



# Team Handbook

# IRVING SWIMMERS

This book was published by the Board of Directors of Irving Swimmers, Inc. in Irving, Texas, Revised October 2011, for the use of the swimmers, parents, coaches, and administrators of the Irving Swimmers, Inc. swim club. No other use of this book is implied or allowed.

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## I. WELCOME TO IRVING SWIMMERS

Irving Swimmers is a non-profit, year-round age group, senior, and masters competitive swimming team. The team competes in local, regional, and national competitions sanctioned by United States of America Swimming, Inc. (USA Swimming), the national governing bodies for youth and adult amateur swimming in this country. The following information pertains to Irving Swimmers Youth Age Group swimming. You will find information on Irving Masters at the end of this document.

### A. Purpose of Irving Swimmers

Irving Swimmers (IS) is a competitive swimming team offering year-round instruction and competition. The main purpose of the team is to conduct training of swimmers and to create an atmosphere in which each athlete may reach his/her potential and achieve the highest level possible in the sport. The training program is designed by professional coaches interested in helping develop successful people as well as successful swimmers.

### B. Philosophy of Irving Swimmers

While winning can be important, the striving, planning and learning that leads to the overall competitive experience is of greater importance. Championships, trophies, medals, and records do not begin to compare with the valuable lessons and personal growth that will take place as a result of participation by both swimmers and their parents. These lessons can be applied to situations that occur throughout life.

Throughout the program the swimmers are taught, with varying emphasis, the importance of striving to instill a positive self-image, goal-setting skills, basic time-management skills, determination, commitment, dedication, and team support. We like our young athletes to learn and mature at their own rate in a positive environment. The long-term interest of each swimmer is kept in mind at all times.

### C. Membership

Membership in Irving Swimmers (IS) is open to all swimmers and families regardless of race, religion or nationality. You do not have to be a resident of the City of Irving. As a member of IS, you will also become a member of USA Swimming, our sanctioned organization. All members of the team must pay an annual fee to USA Swimming regardless of whether or not you attend swim meets. Your USA Swimming membership provides you with insurance coverage during practice, swim meets, all club activities, and travel to and from these events. The USA Swimming registration form must be completed and the fee paid no later than one week after joining the team.

### D. Information Resources

Head Coach	Thomas Radam	972-849-1160
Irving Swimmers Website	<a href="http://www.irvingswimmers.com">www.irvingswimmers.com</a>	
USA Swimming	<a href="http://www.usaswimming.org">www.usaswimming.org</a>	

Irving Swimmers Parent Board of Directors changes annually and can be found on the Irving Swimmers website.

## II. MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### A. Mission

Irving Swimmers (IS) is a competitive swimming team offering year-round instruction and competition. The main mission of the team is to conduct training in the sport of swimming and to create an atmosphere in which each athlete may reach his/her highest potential. The training programs are designed by professional coaches interested in helping develop successful people as well as successful swimmers.

The Irving Masters (IM) is competitive masters swim team offering year-round instruction and competition. The mission is to provide a variety of training regimens to meet the needs of the fitness swimmer to the national competitor.

Irving Swimmers compete in local, regional, and national competition sanctioned by USA Swimming Inc. and by US Masters Swimming.

### B. Goals and Objectives

The primary goal is to provide individuals with the opportunity to develop a positive self-image through appropriate training and competition at all age and ability levels. Employment of qualified coaching professionals helps maintain these objectives.

The overall goal for each swimmer is to learn and improve the swimming and competition skills, continually improve those skills (as evidenced by improved times at each entered meet), and increase physical and mental fitness.

The overall goal for the swimming team is to compete in complete seasons and have lots of fun as swimmers.

Create a positive training environment that promotes high self-esteem, the values of hard work, goal setting, perseverance, self-discipline and dedication.

Provide opportunities to learn good health habits that last a lifetime.

Contribute to the goals of USA Swimming in its efforts to build a broader base of experienced athletes and to develop those who aspire to Olympic events.

Participate in the leadership, direction and administration of USA Swimming on the local, regional, and national level. Coaches and parents fulfill these goals by serving in the administration of North Texas Swimming, Texas Senior Circuit, and USA Swimming national committees.

## III. GENERAL INFORMATION

### A. History

Irving Swimmers was formed in early 1991. The club is operated under the corporate name of Irving Swimmers Inc., a non-profit corporation in the State of Texas, by the Board of Directors, and City of Irving Parks and Recreation Department, providing governmental guidance. Irving Swimmers is co-sponsored by the City of Irving.

## B. Facility

North Lake Aquatic Center is located on the campus of North Lake College, which is most accessible from the MacArthur entrance, but can be reached from the Walnut Hill entrance. The pool is a 50-meter, eight-lane pool with a movable bulkhead to facilitate short course swimming. The pool is owned and operated by three separate entities: The City of Irving Parks and Recreation Department, North Lake College, and Irving Independent School District. The physical address of the pool is 5001 N. MacArthur Boulevard, Irving Texas, 75038.

## C. Governing Body

In addition to the head coach, Irving Swimmers is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of parents and volunteers. Members and officers of the Board are elected each year at the annual meeting. The Board organization is described in the Irving Swimmers, Inc. Bylaws. While members and officers are elected, willingness to serve is largely voluntary.

Head Coach	Coaches the team and manages day-to-day operations
Board President	Manages the affairs of the Board of Directors
Vice President	Assists the President with Board meetings and activities
Treasurer	Manages the financial affairs of the team, collects dues
Secretary	Records the activities of the Board of Directors
Member at Large	Provides additional support; sits on other City of Irving committees
Masters Rep.	Provides input/feedback for the Irving Masters

## D. Board Meetings

The Board of Directors meets once each month at a location on the North Lake campus to carry out team business, plan upcoming events, and monitor committee and volunteer activities for the team. Times and locations for these meetings will be announced ahead of time but are generally the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm. Non-Board parents are always invited to attend these meetings.

## E. Coaching Staff:

### 1. Head Coach: Thomas Radam

Tom Radam, a U.S. Masters All-American, is the head coach for Irving Swimmers. He is a seasoned swimming instructor with extensive competitive coaching and swimming experience providing technical and motivational instruction to swimmers of all ages and skill levels.

Tom began swimming competitively at age 8 with his community's summer swim team. By age 10, he proved himself a versatile swimmer winning both the Butterfly and Individual Medley events at the Northern Virginia Swim League (NVSL) All-Stars. He subsequently started swimming year round with USA Swimming programs where he specialized in the middle distance events. Tom attended Virginia Tech on a swimming scholarship and in his senior year he earned the University's Student-Athlete of the Year Award. In 1999, Tom became U.S. Masters Swimming National Champion in 200 Backstroke and 400 Individual Medley, while swimming with Irving Masters. FINA World Masters has ranked him as high as #2 for his age group. He is the current USMS national Champion in the 25K Open Water Event.

Tom's previous head coaching experience includes three summer league teams - Newington Forest Sharks in Virginia, Woodcroft Whirlwinds in Durham, NC, and Canyon Creek

Barracudas in Richardson, TX. Tom led the Barracudas to their 11th consecutive Dallas Amateur Swimming Association Championship this summer. He also started numerous adult swimming programs in Virginia, North Carolina and Texas and provides private swimming instruction. He's a past President of the Board of Directors for Irving Swimmers in Las Colinas.

Tom holds an MBA from the University of North Carolina and most recently worked at Verizon Communications, where he served as a Senior Project Manager in the marketing organization. Tom lives in Flower Mound with his wife, Diana, and their yellow lab Cosmo (who's an excellent swimmer too!).

2. Assistant Coaches

The Head Coach will hire and draft assistant coaches (with input and vote from the Board of Directors) as required to adequately teach and monitor the younger age-group swimmers. Typically, the Bronze team will be coached by a hired assistant coach for most practice dates, but these swimmers will also be periodically coached by the Head Coach with the rest of the Irving Swimmers team.

## IV. TEAM STRUCTURE

### A. Age Group Practices

<u>Team Group</u>	<u>Practice Days</u>	<u>Practice Times</u>
Pre-competitive	Coming Soon	
Bronze	Tue/Thu/Fri	4: 45p – 6: 00p
Silver	Mon thru Thu (Fri opt) Saturday (encouraged)	4: 30p – 6: 20p 8: 00a – 10: 00a
Senior Development	Mon thru Thu (Fri opt) Saturday (mandatory)	4: 30p – 6: 30p 8: 00a – 10: 00a

All schedules may vary and are subject to change.

### B. Age Group Practice Requirements

All swimmers should arrive for practice 10-minutes early for stretching prior to swimming. Summer schedules are adjusted. If practice is cancelled due to weather, the team will attempt to notify you either by email or phone.

Bronze, Silver, and Masters have no set attendance requirements. Swimmers can come to as many scheduled practices as they want. However, swimmers who want to improve and excel must practice regularly.

Senior Development and Senior team members must meet attendance requirements to retain their places on their perspective teams.

## IV. OBLIGATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

### A. Forms Required at Registration

Each swimmer must provide:

- Completed *Irving Swimmers Registration* form
- Completed *Code-of-Conduct* form
- Completed *Authorization to Consent to Treatment* form
- Copy of front and back of current insurance card
- Copy of Birth Certificate (no originals please)
- Completed *Release of Liability* form
- Completed *USA Swimming registration* form or Transfer form

No swimmer may participate in practices or swim meets without these forms on file.

### B. Monthly Dues

Dues described below are billed and paid monthly. Invoices arrive on the 1st of the month via email and payment must be made by the 10th of the month. Dues submitted after the 10th will be assessed a \$10 late fee. There is no invoice or payment due for the month of August. Payments may be submitted via check or money order. A drop box is located at North Lake Aquatic Center in the Irving Swimmers equipment cage. You may also use your bank's bill payment feature and have payment sent to:

Irving Swimmers, P.O. Box 168173, Irving, TX 75038

Bronze 1 and Bronze 2: \$73/month

Silver: \$85/month

Senior Development: \$97/month

### C. Annual Fee

An annual membership fee per swimmer is due upon registering or renewing membership with Irving Swimmers. The first swimmer in the family is \$100, second swimmer is \$75 and third swimmer is \$50.

### D. USA Swimming Fees

All members of the team must pay an annual fee to USA Swimming regardless of whether you attend swim meets. Your USA Swimming membership provides you with insurance coverage during practice, swim meets, all club activities, and travel to and from these events. The USA Swimming registration form must be completed and the fee paid no later than one week after joining the team.

For 2012:

USA Swimming registration: \$63 per athlete

USA Swimming Transfer within the North Texas LSC: \$5 per athlete

USA Swimming Transfer into North Texas LSC from another LSC: \$10 per athlete

### E. Meet Expenses

Swim meet event entry fees of approximately \$15 and up per meet, depending on the level of competition and number of events entered are the responsibility of the swimmer. Once events are agreed to by the swimmer and are entered with the swim meet host team, the fees will be invoiced

and payment will be expected regardless of whether the swimmer actually attends the meet or swims the events.

Occasional team trip expenses may be required when the team travels to an away meet.

## F. Swimming Equipment

### PRACTICE SWIM SUIT

For practices, a modest one piece suit for girls is acceptable. For boys, a "jammer" style is acceptable. Polyester suits tend to last longer, but have a much different feel than regular lycra or nylon. Your swimmer may need to try several types of suits to determine what type/style works best for him/her.

### COMPETITION SWIM SUIT

A competition suit is recommended but not required. A similar suit in black is acceptable. Ask your coach for recommended brands and styles. The suit should fit very snugly with no sagging (like a second layer of skin).

### TEAM SWIM CAP

A team cap is available for purchase through Irving Swimmers in blue or pink latex or silicone and is optional but strongly recommended. Only the team approved blue or pink swim cap may be worn in competition.

### GOGGLES

Goggles are the responsibility of the swimmer and are highly recommended.

### KICKBOARD

Kickboards can be purchased from a swim store or online, but there are a limited number available in the IS equipment cage.

### SWIM FINS

Swim fins are required for Bronze, Silver and Senior Development teams. Scuba fins are not appropriate for competitive swim practice. Each swimmer should own their own pair of fins, borrowing from the pool stock is time-consuming and delays the start of practice.

### SWIMMER'S SNORKEL

A swimmer's snorkel (specially made for the sport) is recommended for Silver and Senior Development.

### HAND PADDLES

Senior Development and Silver should have their own hand paddles sized for their hands. A limited supply is available for sale in the IS equipment cage. Ask you coach.

### PULL BUOY

Recommended for Silver and Senior Development. Please be sure the pull buoy is sized for your child.

### WATER BOTTLE

We strongly recommend that each swimmer bring a plastic water bottle to every practice. Although your swimmer is in a pool, fresh water will combat dehydration.



#### MESH BAG

Each swimmer should carry their pool equipment in an aerated mesh bag of some sort. Bags designed for this purpose can be purchased at a swim store or online.

#### T-SHIRTS AND OTHER APPAREL

Team t-shirts and other items are available for sale but are not mandatory. Ask your coach.

### G. Fundraising Obligation

To meet Irving Swimmers' financial obligations as a team, fundraising is a vital component of our income. Each year in the spring, IS hosts a Swim-a-Thon where swimmers of every age-group level participate. Each swimmer is required to raise a minimum of \$125 for this event whether they actually participate or not. Receiving pledges from friends and family is generally the way to accomplish this goal. If this goal is not met by each swimmer, the \$125 (or difference between \$125 and what is raised by each swimmer) will be assessed on the next invoice.

### H. Family Volunteer Obligation

Irving Swimmers is a non-profit organization run solely by volunteers. We strive to keep our rates as low as possible and still provide a quality program for our athletes. With this in mind, our volunteers are our life-blood. Each family is expected to provide a minimum of 10 hours of volunteer service to the team throughout the year. A fee of \$10 per hour will be assessed for any volunteer hours not fulfilled by the family, to be invoiced on May 31 or upon notice of deactivation. Opportunities to volunteer include but are not limited to:

**Board of Directors:** These elected positions govern the activities of Irving Swimmers. They meet at least once a month and include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Members-at-Large as needed. Elections by the team parents are held in late November of each year, training for the new positions take place in December and the new board takes over every January 1. Every adult who volunteers on the Board of Directors must become a Non-Athlete member of USA Swimming and complete a Background Check (both paid for by the team) as well as complete a short online training on the subject of Athlete Protection.

**Sponsorship:** These parents search for corporate/business sponsors for the team. They secure product donations or money to directly benefit Irving Swimmers. Help to build a positive relationship with local businesses.

**Publicity:** Individuals who take photos of team members at events and meets, work with city newspapers and websites to promote the team within the City of Irving and the school district. May produce advertising flyers for placement in local media, schools and at North Lake pool. This individual may also produce or research articles and information for the Irving Swimmers website. Puts the best face of IS forward.

**Team Registrar:** This individual works with the Treasurer to make sure that each swimmer and adult member is properly registered with the team and with USA Swimming. The bulk of volunteer work takes place in September/October when USA swimming renewals are due. A class is available through North Texas Swimming to learn how to be a Team Registrar.

**Spirit Wear Coordinator:** Irving Swimmers has several logo items that we keep in stock for purchase by swimmers and their families. The coordinator simply keeps track of the small inventory and works with the Treasurer whenever a sale is made. When stock runs low, the coordinator may order additional items or research new items or new sources.

Fundraising: Anyone with an idea for fundraising is welcome here. Our main fundraiser is the Swim-a-Thon each year, with its own coordinator. If you have an idea for the team to increase its fundraising income, you can earn volunteer hours by seeing it through to completion.

Swim meet volunteers: In any given year, Irving Swimmers may host one or more USA swim meets. There are numerous areas in which to volunteer your time over this three-day event. They include, but are not limited to, officials, meet director, timer, runner, concessions/hospitality coordinator, safety monitor, etc.

Social: Who doesn't love a good party? If you have an idea for an event or party for the team and would like to get it off the ground... bring it on! Parties can take place on the deck of the pool or off-site. Money has been set aside in the IS budget for social events.

## VI. RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. Coaches' Responsibilities

The Coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Irving Swimmers staff is dedicated to providing a program for athletes that will enable them to learn the values of striving to improve themselves. The coaches must be in absolute control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. Coaches have the sole responsibility for stroke instruction and training programs.
2. Coaches make the final decision concerning which meets swimmers will attend. This also applies to events swimmers enter. The coach is solely responsible for selecting members of a relay team.
3. At meets, coaches supervise warm-ups for the team. After each race, coaches offer constructive criticism and motivation regarding swimmers' performances.

### B. Parents' Responsibilities

Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills. When an athlete first joins Irving Swimmers and starts practicing, it is possible he/she will appear to be swimming slower rather than faster. This is likely because of the emphasis on proper technique skills. Remember that this new set of refined habits is the foundation for later improvement.

As training proceeds, muscle development is stressed more. At first the muscles will break down under the increased workload creating more fatigue. This will result in decreased improvement initially. Gradually, the muscles will strengthen and the swimmer's performance will improve.

Every swimmer hits a plateau at one time or another during their career. A plateau signifies that the swimmer has mastered lower-order skills, yet the response isn't automatic enough to leave energies and attention completely free to attach newer, higher-order skills. It's important to explain to the athlete that plateaus occur in every physical level of learning. The more successful swimmers are those who work through this momentary delay and go on to achieve greater personal performances in the long run.

Athletes who are under 11 years old are the most inconsistent swimmers. This can be frustrating for the swimmers, coaches and parents. They may perform great at one meet and look like they have never been coached five minutes later. We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport. Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early

age is normal and is probably more desirable than precocious or forced early development. Everyone is taught how to compete and develop some competitive spirit.

With all of the above in mind, the parents' role is one of support in many ways:

1. Inasmuch as it is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance, it is the parents' responsibility to supply support, recognition and encouragement necessary to help the athlete feel good about their progress.
2. If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, contact the coach and schedule a meeting before or after practice. Criticizing the coach in front of the swimmers undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach trust and support necessary for maximum success. (If a parent has a problem and wishes to talk to someone other than the coach, please feel free to contact an executive parent board member.)
3. No parent should behave in such a way that will bring discredit to the child, another child, the team, or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with an official during a swim meet should be brought to the coach's attention and handled only by the coach.
4. The communication between the coach and the swimmer is crucial. A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice. It is imperative that coaches have the swimmer's full attention at these times. If the child is concerned about pleasing a parent during the practice, then his full attention will not be on swimming. Therefore, parents are required to remain in the bleacher area. Do not go to the side of the pool and interrupt any swimmer or coach during practice.
5. Parents' attitudes and behaviors regarding their outlook on the sport have an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, no one can win all the time. There will always be some disappointments. Every youngster can gain from his experience whether he ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time. The goal is not only to produce great swimmers, but also to produce great young people who swim.
6. At least twice per week, check the email address you have supplied to Irving Swimmers. Meet information, newsletters, and announcements may be emailed to all members or members of specific teams. Make it a habit to visit the team website as well.

### C. Swimmers' Responsibilities

1. Arrive ten minutes before the scheduled start of practice to stretch and begin on time.
2. Sign in at the front desk on the North Lake Pool sheet and on the Irving Swimmers attendance sheet.
3. Be properly attired when arriving at the pool and have proper equipment ready to use. Proper attire includes modest (one piece) practice suit of any brand or style. Equipment includes goggles, swim fins, specialized swimmer's snorkel, pull buoy, filled water bottles and one or two towels. It is very strongly recommended that the swimmer's name be placed on all items, as they can then be returned to the swimmer directly. If no name is visible, items will be placed in the lost and found outside the North Lake pool office.
4. Plan to stay the entire practice. The last few minutes of practice are very often the most important as reminders and announcements are made at this time. (It is not necessary for parents to stay at practice, but swimmers should be picked up promptly when their practice time is over.)
5. Swimmers should notify the coaching staff if they will be away from practice for an extended period of time.
6. Check the team area (cage) at least twice a week as well as the email address you have supplied to Irving Swimmers. Meet information, newsletters, and announcements may be displayed in the IS equipment cage or emailed to all members or members of specific teams. Make it a habit to visit the team website as well.

7. Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at practice as well as in competition. Working together as a unit for the benefit of the team is an important part of the "IS SPIRIT".
8. All swimmers are expected to follow the oral direction of the coaching staff. At no time will disrespectful attitudes be tolerated from any swimmer.
9. Abusive language, lying, stealing, and vandalism are not acceptable. These behaviors are detrimental enough to the group to warrant strict disciplinary action. Such action may range from "time out" to dismissal from the team.
10. There should be no inappropriate physical contact between swimmers or between swimmers and coaches during practices, meets or any other IS event, regardless of the personal relationship of those involved.
11. Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach's permission and then must remain within the swim center's confines until accompanied by a parent or authorized guardian.
12. Irving Swimmers' practice equipment used at any practice is to be stacked neatly in the appropriate place at the end of each practice. The deck area is to be left clean.
13. Swimmers are expected to follow the North Lake Aquatic Center rules at all times.

#### D. City of Irving and North Lake College Posted Pool Rules and Policies

1. No gum or beverages in glass containers are permitted in the natatorium.
2. No smoking or tobacco use permitted in the natatorium.
3. No horseplay, towel snapping, running, throwing equipment, etc.
4. Neither the natatorium staff, Irving Swimmers coaching staff nor the City of Irving are held responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.
5. No person is allowed in the pool or weight training area unless a staff member is present.
6. No chairs, bags, or patrons are to block the doors entering or exiting the pool area at any time. These are emergency exits and must be kept clear at all times.
7. Please place bags and equipment on bleachers.
8. Help keep our team healthy by not swimming when you are sick (fever, rash, vomiting, and diarrhea). Germs are easily transmitted in the warm, moist climate of a pool.
9. No extra children, siblings or friends are allowed in the pool during any practice time. If they must attend with you, they will be required to sit and stay in designated area under the supervision of a parent or guardian.
10. The pool occasionally shuts down for various reasons. Lightning in the area will require swimmers to leave the pool and pool deck and may not return within one half hour from the last lightning strike.
11. Body fluids (such as vomit or fecal matter) will force the pool to be closed for at least one hour as North Lake pool staff cleans and super chlorinates the area.
12. Participants must sign-in upon entering the facility at the front desk everyday. This includes coaches, parents, extra siblings, etc.
13. Aquatic staff will not allow access to the pool when an instructor or coach is not present. Parents must verify that appropriate personnel are present to receive your child before you leave your child at the pool.

## VII. IRVING SWIMMERS TEAM STANDARDS

### A. Pre-Competitive

This level will be offered soon. Must have completed the Level 4 Red Cross swimming lessons.

### B. Bronze

Swim 25 yards unassisted, using freestyle and backstroke.  
Be familiar with breaststroke and butterfly..

### C. Silver

Swim 50 yards of all four strokes with correct turns.  
Commit to four practices per week (Saturday optional)..

### D. Senior Development

Must have USA "BB" times and/or over age 12  
Demonstrate four strokes for 50 yards and proper turns and dive-start for each stroke.  
Perform practice sets of:  
-10x100 yards freestyle in 2:00 minutes  
-8x200 yards any stroke or IM in 5:00 minutes  
-1650 yards for time  
Use all training equipment and participate in dry-land training exercises.Pre-Competitive

## VIII. GROUP LEVEL CHANGES FOR IRVING SWIMMERS

It is the coach's observation of a swimmer's performance that determines when he/she should be moved to another level. Swimmers can be moved up to a higher level or down to a lower level, depending on how the swimmer meets the Team Standards.

The Head Coach, in consultation with Assistant Coaches, will make the final determination of the proper training level of each swimmer. The Head Coach has the final responsibility for this decision. If a change to a higher level is warranted, the head Coach will recommend to the swimmer's parents the level change. Realizing that level changes require adjustments to a family's life schedule, the parents may elect or decline the Head Coach's recommendation.

### A. Ability to train

The primary consideration is the ability to consistently swim times and intervals in all aspects of a swim (strokes, kicks, pulls, turns, and dives).The swimmer must demonstrate that he/she will be able to handle the extra training load of the next practice group before promotion. This is important not only for the success of the swimmer, but for his self-image as well, and for the acceptance by the other swimmers in the new level.

### B. Attendance

Past attendance record is reviewed. The swimmer's ability and desire to handle increased training requirements is considered, as well as his/her willingness to handle extra training responsibilities.

## C. Attitude

Coaches evaluate a swimmer's demonstrated attitude during regular practice sessions, noting whether he/she is able to handle every day stresses, adversity, fatigue, and minor setbacks. Does he/she seem to enjoy practice? If not, it is doubtful that the extra workload of the new level will be appropriate.

## D. Competition Level

This is the least important category to consider. It can happen that a swimmer in a lower level can beat a swimmer in a higher level in swim meets, but the practice groups are designed for training, not meets, and the swimmer's performance in practice takes precedence. However, how the swimmer performs and behaves at swim meets is important and this will be considered as one of the factors in determining whether a swimmer is ready to advance.

# IX. SWIM MEET INFORMATION

## A. Swim Meet General Information

Swim meets are important for training to be a swimmer. Competition is the vehicle that tests the training regimen of a swimmer, which determines how effective the training is. Competing against other swimmers from other teams with diverse skills and speeds shows a swimmer how they stand against a set of standards, judged by consistent standards of USA Swimming. Each swim event both teaches the swimmer how they perform the standard skills of swimming, but provides extra motivation by giving the swimmer something for which to reach. Swim meets provide opportunities for coaches to evaluate swimmers in the best of circumstances and one-on-one chances for the coach to teach the swimmer exact skills immediately after a race.

Each Irving Swimmer should plan to attend as many USA Swimming and alternate-format swim meets as he/she can. Swim meets are part of the work of an Irving Swimmer. Parents should also endeavor to attend these swim meets, if possible. This not only provides an opportunity for a parent to evaluate the swim program for their child, but also provides opportunity for the parent to praise their child for their successes and encourage them after a disappointing performance. No parent should attempt to coach their own child. Allow the Coach to teach the swimmer. Any parent who has difficulty with attending, or paying for, a swim meet should discuss this with the Head Coach.

Irving Swimmers has a policy to celebrate wins, ribbons, medals, and successes for swimmers who win a heat or event at a swim meet, but the team's main goal is to teach swimmers and to improve their swimming skills. This is best achieved by encouraging swimmers to beat their previous swim times every time they swim an event. Parents should encourage and praise their swimmers for this goal and let the wins and losses occur naturally. Under no circumstance should parents discipline or denigrate their children for not winning a heat or event. This is the worst kind of motivation for young children. In all things, be positive. Kids should learn that meets are fun.

## B. Meet Policies

1. You must have a current USA swimming membership in order to swim in USA swimming competitions.
2. We strongly encourage our swimmers to participate in every meet for their classification ("A", "BB", "B", "C") that the Head Coach has placed in the IS Meet Schedule.

3. An average of one meet every four weeks has proven to be most effective in a swimmer's development.
4. Coaches have the final word regarding which meets and events a swimmer is permitted to enter. Swimmers should not enter or scratch an event without consulting the coach.
5. We require a team suit and a team cap in competition for all swimmers attending swim meets. If the price of a team suit is a problem for a parent, discuss this with the coach. Arrangements can be made for this.
6. Swimmers are required to have their USA Swimming ID card at all swim meets.
7. For non pre-seeded meets, swimmers must check in for each and every event for each session of the meet. Check-in is the *sole* responsibility of the *swimmer*! If a swimmer is planning on late-entry at a meet, they must bring a paper copy of their time(s) from the USA SWIMS database ([www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)). (See also, "check-in" and "deck seeding" in this handbook's glossary.

### C. Entry Guidelines

1. Meet information (dates, times, locations, and scheduled events) will be emailed to families and can also be found on the Irving Swimmers website prior to the meet. Parents will be notified of the deadline in which to respond as to the swimmer's availability for each session of the meet and will receive specific instructions for each meet. If you miss the response deadline, your swimmer will not be entered in the meet. Soon, all meet declarations will be done through this website. More information to come.
2. Meet entries are based on the parent's response as to the swimmer's availability for the meet. Meet fees will be charged on the family's invoice accordingly. Fees must be paid whether the swimmer actually attends the meet or swims every event entered.
3. If you miss the deadline to sign up for a meet, your swimmer may still attend and attempt to swim as a "late entry". You must arrive before the scheduled warm-up. Late entry fees are generally 3 times the cost of a regular entry.
4. You should always plan to take the following equipment and supplies to every swim meet (more if it is a winter meet): team suit, cap, goggles, towels, over-clothing, light and nutritious snacks (no candy or gum), water/sport drinks.

### D. Expected Meet Behavior

1. Transportation to and from meets is generally the responsibility of the individual. Car pools are often a good idea and the team will occasionally charter a bus or rent a van for a travel meet. If transportation to a meet is an issue for a parent, discuss this with the coach. Alternate transportation may be possible.
2. Guardians should keep an eye on non-athlete siblings at swim meets. Be sure they follow facility rules and do not distract the swimmers of any team at the meet. Parents are fully responsible for the safety of their non-athlete children. Other adults and swim meet officials will not be monitoring younger kids around a pool at a meet and, if they observe the child creating distractions with the swim events, could ask that they be removed from the pool environment. NO younger siblings are allowed on the pool deck during swim events.
3. As a matter of USA Swimming policy, only registered athletes, coaches and officials are permitted on the pool deck (walking area immediately around water, and sometimes the pool-level floor of a facility with bleachers).
4. All questions concerning a meet result, officiating call, or conduct of the meet, should be asked of the Irving Swimmers coaching staff. They will pursue the matter through proper channels. No parent is allowed to challenge meet officials directly, unless an emergency situation is imminent.

5. After each session of a meet, the team area should be left neat and clean, especially at another team's pool.
6. For travel meets, parents are responsible for arranging transportation and lodging with the exception of Junior or Senior National and All-Star competitions. This transportation could include a team bus or might include a car pool of other traveling parents. Discuss travel arrangements with the coach as far in advance of these away-meets as possible.
7. Parents are encouraged to attend out-of-town meets with their swimmers and chaperone their teammates. This is one way for parents to satisfy their volunteer requirements for the year.
8. A medical release and emergency telephone number should be given to the parent or driver with whom your swimmer is riding in the event medical treatment is required. This is critical for distant swim meets where the parent is not attending.

## X. AGE GROUPS IN USA SWIMMING

### A. Classified Age Group Program

The USA Swimming organization classifies age groups according to the following criteria: 8 & under, 9-10, 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16; 17-18, 15+. Age on the first day of a meet governs a swimmer's age for the entire meet.

Junior age group is for swimmers age 18 and under. Senior age group includes any USA Swimming registered swimmer, regardless of age, who meets the qualifying time standard for a given event.

USA Swimming establishes classification time standards each year to define ability levels (C, B, BB, A, AA, AAA, AAAA) within each age group. In order to compete in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification. This permits fair, challenging competition on all levels. In some cases a swimmer will be in a different class in each stroke (i.e. "C" breaststroke and "B" freestyle).

Meets may combine classification to allow swimmers to compete in a complete event schedule. For example, there may be a "B/C" meet in which the swimmer above would compete in the "C" breaststroke event and the "B" freestyle event. To allow a complete event schedule for the swimmers, if any swimmer has achieved any three "BB" times, they may swim in a "BB" only meet. For example, a swimmer with three "BB" times (i.e. 50 and 100 freestyle, and 50 backstroke), and the rest "B" times, may compete in any "BB" events in a "BB" meet.

### B. Swim Meet Classifications

#### A/B/C Championships

North Texas Championship is held for each classification, "A", "B", "C". In some seasons two of these may be combined.

#### TAGS (Texas Age group State Championships)

At the end of each season (short course and long course), a state championship meet is held. Qualifying times for TAGS are established each fall at the Texas Swimming Association (TSA) Meeting. The times are determined by the average 24th place time for the previous three years in each event. These times are usually between the national "AA" and "AAA" time standards. TAGS prove to be an exciting climax to the season for qualified age group swimmers.



#### North vs. South All-Star Dual Meet

Started in 1974, the state was divided by clubs into North and South teams. A qualifying meet for 11-12, 13-14, 15-16 and 17-18 boys and girls is held with a "get-together" following the meet.

#### Zone Championships

The United States is divided into five zones for age-group swimming. We compete in the Southern Zone encompassing Florida, Texas, Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama, North and South Carolinas. Swimmers qualify for the zone team each summer at a designated meet. Previous Junior National swimmers are not eligible for zone competition.

#### Texas Senior Circuit

Senior Circuit meets are held throughout the state. These meets are held for high school and college age swimmers trying to achieve Jr. and Sr. National time standards. A championship meet is held twice a year. There are separate qualifying times (11% off Sr. National times) to compete in the Senior Circuit.

#### USA Swimming Junior Nationals West

This is one of the highest levels of competition for our senior swimmers. Swimmers meeting the time standards travel to various sites in the U.S. to compete against America's fastest swimmers, age 18 and younger. There is an East and West meet conducted simultaneously on opposite sides of the Mississippi River.

#### Phillips 66/Senior National Championships

This is the highest level of competition for our senior swimmers. By their performances at these meets, swimmers often qualify for the United States teams that engage in international competitions, including the World Championships, Pan-American Games, Pan-Pacific games, and Olympic Games.

## XI. GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING

**BACKSTROKE FLAGS.** Flag string placed 5 yards (short course) or 5 meters (long course) from the end of the pool. They enable backstroke swimmers to execute a backstroke turn and finish more efficiently by counting their strokes, using the overhead flags as guides.

**BLOCK.** The starting platform, from which swimmers dive into the pool in some races.

**BULKHEAD.** Movable wall used to divide 50 yard/meter pools into 25 yard/meter pools.

**CHECK-IN.** Process of confirming a pre-entered swimmer is present and participating in an event. This must be done at least 30 minutes prior to the start of each event and is usually done when first entering the pool area at the beginning of a meet session.

**CIRCLE SWIMMING.** Performed by staying to the right side of a lane so that a large number of swimmers may use a single lane.

**CLERK-OF-COURSE.** Person in-charge of the ready bench and responsible for checking swimmers in and seeding each event.

**DECK.** Area surrounding a swimming pool immediately next to the water.

**DECK SEEDING.** A procedure of assigning swimmers to appropriate heats and lanes immediately before each event at the ready bench.

**MEET DIRECTOR.** Host team's main administrative official when hosting, a sanctioned swim meet, who directs all the officials and volunteers in hosting a swim meet and who, in concert with the meet referee, ensures a swim meet is run according to the rules and procedures of USA Swimming and the LSC.

**DISQUALIFIED (DQ).** Occurs when a swimmer's performance does not adhere to the rules for the event. The swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the time be used as an official time. The most likely causes are when the swimmer fails to touch the walls properly, make the correct turnarounds, or swim the correct strokes for the particular stroke.

**DRILL.** An exercise involving a portion of part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

**FALSE START.** An illegal act whereby the swimmer starts or moves prior to the starting signal. This results in disqualification in higher level races, but with younger ages, the starter often restarts the race with all swimmers.

**FINAL.** The championship heat of an event in which the top six or eight swimmers from the preliminaries compete to determine final placement order and top finishers. Often, during age group meets, final placement of swimmers in all heats is determined by the times of each swimmer, compared with all others in that event.

**HEAT.** The grouping of swimmers within an event when the number of swimmers is larger than the number of pool lanes. Swimmers are grouped according to their seed times, so that comparable-time swimmers will swim against each other within a heat. Swimmers' times in all the heats of a particular event (stroke, distance, age, sex) are grouped together to determine the final winners of the event.

**HEAT SHEET.** Listing of all swimmers by event numbers, heats, and seed times. These are available at the beginning of meets and provide a guide for swimmers, coaches, and parents.

**JUNIOR NATIONALS.** National meet for 18-year olds (and younger) held twice each year.

**LATE ENTRY.** Policy of accepting entries on the day of the meet. Late entry fees are usually double the regular entry fees.

**LONG COURSE (LCY or LCM).** A pool 50 meters in length. USS conducts most of its summer competition in long course, as does international and Olympic events.

**LSC.** Abbreviation for Local Swim Committee, the governing body for swimming on a local level under the auspices of USA Swimming and the regional swimming organization (e.g. North Texas Swim).

**PRELIMINARIES.** In certain meets, qualifying rounds are held for each event to determine the finalists.

**READY BENCH.** An area at the meet where swimmers report before their event to be arranged into heat and lane assignments. This is especially true for 8-year old and under events, where the swimmers meet at the bench and are escorted out to their lanes by adults.

**REFEREE.** The official who has authority over all the other officials at a meet and who makes the final decisions about all swimming-related matters.

**RELAY.** An event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time. Each swimmer swims a leg (e.g. 100 yards in a 400 yard race) or one stroke (e.g. IM races that require all four swimming strokes).

**SCRATCH.** Withdraw from an event in a competition.

**SEED TIME.** The performance time a swimmer uses to enter a meet, which determines the swimmer's heat and lane assignments in each event. These times also determine which swim meets a swimmer may enter (See section IX-F of this book for details).

**SHORT COURSE (SCY or SCM).** Pool of 25-yards or 25-meters in length where swim meets are held. Most USS winter competitions, college, and high school events are held in short course pools.

**SPLIT.** A swimmer's intermediate time in a race, such as the time for 100 yards in a 400 yard race.

**STREAMLINE.** Swimmer's body 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 as it can be and therefore flows smoothly through the water, creating faster times.

**STROKE-AND-TURN JUDGE.** Official who determines the legality of a swimmer's strokes and turns during a swim meet event. It is their duty to disqualify those who do not conform to the rules by reporting the infractions they see to the referee.

**TAGS.** Abbreviation for Texas Age Group Swimming Championships, which is the state meet for age group swimmers.

**TIME TRIAL.** A time-only swim event, which is not part of a regular meet.

**TOUCH PAD.** Part of the electronic timing system (Colorado Timing System) that rests in the water at the finishing-end of each swimming lane. Swimmer's split and end times are automatically recorded when the pad is touched. This system is backed-up by timers, who also record the race time with stop watches, in case the timing system times are either missing or too far off from the stop watches.

**USS.** Abbreviation for United States Swimming, the national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States.

**WARM-UP/WARM-DOWN.** Low intensity swimming used by a swimmer prior to and after a main practice or at a meet to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase/decrease heart rate and respiration.

## XII. IRVING MASTERS

### A. Purpose of Irving Masters

Irving Masters is an adult program (age 19 and over) designed to train the recreational, fitness-minded, competitive and triathlete swimmer. A professional coach provides training workouts specifically designed for the adult swimmer and their goals.

### B. Membership

Membership in Irving Masters requires filling out a team registration form (found at [www.irvingswimmers.com](http://www.irvingswimmers.com)) and completing a USMS registration through the USMS website. Proof of USMS registration must be provided before beginning practices with Irving Masters. An annual pass to North Lake Aquatic Center may be required, please ask your coach. Monthly dues for Irving Masters is \$60. Payments should be made to Irving Swimmers and mailed to P.O. Box 168173, Irving TX, 75038.

### C. Practices

Irving Masters holds practice at North Lake Aquatic Center on the campus of North Lake College, Building "S". Times may vary seasonal but are generally 6:30am to 8:00am.

### D. Board Representation

Irving Swimmers and Irving Masters are both governed by a Board of Directors voted on by members annually. We strive to always have a Masters representative on the Board, but it is not a requirement of our Bylaws. Active participation by a Masters member is always welcome.