

Gold River Stingray Team Handbook

The Gold River Stingrays Swim Team Handbook has been prepared in order to provide general information to the swimmers and their parents about the team, its philosophy, organization, practices and meets with other clubs.

The club is a member of the Northern California Swim League and, to the extent that the policies set forth in this handbook conflict with the bylaws or rules of the league, the league bylaws and rules shall prevail. Contact the board of directors if you want to review a copy of these bylaws and rules. The Gold River Swim Team board of directors has established bylaws. Similarly, any rules of the Gold River Racquet Club shall supersede the Policies set forth in the handbook in the event of a conflict.

If you have questions about the contents of the handbook, please contact a member of the board of directors.

TEAM PHILOSOPHY

The operation of all aspects of the team shall be conducted with the following elements in mind, in order of importance:

- Recreation and physical fitness
- Sportsmanship and team spirit
- Competition

REGISTRATION

In the spring of each year, the registration of the swimmers will be conducted at the club. Watch the club newsletter and the swim team bulletin board for dates. At registration, each family must:

- Pay the swim team fee.
- Complete registration forms.
- Supply a copy of each swimmer's birth date verification that the team can keep (unless one is already on file with the team).
- Sign up for at least one parents' committee.

SWIMMER ELIGIBILITY

Each swimmer must:

- Be a club member throughout the season.
- Not swim for another club during the season except as provided in the league rules.
- Not be older than eighteen (18) years of age on June 15 of the current season.
- Not participate on a USS swim team after January 31 of the current season.
- Be proficient in the water, as determined by the coaches.
- Not participate in any organized swim practice (other than stroke and turn lessons, or a high school team, or as provided in the league rules) before April 1 of the current season.

SWIMMERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Each swimmer shall:

- Always maintain a cooperative and positive attitude.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship and appropriate behavior at all times. (The failure to do so will result in discipline, which may include dismissal from practice, ejection from a meet, a phone call to the parents, etc.)
- Attend practices regularly.
- Check in on the attendance sheet at each practice.
- Be on time to practices and meets.
- Participate at meets as designated by the coaches.
- Signing out of meets that the swimmer cannot attend (1 week minimum sign out deadline) is required for all swimmers and all circumstances.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Each parent is responsible for:

- Providing a supportive attitude.
- Setting an example of good sportsmanship.
- Helping his or her children fulfill their responsibilities.
- Working as a volunteer on one or more committees.
- Sending a note to the coaches if a swimmer is to be excused from practice for an extended time.

EQUIPMENT

The team's colors are black and gold. Each year, the team selects the design of the suit for the season (we may use the same design for more than one year). Although it is possible to wear the prior season's suit, you will usually find out that they do not last more than one season. Each swimmer must have a team cap, goggles and fins.

Other clothing and swimming articles are optional. For example, we have team t-shirts and sweat suits available.

Put your name on all of your clothing, equipment, towels, sleeping bags, etc.

If you lose equipment at a meet, check the club lost and found as soon as possible after the meet .

Black Vs. Gold Meet -TIME TRIALS

Each season, time trials are held at the club for all of the swimmers on the team. The swimmers will be split into two teams and will compete against each other. Each swimmer will race in all individual events and also one relay. Check the season's calendar for the date.

The purpose of the time trials is to get a beginning of the season time, in each stroke, for each swimmer. Times received at Time Trials are important as we watch each swimmer's progress during the year and it also serves as a time that can be used for entries in the championships meet if needed.

Every swimmer on the team is expected to swim at the time trials. If you have a conflict on the day of time trials, you may come for only part of the morning, unlike regular swim meets when you must attend the entire meet.

PRACTICES

Practices begin in April each season (check the team calendar for the exact date) and continue Monday through Friday until the season ends. Each season, the team issues a practice schedule with the practice times for each age group.

Each swimmer should arrive at practice at least five (5) *minutes* before the scheduled practice time and wait in the area designated by the coaches. Swimmers should not enter the water before their scheduled practice time and must not remain in the pool after their scheduled time ends except according to club rules. **The coaches are not responsible for children in the water after their practice ends.**

Parents are welcome to observe practice from the deck, but the coaches cannot be interrupted during practice. Any questions or concerns for the coaches should be written and put into the coaches' box at the club front desk. Then the coaches will contact the parent at a time other than at practice.

SWIM MEETS

This portion of the handbook describes the events leading up to each swim meet and the sequence of events at each meet.

The Schedule

Each season, the team establishes a schedule for the league meets, the non-league meets, and the league championships meet.

Most meets occur on Saturday mornings, although some meets may be scheduled on weekday evenings.

"Dual meets" (meets with one other team) generally last about five and one-half (5-1/2) hours from the arrival time until the meet ends. The league championships run all day Saturday and Sunday of one weekend at the end of swim season.

A schedule is distributed to each family at the beginning of each season. It can be found on the team web site, www.goldriverstingrays.org and it is posted on the team bulletin board.

The Events

There are three types of events at each meet:

- Individual events that involve races for each stroke (where only that stroke is used):

Freestyle (or crawl or "free")

Backstroke

Breaststroke

Butterfly (or "fly")

- Individual medley ("IM") events where each swimmer swims each of the four strokes during the event in the following order: fly, back, breast, free
- Relays (four (4) swimmers per relay team) of two types:

Freestyle relays where each swimmer swims freestyle

Medley relays where each swimmer swims a different stroke in this order: back, breast, fly, free

Boys and girls compete separately in the following age groups, as determined by their age June 15:

- 6 and under
- 7 and 8
- 9 and 10
- 11 and 12
- 13 and 14
- 15 to 18

The events are organized by age group and stroke. Although there are some variations, generally all the events for a particular stroke are conducted in one block of events. Then, all the events for the next stroke are conducted. Not every age group swims every event.

Entries

A list of events and swimmers will be posted on the swim team bulletin board prior to each swim meet.

- Swimmers: Check the bulletin board to see if you are swimming in the meet and which strokes!
- Parents: Assist younger swimmers in checking the board!

Once the list is posted, changes may be made in the set up of the meet due to circumstances such as swimmer illness, family problems, etc.

Every swimmer/parent should check the posted list for every meet.

Occasionally a parent thinks that the swimmer has signed out, or the child thinks that the parent has signed out, and does not check the posted list. Then, when they do not show up at the meet, much confusion results and the swimmer may be penalized (see below).

Our entries are subject to league rules as to how many times a swimmer may swim. For example, in dual meets, a swimmer may swim no more than three (3) individual events and two (2) relay events. There are also league rules as to how many swimmers a club may enter in an event and the number of heats for each event.

Because our club is large and we do not want to have a swimmer attend a meet where he or she will swim only one event, the coaches may not always schedule a swimmer to swim in every meet. However, the coaches will strive to give each of the swimmers in each age group the opportunity to swim approximately the same number of events during the season as the other swimmers in the age group.

Signing Out

Any swimmer who cannot attend a meet **MUST SIGN OUT IN THE TEAM "SIGN OUT" BOOK AT LEAST SEVEN (7) DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE MEET (EXCEPT THE SIGN OUT DEADLINE FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS WHICH WILL BE DETERMINED EACH SEASON IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHAMPIONSHIP MEET SCHEDULE).**

A swimmer who fails to sign out as required and then fails to appear at the meet will be subject to sanction. A swimmer who does not show up at a meet (and who was not signed out) will not be allowed to swim at the next meet that he or she would have swum otherwise.

The Parents' Jobs

The parents' jobs at each of the meets will be scheduled by the chairperson(s) of each committee and will be posted on the swim team bulletin board, along with swimmers events. Each parent **MUST:**

- Check the bulletin board before each meet to confirm your assignment for the meet.
- Find a replacement if you cannot attend. Also, note your replacement's name on the assignment sheet in place of your name and let your committee chairperson know.

What To Bring To A Meet

Each swimmer should make sure that he or she has the proper equipment for each meet:

- Team Suit, team cap and goggles
- At least two towels
- Warm clothes for cold days and evening meets
- A sleeping bag is handy for something to rest on and for warmth
- Snacks if desired - make them healthy!

Check In/Out

Each swimmer should arrive at home meets no later than 7:15 a.m. and at away meets no later than 7:30 a.m. and:

- Find our team's area (each team has an area)
- Check in with Coaches at the Check in table and also with your age group parent
- Check the events list for last minute changes

- Find a place to keep your things
- Stay in the team area except for warm ups and actually swimming an event
- Conduct yourself appropriately in the team area (no horseplay)
- Swimmers must check out with their age group parent before leaving the meet (leaving early will be considered an emergency).

Any swimmer who has not checked in by at least 7: 15 a.m. for home meets or by 7:30 a.m. for away meets will be scratched from the meet (not allowed to swim) and will also not be allowed to swim at the next meet that he or she would have swum otherwise.

Each parent worker should arrive at the meet and check in immediately with their committee chairperson to confirm their duties and then remain near the pool deck and team area for the beginning of the meet.

Warm Ups

Each team has a set period of time before each meet to warm up. Pay attention to the coaches for warm up times and instructions. When you are asked to clear the pool, do so promptly. After warm ups, the team will have a brief meeting and then the meet will begin.

The Meet Itself

When the meet begins, pay attention to the announcements that tell you what events are being swum. When one of your events is called, report immediately to your age group parent who will take you to the ready bench and remain there until it is time to go to the blocks. At the ready bench area:

- Swimmers are checked in before each event
- Lane assignments are reviewed
- Relay swimmers are placed in the proper order
- Swimmers go to the starting blocks where they will start their event
- Age group parents help younger swimmers get to the starting blocks

Once at the starting blocks, pay attention to the starter as the starter is in charge from that point forward. The starter will give the command for the swimmers to get on the blocks, then to take their mark, and then swim at the sound of the gun or the beep of the electric starter.

After the swimmer swims the event, the swimmer should exit the pool quickly and return to the team area to await his or her next event. |

All swimmers are expected to remain at the meet until it is over. Do not leave the meet just because you have finished swimming - this is a team sport! Many times swimmers are needed to fill out relays.

At the end of the meet, we need to clean up our team area and, once it is clean, we may leave the pool area.

Disqualifications

Each of the four strokes has rules governing the proper way that the stroke is to be done, including the start, the stroke itself, turns at the end of the lanes, and the final touch. Coaches will instruct the swimmers on how to start and the proper techniques for each of the strokes. A written description of each stroke is contained in the USS Rules and Regulations book (although the league may adopt slight variations from the USS rules). The team web site has a link to the current USS Rules and Regulations. Contact the parent directors if you want to review these rules.

Swimmers who false start or who use illegal stroke or turn techniques will be disqualified as follows:

- Swimmers in age groups 6 and under, 7 - 8, and 9 - 10 are allowed one (1) false start. If the swimmer has a second false start, the swimmer will be disqualified and not permitted to swim that event.
- The officials are more lenient with stroke and turn violations with the younger swimmers.
- Swimmers age 11 and up are permitted no false starts.

Ribbons

Ribbons are given to every swimmer who has not been disqualified. Swimmers and parents should not go to the scoring table during the meet for ribbons. A team parent will be responsible for distributing ribbons to the

swimmers at the first practice following the meet (weeknight meets may take an extra day).

General Deck Rules

Throughout the meet, all swimmers and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner:

- No excessively loud cheering or obnoxious behavior
- No obstruction of the orderly conduct of the meet
- No bad language
- No clowning during races or at the starting blocks
- No rowdy behavior in the team areas (for example, no chasing each other around or wrestling)

Certain sections of the pool area are restricted as to access. For example, there must be an alley on each side of the pool for the stroke and turn judges, and there must be as much room as possible in the ready bench and timers areas. Unless you are authorized to be in such areas, please keep out.

The following are strictly prohibited in the pool area:

- Smoking
- Alcoholic beverages
- Glass containers
- Profanity or abusive language

The meet referee has the authority to eject any person from the pool area who is not abiding by these rules.

Swimmers are to stay in the team area and tell their age group parent if they are leaving for a snack or to go to the rest room. Swimmers are not allowed in the spa during the meets.

SWIM TEAM PERSONNEL

The following is a brief description of each of the key jobs that must be done in order for the swim team to be a success and to make each season a fun, rewarding experience for each swimmer. More detailed job descriptions of many of the positions are available from the parent directors for your review.

The Coaches

The coaches are employees of the club and report to the club manager. In the absence of the club manager, the coaches shall report to the swim team board members.

There shall be at least two (2) coaches, and more may be required depending upon the size of the team. Coaches are to attend all practices and meets, and such other functions as the club manager designates.

The coaches shall understand and accept the philosophy of the team and the league. They shall provide examples of leadership, cooperation and good sportsmanship to the team members. The coaches shall attempt to foster these qualities in the swimmers.

The coaches shall provide active supervision of all swimmers at all practices and meets. The coaches have the authority to discipline swimmers who are disrupting practice or who are not conducting themselves properly at a meet. They shall familiarize themselves with each swimmer's abilities and instruct each swimmer so that the swimmer learns the proper techniques for each stroke, starts, turns, and touches. The team intends that the techniques of each swimmer and his or her times will improve over the course of each season.

The coaches shall schedule swimmers for the meets in a manner that is consistent with the philosophy expressed in this handbook and the league rules.

The coaches shall cooperate with the parent directors and other parents who are responsible for the successful operation of the team.

Board Of Directors

The board of directors have the overall responsibility for the support that the parents need to provide for the successful operation of the team. They determine the parent committees that are needed each season, select committee heads, participate in committee meetings as needed, conduct parent meetings, and generally supervise the operation of the team other than those responsibilities specifically within the purview of the coaches.

The boards of directors act as the liaison between the parents and the club manager. The parent directors have supervisory authority over the coaches in the absence of the club manager.

Meet Director

The meet director is responsible for overseeing the proceedings of each meet with respect to proper staffing, equipment and supplies, and the preparation of the pool site for the meet. The meet director is to ensure that each parent does his or her job.

Meet Referee

The meet referee is responsible for the proper conduct of each meet. The meet referee has jurisdiction of all swimmers, coaches, officials and spectators at the meet. The meet referee resolves all disputes that arise concerning the conduct of the meet.

Starters

The starters are members of the starters committee. The head starter shall be the head of the committee and shall report to the meet referee. The starters are responsible for starting each event and for maintaining the starting equipment in good working order. Starters must be familiar with the proper way to start each event and for actions that require disqualification.

Stroke and Turn Judges

The stroke and turn judges are members of the stroke and turn committee. The head stroke and turn judge shall be the head of the committee and shall report to the meet referee. The stroke and turn judges are responsible for

disqualifying swimmers who use illegal strokes, turns or touches or who leave early in relays; The stroke and turn judges must be familiar with the proper technique for each stroke and must attend a stroke and turn clinic at the beginning of each season.

Timers

The timers are members of the timers committee. The head timer shall be the head of the committee and shall report to the meet referee. The timers are responsible for timing each event. The team must supply nine (9) timers for each meet. The head timer is responsible for maintaining the club's stopwatches in good working order, having them at each meet, and collecting them after the meet.

Ribbons Committee

The ribbon writers are responsible for labeling each ribbon given to swimmers for each event at the dual and championship meets. They are also responsible for filing the swimmer's ribbons in their family mailbox. A minimum of two ribbon's people are required for home meets and one for away meets.

Announcers

The announcers are responsible for all announcements at home meets including calling swimmers to the ready bench, calling swimmers to the blocks and announcing the score of the meets. The announcer is responsible for maintaining the announcing equipment in good working order.

Ready Bench

The ready bench coordinators are members of the clerk of the course committee. One member shall serve as the clerk of the course for the team and shall report to the meet director. The ready bench coordinators organize the swimmers at the ready bench so that swimmers are in the correct lanes at the proper times for their events.

Age Group Parents

The age group parents are also members of the clerk of the course committee. One member shall serve as the head of the committee and shall report to the clerk of the course. The age group parents are responsible for the swimmers in the assigned age group in the team area at each meet and for getting the swimmers to the ready bench.

Set-Up/Take-Down Parents

The set-up/take-down parents are members of the set-up/take-down committee. One member shall serve as the head of the committee and shall report to the meet director. The set -up/take- down committee is responsible for setting up the pool for all home meets and putting all the equipment away after each home meet. The committee is also responsible for overseeing out team area at the championship meet.

Hospitality Parents

The meet hospitality parents report to the meet director and are responsible for serving hot and cold drinks to meet workers. The team/social hospitality parents work cooperatively with the parent directors on social events and activities for the team members and their families throughout the swim season.

Computer Committee

The computer committee shall report to the meet director and shall work with the parent directors and coaches during the season. They will be responsible for inputting the swimmers times into the computer prior to each meet and for any inputting required during the meet.

Lane Writers/Runners

The lane writer committee reports to the meet directors. At the meets, they are responsible for recording the times given to them by the timers. The team may be required to provide at least three lane writers for each meet.

THE LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP MEET

The league championships meet is held at the end of each season on a Saturday and Sunday at the end of the season. All the teams in the league compete. The location varies from year to year.

In order for a swimmer to compete, the swimmer must:

- Have swum in at least one (1) event in each of two (2) league meets during the season, and

- Have at least one (1) time in each event that the swimmer wants to swim in the championships meet.

There are no qualifying times for freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke or butterfly. Any swimmer who meets the above qualifications may enter these events. However, there may be qualifying times for the individual medley ("IM") and the long freestyle ("long free") events. If so, the qualifying times will be posted on the team bulletin board each year.

The championships meet operates in the same manner as the regular season meets except:

- There is no limit on the number of events that a swimmer can swim;
- All swimmers swim qualifying heats;
- The fastest swimmers swim in the finals to determine the winner of each event;
- If a swimmer qualifies for the finals and fails to swim without the permission of the meet referee, the swimmer shall be barred from the rest of the championships meet; and

Parents will be requested to work various jobs at the championships meet. The jobs for which each team is responsible are decided by the league each season and given to the clubs. Then, the team will notify the parents. Some of the jobs for the regular season continue through the championships meet and other parents maybe requested to perform other jobs. Although the league championships do consume an entire weekend, the meets are exciting and a lot of fun for all involved. The team encourages all swimmers and parents to participate.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The team generally has certain social events throughout the year. Typically, these consist of:

- A family BBQ following the Black Vs. Gold Meet(Time trials)
- An end of the year ceremony to celebrate the end of the season and distribute awards

Other events may also be scheduled for the whole team or different age groups. Everyone is encouraged to participate in these functions so we all get to know each other better.

COMMUNICATIONS

One of the key elements to successful team is the effective communication of ideas and information throughout the year. This process requires the cooperation of all swimmers, parents, coaches, and the club staff.

In order to facilitate communications, the swim team has a bulletin board located in the club. All announcements will be posted on the swim team bulletin board. Each swimmer or parent should check the swim team bulletin board on a regular basis for new information, particularly regarding our schedule, swimming assignments, and parent work assignments.

A team web site has been created to assist with communication. You will find meet schedules, list of events, maps to away meets, pictures of past events and more.

Also, each family has a "mail box" on deck at each practice. Please encourage your swimmers (or yourself) to check his/her mailbox each day for important information. This is our best way to communicate information for our swimmers and their families so it is critical that it is checked regularly.

In addition, the board of directors and the coaches each have a box at the front desk at the club where messages may be left.

Finally, all swimmers and parents are expected to be familiar with, and to observe, the rules of the club concerning conduct while on the club's premises.