weeks after the winter or summer sessions end. The club tries to have as many of our swimmers attend State as possible. Even though your swimmer may not have a "Champ" time in any event, if they are one of the fastest swimmers in our club for an event, they may be asked to swim for our State Team. Unfortunately, not every swimmer has the opportunity to swim in a relay because of limited space availability.

Each swimmer and the events they swim will be posted on our website before every meet and from that, the approximate cost of the meet to be charged to the family's account can be estimated (the unknowns will be relay charges and time trials, if any). After each meet (when all specific charges are known), your swimmers' meet fees will be added to your current statement of "account outstanding balance" in your online NSAC account. The current outstanding balance as of the last day of the month will be deducted from your designated bank account on or around the 1st of the following month. You may view a statement of all unpaid fees, including those for meets, at any time by logging into your active NSAC online account.

While rare, occasionally a swimmer cannot attend a meet they have been entered in and confirmed (i.e. unforeseeable circumstances, illness, etc.). Should this happen, the family's monthly billing account will still be charged if the Host Club charges NSAC for the entry. The Head Coach is your best advocate in this circumstance, but is subject to the rules and decisions of the Host Club.

What to Take to a Meet

- **Competition suit, team cap, team t-shirt and/or warm-ups.** It is also a good idea to have a spare cap and goggles. Team caps at swim meets are strongly recommended—not only for increased performance, but for officials to recognize “what team” is in any given lane. Warm-ups are nice for swimmers to have available in between their events to keep them from getting chilled while out of the water. Team t-shirts are usually printed for State competition or special events.
- **Towels.** Pack at least two. The meets can be long with lots of time in between your swimmer’s events.
- **Something to sit on,** especially for outdoor meets that do not typically have the bleacher-style seating seen at most indoor meets. Folding chairs are commonly brought by adults to outdoor meets, while cushions with a back support are typically brought to indoor meets. NSAC has a tent for outdoor meets which provides a shade haven for the swimmers and coaches who have to be there all day. Sleeping bags or blankets are a great asset for swimmers to lay on at outdoor meets under the club tent.
- **Shoes/sandals.** Have your swimmer wear something on their feet to prevent injury and slipping on the wet deck.
- **Games, books, cards, etc.** While on deck, swimmers are expected to cheer on their teammates which requires them to be aware of when other NSAC swimmers are in the water; however, there may be extended periods of time when NSAC has no swimmers entered in events. At these moments, it is helpful to have something to pass the time. Coaches are too busy at a meet to police this, so parents should be aware that items brought on deck which cause too much distraction, or that become more important than the meet, should be left at home.
- **Food and fluids.** Concession areas are available at most meets, but they often lack healthy food for good performance. Some suggestions? Granola bars, fruit, cereal, bagels, sports drinks, juice, and plenty of water. For the summertime outdoor meets it is especially important to bring a cooler with appropriate beverages for the whole family.

Before the Meet Starts

Feed your swimmer breakfast!! Coaches commonly hear swimmers complain of fatigue and lack of energy. Breakfast is extremely important in order to perform at peak levels. Breakfast takes the body out of its “starvation” mode and energizes one’s metabolism to process fuel more efficiently for the rest of the day. Even though your swimmer may not want anything for breakfast, they need to understand how their body works and the importance of eating something prior to physical exertion. Timing of other

meals/snacks and types of food are additional considerations which can be discussed with our coaches.

Arrive at the pool early! In addition to meet information, coaching staff will announce what time swimmers should be ready for warm-up. Swimmers need to be at the site beforehand so they can change, stretch, and find the team area. Once there, swimmers need to prepare to enter the water. Goggles and caps should be located and put on in preparation for the team warm-up. The coaches cannot emphasize enough how important warm-up is to the swimmers. Without proper warm-up, swimmers will not perform as well and, more importantly, risk serious injury to muscles.

No Parents on Deck...

PLEASE NOTE: Due to insurance liability issues, AT NO TIME are parents allowed on deck for any reason during a meet. Not only can officials running the meet escort parents from the deck (unless the parent has a specified job at the meet), but **teams can be fined if parents are on deck without authorization**. Only registered coaches and officials can join the meet volunteers on deck. Any parent who violates this rule and causes our team to be fined will have the fine applied to their personal account with the club.

Any questions parents may have about meet results, officiating, or how the meet runs should be addressed to the coaching staff **off deck when they are not busy with swimmers**.

When the Meet Starts

The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after the warm-up period. The order of events will be listed in a program offered for sale by the hosting team. This order of events is the same as printed on our meet information form; however, the host club's program lists all swimmers and their "seed time" (entry times). Swimmers are placed in "heats". Heats are groups of swimmers racing together at one time. For example, 30 swimmers in a six-lane pool would comprise five heats of six swimmers each. Most events are seeded slowest to fastest. If a swimmer is swimming for the first time, she/he will be seeded at "NT" (No Time) or "TSE" (Time Standard for the Event) which are considered the slowest seeds. TSE's and NT's are very common entries in a "B/C" or "Open" meet.

During the meet, the coaches will guide the swimmers. They will make sure the swimmers know what, where, and when they are swimming. After each swim, the swimmer should report back to the coach. The coaches offer constructive feedback on the swimmer's race performance. This feedback may consist of: positive comments or praise; suggestions for improvements; and any further instructions for events yet to come.

Between races, swimmers should stay close to the team area. They may have time to eat, drink, or visit with parents, but should check with a coach before leaving the area. Anytime a swimmer leaves the pool deck he/she needs to inform a coach.

Results from events are posted somewhere in the facility, usually between the pool and the concession area. These results list official times and places for each swimmer. Ribbons and medals are usually awarded through sixth place overall, and for the top three finishers in each level, depending on the type of meet and the host club. Certificates are normally given if a swimmer advances to a new level and beats their seed time (i.e. a “C” time to a “B” time). Awards can be picked up toward the end of the meet at the award table. Any awards not picked up by the swimmers are usually given to the coaches at the conclusion of the meet by the host club. (Note: sometimes there is a delay receiving awards from the host club, so please be patient).

Time Trials

The opportunity for another attempt to achieve a qualifying time in a particular event is offered through a time trial. This opportunity most commonly exists during A/B/C Finals when swimmers are trying to get a “Champ” time in order to qualify for state competition. Time trials are usually offered at the end of each session during finals. They are an option for those swimmers who either had a poor swim during their event for some correctable reason (poor start, lost goggles, disqualified, etc.), or for those swimmers who are so close to qualifying at the next level that they have a reasonable chance of success upon attempting a time trial.

Swimmers have to be entered into a time trial at the meet during the time specified by the host club, which is usually before the session is over to allow time for the host club to organize time trial heats to follow the session. Time trial results do not qualify for placement, medals or ribbons for the meet at which they are swum. There is a specific event fee, separate from the meet entry process and meet escrow accounts which must be paid at the time the swimmer is entered into a time trial. There are also restrictions such as the swimmer cannot be entered into time trial events that would exceed the maximum of five events per day including all regular events entered that day.

The decision to enter your swimmer in a time trial is a complex function of the parent-coach-swimmer triad (see page 39). The coach and the swimmer have to be involved in the decision because of the logistics and meet strategy that may be affected.

Scratching Events

It is not uncommon for a swimmer to wake up the morning of the meet and come to the conclusion they don't really want to swim one of their events (especially the longer and more difficult ones). Once the swimmer is entered and seeded into a heat, there are specific rules governing when and under what conditions a swimmer can scratch, or withdraw, from that event. Scratching an event after the deadline passes is highly discouraged and usually associated with the assessment of “penalties” by MSI. These

penalties result in the swimmer not being allowed to compete any further at that meet, and this may carry over to future meets depending on the situation.

If you know your swimmer cannot compete in an event they have entered for any reason, you must inform their coach as soon as possible. Exceptions for scratching events do exist, but the rules are fairly strict to prevent scratching from being a frequent occurrence.

Team Points

While much of the competition is focused on individual performance, there is team competition also. Teams are awarded points based on how well their swimmers do in the meet. Team points come from relay teams and from any swimmers who place in an event when seeded with an “A” time or better.

If Your Child Has a Disappointing Race

If your child has a poor race and feels badly, talk about the positives. There is always something good to say about a race! There is nothing wrong with the swimmer acknowledging a poor race; they should know when they did not perform well. Many times, swimmers learn much more from a poor race than a quality one. That is part of swimming and part of learning life-skills. Be positive and let the coach handle the constructive criticism. The parent’s role is to be supportive, even if your swimmer is disqualified. For beginning swimmers, a disqualification (DQ) should be a learning experience, not a punishment. A DQ alerts the swimmer and coach to what aspect of a stroke needs work. A DQ is much like an incorrect answer in school. It points out what the swimmer must improve on or may not understand. Disqualifications are needed to keep the sport fair and equitable. Proper treatment of DQ’s by parents, swimmers, coaches, and officials will keep a DQ’ed swimmer’s experience a positive one.

Basic Competitive Swimming Rules

- False starts are not allowed. Any movement before the starting signal can result in disqualification (DQ). Flash photography interferes with the starting signal and can precipitate false starts; therefore, flash photography is not permitted once swimmers are on the starting blocks.
- Breaststroke and butterfly turns and finishes must be performed with a two-handed, simultaneous touch.
- When swimming breaststroke and butterfly, both arms and legs must move simultaneously.
- A swimmer must have their hips in the water when doing a backstroke start.

- Backstroke turns may be initiated with a roll into a freestyle stroke as long as the flip-turn is continuous with the freestyle stroke. Any gliding on the stomach or delay in the flip-turn is grounds for a DQ. The finish must be completed on the back with some part of the body above the surface.
- On any start or flip-turn, swimmers must surface within fifteen meters of the end of the pool from which they came. Lane lines usually have a specially colored buoy marking this distance from each end.

Championship Meets

NSAC wants to have as many swimmers as possible qualify for the State Championship meet. The Championship meets are special experiences that are earned through dedicated, hard work. Swimmers with “Champ” times achieved at any sanctioned meet while still in the same age group will qualify to go to State.

To increase the likelihood of a swimmer going to State and being successful, he/she must be properly prepared:

- Swimmers need a minimum of twelve weeks of solid training before the meet. Regular attendance at practice will increase the likelihood a swimmer will perform well at the end of the season.
- Swimmers must attend meets to have the race experience necessary to excel. Racing is different than training, and races must be practiced under race conditions. There is no substitute for experience.

Ultimately, every swimmer’s goal should be to swim as fast as possible at the highest level possible. Whether that takes the swimmer to the A/B/C finals, State Championship meet, on to Zones or to a National level is something we want to strive for with every swimmer.

Communication

NSAC must communicate a lot of information to a large number of families. This Member Handbook helps to build a foundation of knowledge about our organization and its activities, but there is much more to communicate on an ongoing basis (i.e. practice schedules, meets, upcoming events, etc.). While the coaches, Board President, and Registrar are probably the most visible communicators of the organization, NSAC would like each of our training programs to have one or two representatives from the swimmers’ families to help organize and distribute information on the pool deck. If you are interested in becoming a Program Representative, please contact the Board President-Elect.

Each family is responsible for all information distributed by the Board, the coaching staff and any of the Board’s working committees through the mechanisms outlined below. In

addition, parents may come to practices to stay current, observe their swimmer(s) and help form that important relationship triad between coach-swimmer-parent.

E-Mail

E-mail has become the primary method of communication to our membership. Each family has an online account that is active or de-activated depending on whether they have swimmers actively participating or not. Email notifications will be sent to the primary “log-in” email address, and you can add up to 2 additional email addresses to which you would also like club emails sent. Any family without a personal e-mail address should try to list another e-mail to receive confidential information (i.e. work, family, or friend’s e-mail). If absolutely no e-mail is available for use, please notify the Registrar.

NSAC Website: <http://www.nsmakos.org>

Our website is a very useful tool that contains information regarding our organization, its background, what we do, who our coaches are and links to other swimming-related websites that may be of interest to our members. The homepage is where to find our ongoing current announcements. While we try to have the website up-to-date with last-minute practice changes, there has been a heavier reliance on e-mail for this purpose due to its ease of use.

The website has the online/electronic registration system access; this is how members sign up each fall (or whenever they return after the new registration year starts on September 1st); the online registration process allows members to update contact information, email addresses, and is the means by which the registrar obtains electronically signed liability waivers for each registered member.

Another important piece of the website is the “Meets/Event” tab which can be accessed from the website homepage. From here you can access meet information, sign up for meets, and sign up for volunteer jobs at our NSAC hosted meets.

Parent/Coach/Swimmer Communication: An Important Triad

The relationship that exists within this triad can dramatically affect a swimmer's performance at practice and at a meet. When there is strength within this relationship, those bonds can promote a harmonious environment in which the swimmer thrives. NSAC encourages all parents to get to know their program coaches and feel comfortable addressing any concerns you may have directly with the coach. Coaches are generally available for fifteen minutes at the end of any practice to briefly discuss anything, and are available for additional time if pre-arranged. As in any organization, our coaches will have different styles and mannerisms that may be more adaptable to some swimmers than others. However, there is more than one coach on deck for most programs so if a personality conflict does exist, the problem should be easy to remedy. In addition, from time to time parents or swimmers may have philosophical disagreements with the coaching staff. If any issue arises, please bring it to the attention of the coaching staff immediately; do not let the issues worsen over time. The bottom line is that our coaches are trained professionals who all want your child to maximize their swimming potential and have the best experience possible.

Tips to Make Your Triad Work for You:

- Get to know your coaches. See who they are, what they have to offer beyond swimming, and learn what they expect from you and your swimmer.
- Respect the complexity of the coach's job. Remember that he/she needs to do what is best for all swimmers which at times leads to difficult decisions.
- Use the meet entry process to open a dialogue between you and the coaches. Let your Lead Coach know that you value and trust their judgment in determining the appropriate events your swimmer should enter.
- Avoid putting undue pressure on a coach or athlete to perform. Let development occur naturally and realize that victories come in various forms.
- VOLUNTEER! Not only will you be helping the team and your coaches, but you let your child know how important swimming is by being actively involved with NSAC. If your child sees how important swimming is to you, the additional effort they put forth will pay off in ribbons and smiles later.
- Don't be afraid to ask the coaches what your swimmer is doing and why. They want you to be knowledgeable so your swimmer has an additional source of information.
- Above all, simply take an interest in your swimmer(s). Know their times. Know what they did in practice yesterday. Know their favorite stroke(s). Swimming becomes a large part of many of our children's lives. Coaches like to see parents

taking an interest in their children and helping them to succeed (i.e. feeding them properly, getting them to practice on time, and offering their support).

Grievance Procedure for Programming and Meet-Related Issues (for financial or administrative issues, see below)

When a disagreement or issue arises that causes conflict within the triad relationship, the appropriate procedure to follow is outline below:

1. Address the coach in question face-to-face after practice in a non-threatening manner. Remember that each of you wants what is best for your swimmer and that you each have very valuable insight to offer. A parent knows their child much better than the coach, but the coach knows swimming techniques and philosophy. Try to define the issue, understand what is happening and work toward a resolution together. Most issues should be resolved through this initial communication.
2. If no resolution is foreseeable, please involve the Head Coach. You may want to set up a special meeting with the three of you so he/she can try to understand the issue from both perspectives. Having a third person involved may help to reduce any tension (if it exists) and may provide new insight that leads to resolution.
3. Finally, if still no resolution is apparent, involve the Board President (or a representative of the Board) who can provide additional perspective and insight.

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM:

- Trying to resolve the issue during practice. The appropriated time is after practice, and, if needed, a special time can be scheduled.
- Getting the swimmer caught in the middle between disagreeing adults. Issues should be discussed away from the immediate presence of the swimmer.
- Conducting yourself in an unprofessional manner. Resolutions are almost always at hand when using calm, rational diplomacy.
- Disregarding decisions made by the coaches and/or the Board. Preliminary decisions may need to be made in order to defuse a situation. Grievances regarding final decisions may be brought to the Board or Executive Committee for review.
- Finally, do not act independently in a manner which may affect the team adversely. Be respectful of NSAC and fact that a coach is a mentor/role model/

authority figure to young people. NSAC hires people it believes will set a positive example and openly disregarding them will not help your child.

Grievance Procedure for Financial or Administrative Issues

If you have any concerns or questions regarding any of the operations of the organization, please use the following procedure:

1. First, communicate your concerns with the Board member or Committee Chair most directly responsible for the issue at hand in an honest and non-confrontational manner. Hopefully, this initial contact will resolve the issue. If you don't know who to contact, all Board members are listed on the club's website along with committee chairs. If you still have a question about who to approach with your issue, please ask the Board President.
2. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from this initial contact, please contact the President or President-Elect of the Board who can help arrange a meeting with the parties involved, if necessary, to further investigate the issue and who will try to provide a workable resolution.
3. If the response you receive after involving the President/President-Elect is not satisfactory, you can request that he/she present your concerns to the Board (or Executive Committee if more appropriate). You may be asked to present your issue in-person if deemed necessary. The decision reached at this level is final.

Communication is hugely important to our organization and to your swimmer's success. If you have any suggestions on how NSAC can communicate better with you or your family, if you want to play an active role in the communications pathways, or if you have ideas about other information that may be useful to include in this handbook, on the website, or as a newsletter article, please let us know.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

By this time I'm sure you're wondering, "How do I sign-up?" In order to attend practice and meets with our club, every swimmer must complete the online registration process found on our website at www.nsmakos.org. New and returning swimmers may sign up or re-activate at any time; once you are fully registered or re-activated, your membership and monthly billing continues indefinitely until you notify the registrar of your intent to discontinue swimming for any reason.

NSAC periodically holds "Try-Comp" clinics for anyone who is not enrolled, but who thinks they might like to try swimming as a competitive sport. The "Try-Comp" (try out competitive swimming) clinics are advertised within the local school district. Information about these clinics should be available on our web site at appropriate times.

Fees for each program are approved by the Board before the start of each fiscal year and are determined based on a number of factors including competitive market trends, program offerings, current budgetary needs, and the amount of planned fundraising. Current monthly billing amounts are generally available for viewing on the website.

NSAC is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501c-3 organization run by parent volunteers, most of whom have swimmers in the water. Our philosophy is to have highly-trained, professional staff running quality programs at competitive rates. Monthly program fees are therefore fair, reasonable and as low as fiscally possible.

Returning swimmers (those re-activating their accounts after a period of absence) will have priority for re-entry into programming over applicants new to the club; however, there is no guarantee that space will be available after following an absence. New swimmers will be accepted on a first come, first served basis and will be subject to space availability. (Note: placement of a swimmer into a specific practice group is a coaching decision - see Practice Groups).

Fees: Prorating and Payment Options

Swimmers enrolling mid-month can have their fees prorated to the ½ month as applicable. If a swimmer begins swimming after the 15th of the month, they will only be charged for half of the monthly fee. Notice of anticipated program session fees and other expenses incurred by a member family will be emailed out around the 21st of each month and will cover enrollment for the following month. On or around the 1st of the following month, the balance of all unpaid invoices, including the one for your program session fees, will be deducted from your designated bank account once you have signed up for the electronic withdrawal (ACH) system. For example: your swimmer will continue to swim in February and you have meet fees from a meet in January. You will receive an update via email on January 21st for the anticipated fees due February 1st. On or around February 1st, your designated bank account will be debited for the February swim fees plus the fees for the one meet attended in January. This approximate 10 day delay between the email notice and payment will allow time for adjustments/corrections needed before the amount is debited from the family's checking account.

Registration Procedure

All new swimmers must register electronically before starting a trial week via the online registration system on the NSAC website at www.nsmakos.org and be notified that they are “approved” prior to being allowed to participate in any of our programs. Returning swimmers are expected to re-register once each fall (or whenever they return after 9/1) and update their contact and emergency medical information in the online electronic database as changes occur. Current members may deactivate and reactivate periodically during the registration year by communicating their desire to do so to the registrar by

email or phone. New swimmers considering enrollment in our programs will be allowed to actively participate and be evaluated for a time period of up to one week without payment of fees. If the swimmer decides to join the club after this trial period, they will be charged the monthly fee based on the start of the trial period. Swimmers deciding not to join after the trial period will not be charged for it. **All swimmers must notify the registrar of their intent to initiate or resume participation and need to be sure that they have received email confirmation that this notice has been received by the registrar BEFORE they attend a practice.**

USA Swimming memberships are required by all youth swimmers enrolled in our programs. This fee is non-refundable and will be due and payable with the monthly fees for all new swimmers and any other swimmer whose membership is expired. All other swimmers will be notified by the Registrar when this fee is due based on their membership expiration date.

Masters swimmers will need to register with US Masters annually via the USMS website and pay for the yearly registration fee by credit card. More information on how to do this is available on the website under the “Masters” tab.

Program Withdrawal

If a new swimmer who joins the club decides to quit, for whatever reason, within the first two weeks from their start date, they are eligible for a 100% refund of any fees paid excluding any meet fees or the USA Swimming fee. The new swimmer’s start date shall include the trial week, if any, as mentioned above and as long as the trial week is contiguous with the weeks paid for.

New swimmers who quit after their first two weeks of participation and returning swimmers (those who have been enrolled at any time in our programming in the previous twelve months) who decide to discontinue participation will have their billing prorated to the ½ month effective the day of notification of the registrar. For example, if a swimmer withdraws on or before the 15th of a month, the swimmer will only be charged for the first half of the month. Any balance due on the account will be billed in the next billing cycle, and any credit due will be applied to the family’s account balance to be applied to future enrollment or may be requested to be refunded by check. No “back-dated” refunds are granted. **USA Swimming and USA Masters Swimming membership fees are non-refundable.**

A new or returning swimmer’s request for withdrawal must be made known to the club Registrar on or before the effective date of withdrawal. Notification and date of withdrawal must be clearly stated. No “back-dated” refunds will be given. Notification must be made to the club Registrar by email, fax, or US mail; a confirmation email will be sent to the withdrawing family/swimmer indicating the effective date of the refund, which would be the date the notification was received or postmarked unless otherwise

indicated. Please save or print this confirmation email for future reference, and notify the Registrar if you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of your first attempted notification of intent to withdraw from the club (allow up to 1 week for US mail deliveries).

Multi-Swimmer, Family Discounts, Other Discounts

Swimming families will often times have more than one swimmer enrolled at any given time which can be cost prohibitive, especially if the parents also swim. This portion of our fee structure and policy offers discounts to multiple swimmers from the same family who wish to participate in our programs and applies to all the programs we offer.

First Swimmer: no discount from fees.

Second Swimmer: 20% discount.

Third Swimmer: 30% discount.

Additional Swimmers: 40% discount.

Swimmer will be ranked first, second, etc. based on amount of fees with the highest swimmer program fees being ranked first, next highest second, and so forth.

Other discounts may be offered from time to time for marketing purposes or as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors.

In-Season, High School/College Swimmer Policy

Due to the rule change by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) allowing **high school** athletes to participate on private club teams during the swim season (see page 11), NSAC has developed a policy that allows these swimmers to attend Senior, National, Junior, or Gold practices free of charge, provided: (1) the swimmer has swum at least 3 months with the NSAC Senior/National/Junior/Gold program or enrolled for the summer season (long-course practice period) in the HSM/College conditioning program within the last twelve month period; (2) the swimmer has not swum most recently for any private club other than NSAC; (3) the practice(s) being attended has(have) been identified by our Head Coach as an approved practice for in-season high school swimmers; (4) the swimmer's high school coach is aware he/she will be attending our practice(s); (5) the swimmer's USA Swimming membership fees are current and required emergency information is up to date in their online NSAC account; and (6) the swimmer has no outstanding/past-due balance in their NSAC billing account. In-season high school swimmers competing with NSAC in USA Swim meet must pay their own meet fees as described in our Meet Fees Policy (see page 30).

NSAC also allows in-season **college** swimmers to attend occasional (up to one week) Senior, National, or High School/College Conditioning practices free of charge with the following provisions: (1) the college swimmer has been enrolled in the Senior or National swim group for at least 3 months during the previous 12-month period (or enrolled for the summer season/long-course practice period in those groups or HSM/College Conditioning); (2) the swimmer has not swum most recently for any private club other than NSAC; (3) the practice(s) being attended has/have been approved

by the head coach for the college swimmer to participate; (4) the swimmer's USA Swimming registration is current and emergency information is up to date in their online NSAC account; and (6) the swimmer has no outstanding/past-due balance in their NSAC billing account. In-season college swimmers competing with NSAC in USA sanctioned swim meets must pay their own meet fees.

If an in-season college swimmer wishes to swim for a time period greater than 1 week (for example, home for Christmas or January break), the above provisions apply plus the swimmer will be charged swim fees at the "4th swimmer" rate for whichever group in which they choose/the coach recommends for them to participate. Fees can be prorated to the half-month in accordance with current NSAC billing policies. A college swimmer always has the option to purchase the annual US Masters registration and swim with the NSAC Masters group at the 4th swimmer rate at any time in the course of the school year during which they are enrolled full-time in college (not just during the college swim season).

Meet Fees

For a complete discussion on this topic, please see page 30.

Returned Payments

Returned checks or any other form of payment on a swimmer's account with NSAC returned by the bank and where NSAC incurs a charge, that charge will be the responsibility of the account holder and not that of NSAC.

Economic Hardship Policy

Families may qualify for reduced or waived fees for their swimmers aged 18 & under, by one of three methods: 1) any family that qualifies for, or is currently enrolled in the Federal Food Stamp program; 2) any family that qualifies for, or is currently enrolled in Medical Assistance (through the Minnesota Health Care Program); and 3) any family that is "Directly Certified" for their school district's Reduced Lunch Program may qualify to have their fees waived, or reduced, in accordance to the percentage discount specified by the program. Necessary documentation to qualify for Economic Hardship will need to be submitted and approved by the Registrar or Treasurer prior to any granting of reduction or waiver of weekly program fees. Appropriate documentation may include proof of current enrollment in any of the three programs outlined above, or a signed affidavit of qualification for #1 and #2 above.

All families who qualify for Economic Hardship under this policy will be considered for a program fee reduction, but are subject to the availability of funds allocated to this program by the Board of Directors. Initial decisions regarding qualification and level of reduction in fees can be appealed to the Executive Committee, but the decision made by

the Executive Committee will be final. All families who qualify for reduced or waived fees under the criteria listed above are eligible for a reduced membership fee through USA Swimming (currently \$5).

All swimmers qualifying for Economic Hardship must comply with all the other registration policies and procedures, and will be subject to space availability. Any other Hardship circumstance with request for refund or reduced fees should be sent to the Board of Directors, c/o the current Treasurer, for review by the Executive Committee.

Habitually Delinquent Accounts

Members who allow their accounts with NSAC to become delinquent will be informed of their need to bring their accounts up-to-date in a timely fashion. Failure to pay monthly program and other fees in a timely fashion, or allowing accounts to become delinquent for any reason, may also result in loss of privileges to participate in our programming. Furthermore, members who repeatedly have delinquent accounts will be sent a formal letter from the club indicating their status and need to resolve the situation. Any family receiving three formal letters in any calendar year may be refused future membership renewal at the Board's discretion. Contact the team Treasurer if you have questions or concerns about your account.

Privacy Policy

NSAC respects its members' privacy. Any personal information you provide to the club as a member is kept confidential and will not be sold, rented, traded or distributed to any other company or individual for financial benefit or solicitation. The personal information we request from you is intended for specific, limited purposes. Some of this information may be necessary to share with authorities in emergency situations (i.e. medical information) or as a normal consequence of participating in competitive swimming (i.e. information required by MSI, USA Swimming). However, the information you supply will be kept in confidence and is important for us to have while you are a member of NSAC.

All registration material is available from our Registrar at any time who may be contacted through our web site. Our current policy is that all registration materials must be mailed directly to the Registrar with any required supporting documentation. Enrolled swimmers' personal information is stored electronically on our website and requires a password and/or administrative access privileges to view and edit.

Training Trips and Clinics

From time to time, depending on our swimmers' needs and levels of performance, the coaches may offer additional training outside our regular programming. While our programming encompasses all aspects of competitive swimming, special skill clinics may be offered if the opportunity arises to do so either between sessions or during a session in certain circumstances. These clinics offer a unique opportunity for instruction usually on specific topics that may include swimming professionals or other experts from outside the club. These clinics may or may not be offered to swimmers in our community not currently enrolled in our programming; this option will be determined at the time the clinic is planned.

A training trip is a special clinic in which the Head Coach provides a unique opportunity for a targeted group of swimmers who need and could benefit from a traveling experience that provides special circumstances under which these swimmers can excel in ways not possible in the environment provided by our facilities in Minnesota. Training trips are not for all swimmers and are focused on specific goals to be accomplished.

Training trips and special clinics are sponsored by NSAC, but are separate from our normal programming and are funded by the participating individuals (i.e. not part of our operating budget).

For any out-of-town, NSAC-sponsored event that requires an overnight stay, parent/guardian permission to attend is required when the parent or guardian is not also going to attend (see page 30). Those parents who are attending may be asked to serve as NSAC Chaperones and will be asked to fill out the background check form found on page 58.

For information on Try-Comp Clinics, see page 42.

A Parent-Run Organization

NSAC is a parent-run organization that exists because of adult volunteers who are willing to share their expertise and donate their time to a worthy organization. Volunteer support is vital to our success and economic competitiveness, and is the heart and soul of NSAC. Our volunteers serve on the Board of Directors, on various committees, and take on special assignments for necessary tasks required to support our operations. Meanwhile, the Board employs professionally trained and certified coaching staff to run our programs. The Board is extremely interested in providing high quality programming with professional staff in the most cost-effective way possible for our members. We would like all of our member to have an enriching, satisfying experience with our club,

but would like all members to realize that joining our club comes with some level of volunteerism expectations. The Board recognizes that each individual has a varying ability to commit to volunteer time and efforts; however, any volunteerism that our members can provide serves to make our organization even better able to succeed in its overall Mission, while providing a cost-effective venue that promotes our swimmers' success.

The Bylaws specifically define our corporate structure and the volunteerism that is needed in specific positions to keep the wheels turning. A copy of the Bylaws can be obtained through our Secretary if you are interested, but basically, volunteers are involved on every level within our organization.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors consists of our Head Coach and ten volunteer positions: President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Personnel Coordinator, Registrar, Safety Officer, Board Emeritus, and two Members-At-Large. Approximately half the volunteer positions are elected every other year at our annual member meeting in the spring such that all the volunteer positions rotate on, at most, a two-year cycle. The Board meets monthly throughout the year. All operations of the swim club are under the direction of the Board with each Board member's responsibilities defined in the Bylaws.

Board meetings are usually on a specified day of each month and are open to all members of the club. Meeting times and places are announced in the newsletter and on the website. The Board encourages you to attend, share your views, and get involved. If you have the interest and the time, please let our President-Elect (Nominations Chair) know of your desire and willingness to serve.

Committees in Action

While some of the Board's work is done through individual positions, much of the work is done through a committee structure set up under the Board's direction. Some of these committees are permanently provided for within the Bylaws (Standing Committee) while others are set up by the Board as needed (Special Committee). Most committees are looking for individuals who want to get involved; those with an asterisk below need non-Board support. Our current committee structure includes the following committees:

- **Executive Committee** (Standing): this committee is composed of specific Board members who have the authority to act on the Board's behalf in between Board meetings with regard to urgent and, especially, confidential matters.
- **Finance Committee** (Standing): this committee is set up to support both the Treasurer and Registrar with their responsibilities. It helps prepare financial reports and analysis, assists in annual budgeting, recommends session fee rates, establishes payment policies, and does a number of other tasks behind the scenes.

- **Fund-Raising Committee*** (Standing): fund-raising is an important activity of any tax-exempt organization. It provides the club with additional resources to fulfill definite needs while allowing the club to keep session fees at competitive levels. Fund-raising can be internal (events, sales, etc.) or external (individual/corporate donations, grants, etc.). Additionally, fund-raising events can serve as community-building, social functions for our families. Each year a certain amount of revenue in our budget is expected to come from fund-raising activities. A primary responsibility of this committee is to work with the Meet Committee to ensure the club-hosted meets are successful.

An important thing to keep in mind as a member and volunteer in our organization is that the time you donate working for our club can bring in extra revenue. Some large employers (i.e. Medtronic, 3M, IBM, etc.) offer grants to 501(c)(3) organizations where their own employees donate a certain number of volunteer hours. Check with your employer to see if they have such a program!

As a tax-exempt, charitable organization, NSAC is always willing to accept donations in the form of cash or gifts in-kind. If you, or anyone you know, would like to support amateur competitive swimming by making a donation to our club, please contact a member of the Board.

- **Meet Committee* (Standing):** this committee is chaired by the Head Coach and designated volunteers willing to help with administration of the club's meet schedule and attendance throughout the year. This includes administering to our club-attended sanctioned meets, non-sanctioned meets (mini-meets) and one or two club-hosted meets. The mini-meets and club-hosted meets are quite an endeavor and take many volunteers to be successful. The mini-meets are fun, involve only our club, and are primarily geared for the Age Group programs as an introduction to competitive swimming. The club-hosted meets are generally larger and involve many clubs. As a registered swim club, we are expected to host one or two sanctioned meets each year to help promote competitive swimming in our region. An added benefit to hosting a meet is that it serves as a significant fund-raiser for our club.
- **Nominating Committee* (Special):** this committee is transient, chaired by the President-Elect, and is responsible for recommending candidates to the Board for volunteer positions within the organization (i.e. new Board members, committee members, etc.).
- **Parent and Public Relations Committee*(Standing):** this committee is composed of the President-Elect, the Members-At-Large, the Program Representatives (see below) and any other members of the corporation who have an interest or expertise in marketing and communications. This committee assists with communications within the club and therefore, its members must maintain a current knowledge base of ongoing operations and Board actions. This committee may be given marketing responsibilities as deemed necessary by the Board and is

responsible to assist the Fundraising Committee and Meet Committee to ensure our club-hosted meets are successful.

- **Other Special Committees*:** other committees or task groups will be formed from time to time by the Board for certain purposes to help the organization overall.

Other Special NSAC Positions

In addition to that listed above, there are other positions that have specific, well –defined roles requiring parental involvement:

- **Program Representatives:** the Lead Coach of each program chooses one or two willing parents with swimmers enrolled that program to serve in this capacity at the beginning of each session. As a Program Representative, the parent is responsible to help distribute (collect) communications/forms to (from) the rest of the parents with swimmers enrolled in that program, and is expected to attend practices regularly or communicate with the Lead Coach on a regular basis. Most of the information distributed originates from the Board, Head Coach, or Lead Coach, but may also come from any of the other committees working under the direction of the Board. The Program Rep. serves to augment the communication process by helping to stuff on-deck mailboxes, works with the Lead Coach to create/distribute program-related material if needed, helps keep bulletin boards up to date, helps the Lead Coach administer swimmer-recognition programs (i.e. Swimmer of the Week, etc.), and may be asked to help communicate verbally either on-deck or through a calling tree. Program Reps. Are to serve as members on the Parent and Public Relations Committee.
- **Team Clothing Coordinator:** generally one person is needed to act as a liaison between our vendors and NSAC. This person works with the Head Coach to choose and arrange for the sale/distribution of logo clothing, suits, and equipment needed by our swimmers. This usually happens once per session and involves coordinating a time and place for our vendors to display items for sale (i.e. at our meet, at our member meetings, on the internet, etc.).

NSAC has two general membership meetings each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The fall meeting is an orientation meeting for new members, an opportunity to introduce new Board members, meet new coaches, and announce any changes in programming in the new fiscal year. The spring meeting is considered our annual meeting where swimmers are recognized for their accomplishments in the water; there is an awards program, and also is the time when the following year's Board slate is elected by the general membership. Both meetings serve as socializing backdrops for parents to meet other parents and for families to get to know each other.

Get Involved!

Volunteerism in our parent-run organization is an important part of your family's experience with NSAC. Your active participation as a parent volunteer benefits your family two-fold. First and foremost, parent participation in whatever your child is involved in improves the quality of your child's overall experience. Seeing his or her parent(s) participate in NSAC adds value and importance to the development of that child's skills. Subsequently, the swimmer becomes more engaged with the coach, listens more intently, and works on his or her skills with more determination.

Secondly, the time and talents you can bring to NSAC as a volunteer help us to deliver a high quality product while keeping session fees as low as possible. As stated above, much of the administrative and operating support comes from the Board and its network of committees.

Session fees by themselves do not cover all the expenses for our programming and attendance at meets. Furthermore, hired personnel cannot meet all the needs that exist. **An important component in our operating budget is the income derived from our NSAC hosted meets.** These meets are the number one best source of fund-raising for our club. Without this income supporting our operating costs, session fees would go up to continue to provide the same quality programming to which we are accustomed. Our NSAC-hosted meets require a significant amount of labor contributed by our families, but are fun and provide swimming opportunities that further develop skills in our children. It is an important duty of every swim parent to assist in putting on these events. Experience is not necessary—on-the-job training is provided. Those members who eagerly participate in this event have found it to be a fun and rewarding experience. A swim meet is more fun if you are in the middle of it, helping, as opposed to watching it from the stands. Contact the Meet Committee and let them know you want to help with our hosted meets!

The Fund-Raising Committee also needs volunteers to help run various fund-raisers that are both community-building and revenue-generating. To be successful, these events should be well-planned and few in number. Your help and support is needed for these events!

Other Ways You Can Be Involved With Swimming

Beyond NSAC, parents can become involved in the Local Swimming Committee (LSC) for our area, which is Minnesota Swimming, Inc. (MSI). Knowledgeable adults are needed to serve on their Board and possibly on one of their committees. Parents can take advanced training through MSI to become meet officials and can volunteer their services to officiate sanctioned meets. NSAC has a policy to reward our parents who go through training to become an official in that we will pay for a certain number of annual Official's USA Swimming memberships if those same parents will volunteer their skills at our meets.

There are many ways for adults to participate with their children in the world of competitive swimming. The main point being that the sport of swimming is largely supported by an extensive volunteer network that starts locally and extends onto the national scene. The sport needs your help. We need your help...so **GET INVOLVED!**

General Member Code of Conduct

Throughout this handbook there are suggestions on how parents should conduct themselves around the pool deck, at meets, with the coaches, and even with their own swimmers. Parents are members of our organization. As defined in our Bylaws, Regular Members are the parents or legal guardian(s) of any Swimming Member who is a minor. As Regular Members, parents are responsible for being active participants in the organization. This includes volunteering as stated above, but also voting at our general membership meeting. In addition, Board Members (most of whom are Regular Members) are subject to a specific Code of Conduct outlined within the Bylaws. Coach Members are subject to this and their own Code of Conduct, outlined by the governing coaching organizations, which are quite extensive. **All members of NSAC are subject to the rules stated within this handbook and those stated in Section 10.06 of the Bylaws (Forbidden Acts) with potential consequences as stated in Section 3.06 of the Bylaws (Involuntary Termination).** Anyone who wishes to review the Bylaws is encouraged to do so. You can obtain your own copy from the Board Secretary, or view them on our website.

Tips to Make Your Experience with Swimming the Best Possible

- **Remember that swimming is the child's activity.** Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Try not to judge your child's progress based on the performance of other swimmers or based on what you think should be achieved. The best thing about swimming is that everyone can strive to be their personal best, regardless of age or ability.
- **Enjoy the sport.** There is only one question to ask your child: "Are you having fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.
- **Be a supportive parent.** You have taken your child to a professional coach so let him/her do the coaching. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. Believe in and support your coach also. Trying to assume a coaching role with your child may only serve to confuse your child and prevent a swimmer/coach bond from forming. This bond is important and contributes to your child's success and enjoyment.
- **Have only positive things to say at a swimming meet.** If you attend a meet, you should cheer and applaud; avoid misguided criticism of your child, coach, officials, or volunteers.

- **Acknowledge your child's fears.** A first meet, or first 1650-yard freestyle, can be a stressful situation. It is totally understandable for your child to have apprehension. Assure your child the coach would not have suggested an event or situation if your child was not ready.
- **Volunteer.** There are a number of ways you can contribute to the sport through the club and/or as an official for MSI. The sport is dependent on a large base of volunteers to make it successful.
- **Be a team player.** The water is not necessarily bluer at another team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even championship-winning teams. Better to teach children loyalty and responsibility in helping to solve problems than run from them.
- **Remind your child to have realistic goals and expectations.** Giving an honest effort, regardless of outcome, is 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. I achieved my goal and I still lost, but this does not make me a failure. In fact, I am very proud of that swim." Your coach should be very helpful in making sure your child has both short and long term goals individualized for him or her. Keep their dream alive, but keep it in perspective so that anything less is not considered failing.
- **Let your child own their sport.** Having your child take responsibility for their participation and level of involvement in a supportive, loving setting will do the most to ensure success, enjoyment, and longevity.

Glossary of Swimming Terms

Age Group Swimming: Program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 (years old) and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-19. Local events may also include 8 and under.

Block: The starting platform.

Bulkhead: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25-yard courses.

Circle Swimming: Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable maximum use of pool space.

Code of Conduct: 1) An agreement signed by a swimmer prior to travel or participation stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines; 2) A set of behavioral guidelines that all members are expected to comply with.

Cut: Slang term for qualifying time. A time standard that must be achieved in order to attend a particular meet or event.

Distance: Term used to refer to events longer than 400 meters/500 yards.

DQ or Disqualification: Occurs when an official observes a rule violation by a swimmer. A disqualified swimmer cannot receive awards or use the result as an official time.

Drill: An exercise involving isolation of a portion or part of a stroke; used to improve technique.

Dry Land Training: Training done out of the water. Aids and enhances swimming performance. Usually includes stretching, weight training, and/or calisthenics.

False Start: Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the starting signal. In USA Swimming, one false start will generally result in disqualification.

Final: The championship heat of an event in which the top swimmers from the preliminaries compete.

Finish: The final phase of the race: the touch at the end of the race.

Flags: Pennants strung across the pool five yards or meters from the end of the pool. They enable backstrokers to execute a turn more efficiently by counting their strokes from the flags to the wall.

Goal: A specific time achievement a swimmer sets and strives for and can be short or long-term.

Gutter: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and recirculates through the filtration system.

Head Coach: The coach hired by the Board to oversee all the other coaches and all of our practice groups or programs.

I.M.: Stands for “individual medley”, an event in which one swimmer swims equal distances of each stroke in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

Lap Counter: 1) A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a race of 500 yards or more; 2) The person who stands at the opposite end from the start and counts laps for the swimmer.

Lead Coach: The coach in charge of supervising one training group or program.

Long Course: A 50-meter pool. USA Swimming conducts most summer swimming in long course pools.

Medley Relay: An event in which four swimmers swim equal distances of one stroke each in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

Meet: Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, swimmers challenge themselves against the clock to mark improvement.

Middle Distance: Term used to refer to events of 200 yards/meters to 500 yards/400 meters in length.

Minnesota Swimming, Inc. (MSI): Our local statewide governing swimming organization. Also found at www.mnswim.org.

National Age Group Top 16 Reportable Times: Time standards set for both short and long course based on previous year’s achievements. Times meeting these standards are compiled to make a national list of the fastest age group swimmers each year.

Negative Split: Swimming the second half of the race faster than the first half.

North Suburban Instructional Aquatics, Inc. (NSIA): The name of the legal entity under which we are organized as a 501 (c)(3) corporation.

Official: A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and referees.

Pace Clock: Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice. May also be digital.

Preliminaries (Prelims): Races in which swimmers qualify for the finals in the events.

Relay: An event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event in a competition.

Senior Swimming: The program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition in National Swimming Championships. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an education experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a pool of talented athletes for Internal Competition. There are no age restrictions on Senior Competition.

Short Course: A pool 25 yards or meter long. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in short course pools.

Split: 1) A swimmer's intermediate time within a race. Splits are registered every 50 yards or meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is on pace. Under certain conditions, splits may be used as official time. 2) In a relay, the time for one of the four individuals.

Streamline: The position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as tight and elongated as it can be.

Taper: The final preparation phase of a season. Prior to major competition, an older, more experienced swimmer will ease yardage and allow the body to recover. Often during taper, a swimmer will shave his/her entire body to reduce resistance, and heighten sensation in the water.

Time Trial: A time-only swim which is not part of a regular meet event.

Touch Pad: A large, pressure-sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and automatically sent to the timing system.

USA Swimming: USA Swimming, Inc. The national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States. Also found at www.usswim.org.

Warm-up: Low intensity swimming used by a swimmer prior to a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.