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## **Club Swimming**

Welcome to WEST Express, a competitive swim team club. Swimming like many other sports can be hard to understand, especially for new families. Our hope is that we can provide you some written information to help you better understand and let you know that questions are always welcomed.

[www.westexpresswim.com](http://www.westexpresswim.com)

## **United States Swimming**

United States Swimming is the national governing body for the sport of swimming. All participants of WEST Express must be members of this organization. [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

Memberships are good for an entire calendar year. MN Swimming starts collecting the next year's registrations in September in order to get them all processed in a timely fashion. Seasonal memberships are for the long course season only, which is spring/summer.

### **Transfer of membership**

If you currently are swimming with another club, you will need to fill out a Transfer Application. You can still swim with us, but will be entered into meets as "unattached" for 120 days after your last sanction competition.

### **Benefits**

- Receive a subscription to "Splash" magazine
- Can swim in USA swim meets
- Eligible to participate in local and national camps
- Track your times with "My USA Swimming" account - via [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)
- Discounts available on travel to USA swimming events
- Receive excess accident and liability insurance coverage at all USA sanctioned activities

## **Minnesota Swimming, Inc (MSI)**

Minnesota Swimming is the Local Swim Committee (LSC), or administrative division, that handles our geographic area which includes all of Minnesota, and a few select counties in Western Wisconsin. MSI grants annual charters to clubs like WEST Express, making them part of the USA swimming family. MSI also administers all USA Swimming sanctioned meets that take place within their jurisdiction.

[www.mnswim.org](http://www.mnswim.org)

## Club Description

WEST Express is a first-class, progressive, year-round swim team offering a structured, age group youth program for children age 5 and up. The athletes range from beginning/novice swimmers through superior-skilled and experienced top-level swimmers.

## Mission

To provide a safe, structured, competitive swimming environment that meets the needs and exceeds the expectations of the youth and adults (abled and disabled) of the Eastern Carve County District and surrounding areas. These needs and expectations are met through our adherence to the WEST philosophy.

## Team Philosophy

WEST Express offers opportunities for participants to develop physically, intellectually and emotionally through various learning experiences as a member of a top quality, progressive competitive program.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Swimming promotes aerobic endurance, proportional muscle development, enhanced natural flexibility and improved coordination. It is the most injury-free sport for children and can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

### INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Learning proper technique engages the thinking process as new skills are learned. Participants must develop and plan movement sequences. Structured programs of physical activity develop a stronger self-image.

### EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The nature of the sport dictates that swimming is a self-achievement activity. The responsibility for performance ultimately lies with the individual in any given race. That individual, over time, will have many experiences, positive and negative, encouraging and discouraging. Learning how to handle the success and failure and the self-achieving responsibility develops self-confidence. Through perseverance, the swimmer learns courage, dedication, commitment and how to overcome adversity. Swimmers learn to handle pressure and stress – sometimes self-imposed and sometimes imposed by others. Through experiences in swimming, swimmers learn attitudes and habits that will remain with them throughout their lives. Most swimmers learn to be “can do” people.

## Coaching Staff

WEST Express understands that the quality of a program is dependent on the excellence of its coaches. The WEST Express staff consists of a professionally trained head coach and assistant coaches that are certified in the USA coaching programs.

## Team Levels

The WEST Express Swim Team uses a progressive, age group program designed to develop the child physically, mentally and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined, long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during a swimmer's physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. In later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge must be introduced into the training program. In this respect, "too much too soon" may become a cause for "burn out" when the athlete becomes mentally tired of the sport and loses the desire to participate.

In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, it is also important that we establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals.

At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmers. The long-term goal of excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he/she will progress at his/her own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this by making team level assignments based on a child's individual physical, mental and emotional level of development.

### DOLPHIN LEVEL

This is a novice group with a major emphasis on fun and stroke technique. This group will be introduced to introductory competitions. Practices are offered 3 times a week for 60-minute sessions.

### SHARK LEVEL

This level emphasizes stroke refinement. They have started to exhibit good swimming skills and are introduced to some training skills and processes. Practices are held 4 times a week for 75 minutes.

### AGE GROUP LEVEL

This level emphasizes stroke refinement. They are proficient in all four strokes and are progressing their training skills and processes. Practices are held 5 times a week for 90 minutes. A 30-minute period of dry land conditioning is incorporated 2 times a week.

### SENIOR LEVEL

This level of swimmer is well versed in technique and strategy. They are also a full-fledged training group. Emphasis is placed on strength training with continued emphasis on stroke technique. Practice sessions are 2-2.5 hours 5 times a week.

Training sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent participation is needed to progress through the levels of training. Therefore, it is important that each swimmer attends as many practices as possible in order to derive the full benefits of the program. (Pool availability is our most limiting factor....Don't waste it.)

## **Practice and Attendance Policies**

These policies are designed to provide the best possible practice environment for all.

Swimmers should arrive for practice no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their practice time. They should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their session is over. Swimmers should be ready to swim 5 minutes prior to the start of practice.

Plan to stay for the entire practice. The last part of practice is often the most important. Occasionally there are announcements made at the end of practice. If your child needs to leave early, please notify the coach prior to practice.

If a swimmer will be absent, please inform the coach via email (addresses posted at [www.westexpressswim.com](http://www.westexpressswim.com)) or leave a message on the hotline 763-391-2USA (763-391-2872).

Swimmers enter the building at the double doors on the west side of the building and go directly to the pool/locker room area.

No swimmer may enter the water or use team spaces/equipment unless a WEST coach is present.

While on school/pool grounds, the swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. They must remain in the pool area at all times. A swimmer found in any other part of the building could jeopardize our relationship with the facility.

Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach's permission. This is a safety and accountability issue.

The club (swimmers and family members) is to act as a guest of the Chaska Middle School East/Bloomington Family Aquatic Center. It is a privilege to be there and we must respect the property. Damage to the property may result in financial liability of the swimmer/family. This also is a violation of the Code of Conduct and could result in permanent suspension from the team. View the Code of Conduct at the end of the handbook.

Use of the diving board is prohibited at all times. Neither USA Swimming nor WEST Express insures diving board activity.

Parents are not allowed on the pool deck during practice unless it is an emergency. They are welcome to observe practice from the pool bleachers.

### **Illness and injury**

The coach should be informed of any lengthy illness or injury, regardless of the severity. We have a sincere interest in the health of our swimmers. This will assist the coach to prevent further injury to the swimmer. Communication via email or hotline is the most effective method of communication.

### Conduct

Each swimmer will read and sign the club code of conduct that outlines behavior standards that are to be upheld at all times. The code of conduct also outlines the disciplinary process of the club.

Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at all time. Working together as a unit for the benefit of all is an important part of the WEST culture.

Inappropriate language, lying, stealing or vandalism are behaviors directly contrary to the objectives of WEST and are unacceptable.

Swimmers must help set up and take down swim team facility equipment as necessary: lane lines, backstroke flags etc.

Swimmers must start and finish at the walls, complete entire swims and use proper push offs, turns and finishes. Swimmers on WEST do not cheat.

Swimmers must learn to use the pace clock.

Swimmers should never interfere with the progress of another swimmer during practice.

Wherever you wear WEST Express team apparel, know that your actions and words reflect on the team. Please reflect the pride you have in WEST Express.

It is against USA Swimming rules for parents to be on deck during a meet. This insurance liability rule imposed by USA Swimming is not designed to exclude parents but, rather, to geographically account for insured persons (athletes, coaches, officials, meet staff). Only persons serving in a meet capacity are allowed on deck.

As a matter of courtesy, all questions swimmers or parents have concerning meet results, officiating or the conduct of a meet should be referred to the coaching staff. They will pursue the matter through proper channels.

At the conclusion of each session, please leave the WEST team area neat and clean. If not, volunteers from the host club must clean up after us.

Swimmers may not scratch (not swim) events at meets without permission of the coach.

Always display good sportsmanship to teammates and competitors.

### **Parents: Your Athlete Needs You**

To have a successful program, there must be an understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coaches. The progress your youngster makes depends greatly on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join WEST Express and reacquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning WEST Express parent.

### **The Coach is the Coach**

We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. A good relationship between coach and swimmer is an essential ingredient to producing excellent results. When parents interfere with well-intentioned opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and often times insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you have a problem, concern or complaint, please contact the coach.

### **The Best Kind of Parent**

The parent's job is to supply the love, recognition and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition. Your role is extremely important and your swimmer would be at a disadvantage if you were not there. Keep in mind that it is the coach's job to motivate and constructively critique the swimmer's performance.

### **Ten and Under**

Ten and under are invariably the most inconsistent swimmers and this can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and swimmers alike. Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer first joins WEST, there may be a brief period when he/she appears to slow down. This is a result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much better swims for the individual.

### **Not Every Time**

Even the very best swimmer will have meets where they do not swim their best times. These plateaus are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season times should improve. Please be supportive during these challenging times.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

Please make every effort to have your swimmers at practice on time. Realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. Encourage a good diet and sleeping habits. They will serve your child well. The greatest contribution you can make to your swimmer's progress is to be a loving, supportive parent. Please see the reprint of the article called "The Ten Commandments for Parents of Athletic Children." It offers some very useful and sound advice regarding communication with your swimmer. It is posted on the website under "info for swimmers."

### **Fundraising**

One of the commitments you made when you joined WEST Express is to help with our swim meets and fundraising events. When we host a meet, each family is expected to provide one worker per session.

## **Communication**

**WEST Express utilizes email for distribution of information. Please provide the registrar with the appropriate email address, via your WEST online account, so we may effectively contact you and keep you up to date on the happenings of WEST Express.**

**WEST Express also has a website that contains updated information, practice schedules, meet schedules and meet sign up information. Please check out the website at [www.westexpressswim.com](http://www.westexpressswim.com).**

**WEST Express coaches provide updates of practice schedules/cancellations and other club information on our hotline 763-391-2USA (763-391-2872).**

**Parent to coach conferences are available. The coaching staff is available to answer any questions you may have or discuss any concerns that you would like to bring to their attention. We pride ourselves on being approachable and responsive to our parents. Please feel free to contact the coach via email or a message on the hotline. Meetings can be scheduled prior to or after practice.**

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors oversees the administrative functions of the club. The board consists of nine parents elected for 3-year terms, with 3 positions being elected each year. The elections for board positions are held annually in February.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The guiding mission statement of the Board of Directors, which all decisions are measured against, is:

With the main focus of the club always on the swimmer, Board Directors exist to ensure the continuation and excellence of WEST Express Swim team by providing the necessary business functions, assisting and supporting the coaching staff, and communication, communicating, communicating....

The Bylaws Article VI discusses the role of the Board of Directors. This outline provides more specific detail as to what each position is responsible for in the way that WEST Express currently operates.

## PRESIDENT

- Conduct/facilitates monthly meetings and calls special meetings as needed
- Board membership
- Works with Vice President to hire Head Coach
- Performs performance review of the Head Coach annually
- Appoints committees
- Holds elections as outlined in the bylaws
- Communicates with coaches re: general operation of the club

## VICE PRESIDENT

- Performs duties of the President if the President is unable, absent or disabled
- Assists President in the general operation of the club
- Assists with job performance review of Head Coach
- Performs other duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors

## SECRETARY

- Maintains business records of the club
- Record and report minutes of meetings
- Maintain historical records of club activity/proceedings
- Maintains corporate records and Articles of incorporation, copy of charter and bylaws
- Sends thank you's and correspondence as needed
- Sends gifts/cards as appropriate

## TREASURER

- Payroll/benefits
- Deposits of all dues/fees after recorded by registrar
- Budget Reports
- Taxes
- Monthly bills

- Record of receipts
- Financial reports

### REGISTRAR (not necessarily a board member)

- Complete and track USA/MSI registration for athletes, coaches. Non-athletes and club
- Collect and post dues, meet fees
- Publish roster 2 times per year

### COACH

Although not a voting board member, the coach has many important jobs related to the board of directors

- Submitting meet entry report to registrar for billing
- Verification of swimmers times
- Distribute monthly calendar, practice schedule, newsletter or other means of communication to club membership
- Distribute meet information for sign up (currently done online)
- Responsible for hiring assistant coaches and maintaining coaching staff
- Communication of coaching matters with the Board of Directors

## Committees

There are many ways to become involved in your child's swimming. WEST is a non profit, parent-run volunteer organization that relies on the participation of it's families to function effectively. Some of the general committees are listed below. Every parent can contribute in many ways to ensure the success of the club.

- Sponsorship/Ad sales
- Social
- Fundraising
- Publicity/PR
- Team Recognition
- Swim Meet Director

## Fee Structure

Club fees are reviewed annually and are listed in the registration packet on the website. The fees are based on hours of practice time, club expenses and coach instruction/training.

WEST offers a reduced fee for families with multiple swimmers on the team. The swimmer with the lower rate is considered the second swimmer and the discount is applied toward that rate. Contact the registrar for multiple swimmer discounts.

Questions regarding dues or bills you may have received, please contact the registrar.

## Insurance (narrative summary from "USA Swimming, Inc." 2006 insurance summary)

It is required that all WEST swimmers have a current USA Swimming membership. This membership not only supports swimming throughout the country, it also provides accident and medical insurance for every swimmer and every club. Part of your registration fees was forwarded to USA swimming to pay this membership fee. Each swimmer is covered at any organized practice of WEST Express and at every competition that is USA sanctioned.

## Team Uniforms

The necessary equipment for competition is a team cap, team suit and a team warm-up jacket. Caps are available for purchase from the coaches. Team suits are ordered and purchased by the individual swimmer throughout the season online from Elsmore Aquatics at [www.elsmoreaquatics.com](http://www.elsmoreaquatics.com).

## Glossary of Terms – Club Swimming

**Skills:** The five competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley.

**Competition:** Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances, depending on the age group and classification. Each swimmer will have a limit to the number of events he or she may swim each day, depending on the meet rules.

**Freestyle:** In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up and down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

**Backstroke:** Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

**Breaststroke:** The breaststroke, which is the oldest stroke dating back hundreds of years, requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

**Butterfly:** Some consider the butterfly to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish. (The butterfly is the newest stroke and was developed in the early 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.)

**Individual Medley (IM):** The individual medley, commonly referred to as the I.M., features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

**Medley Relay:** In the medley relay, all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle.

**Freestyle Relay:** The freestyle relay events consist of four freestylers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the event.

**Starts:** In the start, the starter who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless calls the swimmer to the starting position; when all swimmers are set, the starting horn is sounded to start the race. If the starter feels that one of the swimmers has moved, left early or gotten an unfair advantage, the guilty swimmer may be disqualified after the race for a false start. Under USA Swimming rules, one false start disqualifies the swimmer.

## **WEST Express Swim Team**

**Teams:** USA Swimming is made up of approximately 2,800 teams from all over the country. Of these clubs, nearly half have 80 swimmers or less, and a handful of teams have over 500 swimmers. A team may be comprised of any number of swimmers, parents and coaches. Participants compete in different age groups and meets depending on their achievement level and how old they are on the first day of the meet. Traditionally, recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Many local meets feature 8 and under, single age groups, or senior events. Team practice groups are usually determined by age and/or ability.

**Officials:** Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

**The Course:** Competition pools may be short course (25 yards or 25 meters), or long course (50 meters). The international standard (as used in the Olympics) is 50 meters. World records are accomplished in 25 and 50-meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for 25 yard, 25 meter and 50 meter pools.

**Winter/Short Course** refers to meets swum at pools measured by yards.

**Summer/Long Course** refers to meets swum at pools measured by meters.

Additional rules can be found in the USA swimming handbook at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

## **Meet Classifications**

### **Classification And Types Of Meets(Using Minnesota Swimming Time Standards)**

**C/Pre-C Meets** are for swimmers who have previously not swum an event ("No Time - NT") or have a "C" qualifying time or slower "Pre-C" time. These meets are great for novice swimmers and first meet experiences. C/Pre-C Meets are also a good opportunity for more experienced athletes to attempt longer events for the first time, such as the 200 Fly, 500 Free, or 400 IM. Pre-C meets are held usually monthly.

**A/B/C Meets** are for all swimmers, and all members are encouraged to participate. Because these meets involve multiple ability levels, awards categories individual events are divided into three levels: "C" and slower, "B," and "A" and faster.

**B/C Meets** provide an intermediate level of competition for swimmers with "B" times, "C" times and "No Times." These meets are most often held in the metro area.

**A Meets** are for experienced swimmers who have attained Minnesota "A" times and faster. Team scores are kept and team awards are given. These meets are most often held in the metro area but may involve travel to a different city.

The swimmer is allowed to swim in the events he or she has A or better times in and may also deck enter into events that he or she is close to an A time in, if there is room available. The coach is responsible for deck entering the swimmer before the meet starts and it will cost approximately \$5.00 for each event and that will need to be paid at the time the coach deck enters the swimmer.

**State Meets** are open to qualifiers with a "CH" (Champ) time or faster. The team state champion is determined at these meets. The Minnesota Swimming Championship for winter short course season is held each March. The State Championship for summer long course season is held each August at the University of Minnesota. A qualifying time can be obtained at any USA sanctioned meet.

**Zone Meets** are annual regional championships, held each August by USA Swimming, which is divided into four zones. Athletes qualify by achieving a "Zone" time, which is the National Age Group "AAA" standard. This is an all-star type of competition in which WEST swimmers represent a conglomerate Team Minnesota. It is sometimes held in Minnesota but often is hosted elsewhere. Other teams in our zone include Wisconsin, Iowa, Midwestern, Missouri Valley, Ohio, Michigan, Lake Erie, Illinois, and Indiana.

**Speedo Sectional Meets** are faster than Zones but not quite as fast as Junior Nationals. There are no age groups and time standards are difficult to achieve. This meet is held in a Midwestern location, and depending on the month/location, it may or may not be included in our team schedule. The coaching staff will determine if the Speedo Sectional Meet in a given season fits team objectives.

The best swimmers from the United States (and the entire world) compete at Junior Nationals and Nationals.

**Junior Nationals**, held every March and August after State, is the national championship meet for USA Swimming athletes ages 18 and under. This elite meet with very fast qualification times brings the fastest young swimmers throughout America together to compete.

**US Nationals**, held twice a year, is the top annual championship meet in America. Qualification times for this elite senior meet are faster than for the US Open. America's fastest swimmers, including world-class athletes such as Michael Phelps, Ian Crocker, and Natalie Coughlin, participate.

**Olympic Trials** are held every four years to select swimmers for the Olympic Games. This elite senior selection meet has qualification times faster than US Nationals. The top two swimmers in each individual event, plus a few additional freestylers, are selected for the US Olympic Team. Several Team WEST swimmers qualified to compete in the 2008 Trials.

## **WEST Express Swim Team**

**International Meets, such as the Olympic Games, World Championships, World Cup, Pan Pacific Games, etc., require selection by USA Swimming to represent the United States on a national team comprised of top American swimmers. Typically, the Olympic Games and World Championships have their own selection meets ("Trials") to directly select such teams. For other international competitions, USA Swimming may use the national championship as its selection venue.**

## Meet Information

When meet information is published by the host club, a printable, detailed meet information flyer will accompany each sign up link on the Meet sign up page and will include specific instructions for entries, eligibility, and the deadline. This information is also found on at [www.mnswim.org](http://www.mnswim.org). You then go to meet information for the specific meet you are interested in.

Coaches are responsible for entering swimmers in meets and selecting individual events and relays. The coaching staff will take into consideration those events the swimmer wishes to enter. The coaching staff retains the final authority to decide both individual events and relay events. Any swimmer who signs up for a meet will be considered eligible for relay selection. Coaches' use specialized software to keep track of swimmers' times.

After coaches make the final decision about events and complete the entry process, entries (including relays) will be posted at the pool and also attached to the meet email sent out. When available the meet timeline will also be posted and emailed. Relays are subject to change, including during the meet itself. Individual events are less likely to be changed during a meet.

**Entry Fees And Surcharges:** Each event that a swimmer enters in each meet carries an entry fee. [Minnesota Swimming, Inc.](#) sets the entry fees, which vary based on the classification of the meet. For common local meets, WEST Express charges a \$3 surcharge per swimmer to help defray administrative costs associated with the entry. For out-of-town meets during the regular season, additional surcharges may be added to cover coach travel. All costs for each meet, including surcharges, will be completely detailed in each meet flyer during the sign-up process.

**Paying Meet Fees:** Meet fees are not refundable once a swimmer is entered in a meet, because the host club will not refund (any portion of) the team entry fee check. All meet fees are due once billed and prior to the swim meet. You will receive an email with an invoice. The best way to pay is to access your WEST account and pay via credit card or e-check online. You may pay by cash/check at the pool or the PO Box address. ALL accounts will be charged on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month if balance is due. If you wish to pay by check or cash, notify the registrar prior to the billing date. All unpaid fees will be charged to the cc# listed on your account.

The PO Box address is: PO Box 185 Chaska, MN 55318

\*\*The team on occasion reserves the right to add or change the billing date. Accounts will be notified by email prior to those changes.

## Swim Meet 101

### What time should my swimmer arrive?

Plan to arrive approximately 10-15 minutes prior to the start of warm ups. They will need to stay with the team, if they want to go talk to a parent that is fine but don't make it too long. It is easier for the coaching staff to keep track of the swimmers if they stay together so nobody misses an event.

### An EVENT is the swimmers "race".

There are 4 competitive strokes: Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Butterfly. There is also the IM - Individual Medley that consist of all four strokes in this order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle.

There are also relays that the swimmers can participate in along with 3 other teammates. Each swimmer swims the same distance. When the first swimmer finishes, the next swimmer goes until all 4 have completed their lap(s). There are two different kinds of relays:

Freestyle - each swimmer swims freestyle

Medley - each swimmer swims a different stroke in the order of Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle.

### Events per Day (generally)

9 years and older: Maximum of 4 individual events and 1 relay per day

8 and under: Maximum of 3 individual events and 1 relay per day

\*\*\*Coaches determine which events a swimmer will compete in.

### Age Groups:

There are general age group categories for most meets. Boys and girls also swim separately. Some meets combine ages/genders or mix it up based on the type of meet. In general, this is the breakdown:

8 & under      9 & 10      11 & 12      13 & 14      15 & 16      Senior

### Pool Length:

Chaska Middle School East (CMSE) is a 25-yard short course pool. In a 25 yard pool a "50" is two lengths of the pool. The Olympics use a 50-meter long course pool. During the summer season, there are meets in both types of pools but the finals and state meet are all in meter pools.

### Events/Heats/Lanes/Seed Times

The number of heats is determined by the number of swimmers and the number of lanes in a pool. If you are at a six-lane pool and there are 30 kids in an event there will be 5 heats. The heats are generally seeded slowest to fastest. Your seedtime is the best time you have swum that event. If you have never swam it, the coach will either make up a time or if allowed will list you at NT (No time). In a six-lane pool the fastest swimmer in a heat is in lane 3, lane 4, lane 2, lane 5, lane 1 and lane 6. In an eight-lane pool the fastest is in lane 4 and alternates from there.

Programs are available to purchase at each meet. The program lists the event order and the heat/lane your swimmer will be in. Writing on their arm/leg helps everyone stay focused of when they swim. A permanent marker works well. It also enables the kids learn to be watching for their own events.

## Relays

The coaches decide who will be on the relays. The number of relays depends on the number of swimmers entered and the type of meet. Sometimes there aren't enough kids for a relay or sometimes there are enough for one but not two. There are times when there may seem like enough kids in a age group but there is no relay. If the meet is a B/C meet and swimmer at the meet as an "A" time in the 50 free, or any other stroke they are ineligible to swim that stroke on a relay at a B/C meet. The coaches try to get as many kids on relays as they can. Relays are a great team-building event.

## Meet Sessions

Weekend meets generally have two sessions a morning and an afternoon session. These meets are classified as finals only meets. Generally the younger kids are in the am and the older are in the pm. It is always good to check the meet information to verify the session information.

Some of the meets, especially ABC finals, State and a few other meets have what is called prelims and finals. The younger kids swim in the afternoon and only have finals (they only swim their event once for awards). The older kids will swim prelims in the am and the top 16 will swim again that night to determine the top 16 places.

The meet information is listed on the MN Swimming website once provided by the host team.

## Standards and Disqualifications (DQ's)

USA swimming has rules for each start, stroke and turn. MN swimming is governed by USA swimming and there are officials at each meet that you will see on the pool deck wearing white. If a swimmer is DQ'd you will see them raise their arm. The coaches receive a DQ slip that explains what the swimmer did incorrectly. As a developmental swimmer you can expect these, they are part of the learning process. The coach may or may not discuss these directly with each swimmer. At each meet the results are posted on a wall outside the pool area. If your swimmer gets a DQ their name will be listed on the bottom of the result sheet with the letters DQ next to it. This means that the time they swam will not count. DQ's are ok. It is a great learning experience but remind them that they did a great job!

What to bring to a swim meet (remember to label all items):

- WEST team suit (highly recommended)
- two WEST swim caps (required)
- two pair of goggles (highly recommended)
- two towels (highly recommended)
- warm clothes - it can be chilly (recommended)
- water bottle and healthy snacks (highly recommended)
- quiet games or books (recommended)
- old blanket or sleeping bag for "camping" (recommended)
- WEST bag or other apparel (optional)

**Warm-Up:** Arrive at the pool 10 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time. Report to your coach with your suit, cap, and goggles, ready to go. A member of the WEST coaching staff always conducts warm-ups. This is both an athletic need and a safety issue. Teams are assigned a specific lane for warm ups. Each group has a specific warm-up designed by the coach. Be familiar with this warm-up before you begin.

## WEST Express Swim Team

**Racing:** Each WEST swimmer is responsible for knowing which events he/she is swimming and for being present in the team area before each race. Before reporting to the blocks, swimmers must confer with a member of the coaching staff to review race strategy, technique, and goals. At the conclusion of each race, swimmers must report to their coaches to discuss the race. At most meets, electronic timing is used. The official time is generally the one recorded in the computer by the swimmer touching the touch pad and appearing on the scoreboard. If a swimmer misses the touch pad or there is a mechanical failure, various back-up times will be used. Between races, swimmers are asked to rest and stay warm. Energy should be conserved and used in competition, for swimming, or supporting teammates! It is very important that swimmers check in with coaches and request permission before leaving a meet. This is a safety and event accountability policy. Some higher-level meets require checking in, deck seeding, swimming in a Finals sessions, etc. These types of meets have penalties associated with failing to appear for a swim.

**Nutrition:** Hunger and dehydration can lead to poor performance. Drink and eat throughout the meet. Often there is a concession area at the meet that offers bagels, hot dogs, chips, drinks (including sodas and Gatorade). It's a good idea to pack some nutritional snacks like granola bars, fruit snacks, yogurt, fruit, cereal, bagels, and non-carbonated drinks. Don't forget your water bottle.

**USA Swimming Policies and Rules:** Several USA Swimming policies and rules govern most swim meets. You can find this information on the USA swimming website. [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

**Check-In Events:** Usually the 400 IM, 400/500 Free, 800/1000 Free, and 1500/1650 Free require swimmers to check in. Coaches check in (or scratch) swimmers from these events. The final decision to check in or scratch rests with the coaches. The coaches must adhere to a deadline, typically early during warm-up or a meet session. Once checked in, if a swimmer misses the event, the meet host imposes a penalty (usually disqualifying the swimmer from his/her next event).

**Relays:** Relays are a team effort. Every WEST swimmer should expect to swim a relay. It is extremely important for swimmers to be on time to the meet, as relays are usually swum at the beginning of a meet session. As with individual events and checking in, the coaching staff has the final authority on relay team selection.

**Prelim and Final Events:** Before you leave the pool after prelims, double-check the results to see if you made finals. If you are an alternate, someone ahead of you may scratch. If you are swimming in finals, make sure you know when warm-up begins before you leave. Failure to show up for a final event, results in an athlete being barred from a portion, or the remainder, of the meet (by USA Swimming rule).

**Deck Entries:** Some meets allow swimmers to enter more events than they are pre entered in as long as they don't go over the maximum events for a day. Deck Entries are allowed based on availability and have an additional fee paid at the time of signing up. This comes in handy if you are going to a meet with qualifying times and you don't have very many yet.

**Time Trials:** Some meets offer time trials, typically at the end of a meet session. Time trials are swum for an official time only; there are no places or awards given.

**Results:** Official results will be posted within 30 minutes following the conclusion of an event. The result sheets are usually taped on a wall somewhere near the pool and/or awards table.

**Awards:** Within 30 minutes following the conclusion of an event, the meet host team will have awards for distribution. Typically, a designated table/area will be set up where swimmers/families can pick up awards. Swimmers/families should pick up their awards during each session of each meet. If awards are not picked up by the swimmer/family, the coaching staff and meet host team are not responsible for unclaimed awards. Awards are sometimes given to the coaches via mail or at a future meet.

## **WEST Code of Conduct**

**By registering my child/children for the WEST Express Swim Team, I agree to the following:**

- **I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all swimmers, parents, volunteers, coaches and officials at every swim meet, practice or any other WEST event.**
- **I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of the desire to win.**
- **I will remember that WEST is here for the kids first.**
- **I will do my very best to make this sport fun for my child/children.**
- **I will ask my child to treat other swimmers, parents, coaches, and officials with respect regardless of ability, race, sex or creed.**
- **I promise to make my child's/children's experience with this sport a positive one by volunteering whatever time I can to WEST when needed.**
- **I understand and will support the WEST philosophy with my child.**
- **I will provide my child with emotional support through the good and bad times with mature guidance.**
- **I understand that all children are gifted but not in equal ways, therefore, I cannot compare child to child.**
- **I will provide unconditional love to my child that's not based upon performance.**
- **I will pay attention to see if my child is having fun, learning and improving – as opposed to just winning.**
- **I will support the coaches' philosophy and messages to my child.**
- **I will not coach my child.**
- **I will notify WEST in writing if photos including my child/children cannot be used on the website, brochures or other WEST advertising.**

**Swimmer Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_