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**Parent Handbook**

**2015-2016**

**Mission Statement:**

The Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team provides every athlete the opportunity to succeed in the rewarding sport of swimming. Achievement through hard work, success through dedication, and personal growth through teamwork constitute the core of the program. An engaged Parents Association combined with the strength of commitment from our coaching staff sets the foundation. This historic program builds upon this tradition by finding and nurturing the finest qualities in sportsmanship and citizenship within our swimmers.

**Vision Statement**

 The Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team’s vision is to work in helping families in Bethel Park and its surrounding communities live happy and healthy lifestyles by promoting the benefits of swimming. From work ethic to self-discipline, these lessons will help children grow into successful adults, athletes and model community members.

**2015-16 Swim Year**

Dear Parent,

Welcome to Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team (BPR), a competitive and developmental swim team with a successful history and a bright future. We strive to offer a complete program for all ages and abilities—from young, developing swimmers to athletes with the talent and commitment to achieve success at increasingly competitive levels.

Our team competes in local, regional, and national competitions sanctioned by USA Swimming, Inc., the national governing body for amateur swimming in the United States. Our regional governing organization is Allegheny Mountain Swimming.

The New Parent Handbook will help introduce you to BPR and answer questions you may have about competitive swimming. The New Parent meeting will be held to provide more detail about Hawks swimming, describe the benefits and responsibilities of membership in our Parent Association, and answer any other questions you may have. We also provide an FAQ section on the [www.bprswim.org](http://www.bprswim.org) website.

Looking forward to a great swimming season,

Bethel Park Hawks Coaching Staff

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# BPR Mission, Vision, and Goals

#### Mission Statement:

The Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team provides every athlete the opportunity to succeed in the rewarding sport of swimming. Achievement through hard work, success through dedication, and personal growth through teamwork constitute the core of the program. An engaged Parents Association combined with the strength of commitment from our coaching staff sets the foundation. This historic program builds upon this tradition by finding and nurturing the finest qualities in sportsmanship and citizenship within our swimmers.

#### Vision Statement

 The Bethel Park Recreation Swim Team’s vision is to work in helping families in Bethel Park and its surrounding communities live happy and healthy lifestyles by promoting the benefits of swimming. From work ethic to self-discipline, these lessons will help children grow into successful adults, athletes and model community members.

#### Goals

1. To nurture the whole child at every age and, realizing that each one is different, allow young people to develop as far as their dreams, talents, and efforts take them.

1. To teach young people the process of achieving. To encourage them to dream, help them set worthy goals, promote a strong work ethic, provide support when they struggle, and inspire them to persevere until they succeed.

1. To provide a level of coaching that will lead to the development of world-class swimmers, should they so aspire, while at the same time allowing beginning swimmers to develop character, self-confidence, and the love for the sport in an atmosphere of caring and consideration.

1. To encourage parents to actively support both their child and the program as a whole, realizing that their personal investment is a key ingredient to a young person’s success in any endeavor.

1. To provide the community and the swimming world with young people who are becoming the best they can be—as individuals, students, citizens, and athletes.

# Practice Expectations

The levels of competitive swimming at BPR include Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Masters. Swimmers of appropriate age and skill may also swim for the Senior high school team. A developmental team (Bethel Park Sharks) is offered during the summer months.

Swimmers are placed in groups based on age, skill, experience, and proficiency as evaluated by their coaches.

## Goals and Objectives for Beginning Levels

The main objective for beginning levels at BPR is for swimmers to develop the skills needed to progress through the age group and senior programs.

BPR’s goals for beginning levels are the following:

* Swimmers should enjoy swimming and have fun.
* Swimmers should want to come to practice.
* Swimmers should show consistent improvement in their stroke technique.
* Swimmers should experience an environment of discipline, where respecting coaches and following directions are expected.
* Swimmers should make friends with teammates and learn what being part of a team is all about.

Note: Stroke technique is the primary focus for these groups. Swimmers with good technique will get faster as they grow and mature. Swimmers without good technique will have more difficulty improving their speed as they get older.

## Practice Behavior

1. Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at practices as well as during competition. Working together is an important part of the “BPR Spirit.”
2. BPR swimmers are expected at all times to follow the verbal directions of the coaching staff. At no time will disrespectful attitudes be tolerated.
3. Abusive language, lying, stealing, or vandalism will not be tolerated.
4. Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach’s permission.
5. Swimmers are expected to follow the rules and regulations of all facilities used.
6. Swimmers are expected to follow the practice etiquette established by the group coach. This enables practices to run smoothly and safely.

## Practice Schedule

The practice calendar for all groups is available on the BPR website

(www.bprswim.org). If you need a copy, please ask your swimmer’s coach.

Swimmers in the following groups not only are encouraged to participate in other sports and activities, but also are given a flexible schedule of practice times to choose from. Note: The practice schedule for these groups typically offers more practices than swimmers are recommended to attend.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Bronze** | Six practices are offered each week.Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least three practices per week. |
| **Silver** | Six practices are offered each week.Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least four practices per week. |
| **Gold** | Six practices are offered each week.Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least five practices per week. |
| **Senior** | Eight practices are offered each week.Swimmers are encouraged to attend all eight practices per week. |

## Practice Schedule Changes

At times, there will be practice schedule changes. Please check the BPR website (www.bprswim.org) regularly to determine if there are any changes. The calendar is updated regularly, with additional changes included in the weekly News & Notes blast from Coach Kutrufis.

## Inclement Weather

Whenever there is bad weather that causes a change in the practice schedule or a swim meet, information will be available on the BPR website and also will be sent by e-blasts. Be sure to check your email for updates.

If the Bethel Park School District is closed, then the facility is closed. That announcement is displayed on the BPSD front page ([www.bpsd.org](http://www.bpsd.org)) and on the websites and screen scrolls for KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI.

## Practice Equipment

All levels should come to practice prepared with a swim cap, goggles, swim suit, towel, and water bottle.

Additional practice equipment is provided. However, the coaching staff strongly recommends personal equipment bags for swimmers. They come in handy when traveling to meets or different practice locations. Having an equipment bag guarantees your child has the right size and type of equipment for each practice.

If a swimmer wishes to use personal equipment, a list follows of suggested gear for the different age groups.

Should a swimmer bring his or her individual equipment to practice, please make sure all pieces are clearly labeled with the appropriate name to avoid confusion.

**All levels should carry equipment in a mesh bag, also marked with a name.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bronze & Silver | * Long fins
* Kickboard
* Pull buoy
 |
| Gold | All gear listed above, plus:* Front mount snorkel
* Paddles
 |
| Senior | All gear listed above, plus:* Short fins
* Old sneakers
* Foam roller (carried separately from mesh bag)
 |

## Facility Use Policy

#### Bethel Park High School

**BPR is fortunate to be able to use the high school pool for our competitive program and some activities/functions that relate to BPR. Coaches, swimmers, and parents are to follow the procedures listed below.**

**Drop off/Pick up**

Parents: If you do not stay at the facility during your child’s practice time, please arrive for pickup no later than 15 minutes following practice.

**Practice**

1. Parents: You are welcome to watch practice from the gallery located above the pool deck.
2. Parents: You and other BPR family members must stay in the gallery to watch practice. Younger children should be closely supervised as a courtesy to others and for their own safety. Other sports using the main gym may close their practices from observation; please be courteous and honor these requests.
3. Parents and Swimmers: Please keep food or drinks (other than the water bottle for training) out of the pool area or locker rooms.
4. Swimmers: Be sure to leave the pool area and the locker rooms as you found them. Be sure to turn off the showers, pick up after yourself, pick up trash, and don’t leave locks on the lockers.

# The Parent’s Role in the BPR Program

## Open Lines of Communication

Communication is critical to a successful experience in the BPR program. If at any time you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact your child’s coach via the information listed on the Coaches tab of the BPR website.

General questions about the program can be directed to any member of the staff. However, if your questions are specific to your swimmer, then it is best to communicate directly with your swimmer’s coach.

When you have a specific question or concern regarding your swimmer, go directly to your swimmer’s coach. Most questions are answered quickly at this level.

If you need additional help, please consult Dave Kutrufis, the Head Coach. If your question or concern relates to anything not specific to your swimmer, you may also contact a member of the BPR Parents’ Association Board.

## Avenues of Communication

In order to keep our membership well informed, we have developed several avenues to communicate information. Please make every effort to take advantage of the following:

**BPR Website:** www.bprswim.org

**News & Notes:** During the swim seasons, information is communicated weekly from Coach Kutrufis via e-blasts. This is an excellent resource for current information and changes.

**Parent Meetings:** A New Parent Orientation meeting is held each year prior to the beginning of the short-course season. The BPR Parents’ Association also holds bi-annual meetings once in September, in the Large Group Instruction room of the high school, and once in April during the post-season banquet. In addition to information about meets and volunteer signups, these meetings are used to disseminate and vote on Parent Association business and changes in club policies.

**SPLASH:** A newsletter published by USA Swimming, Inc. is mailed as a benefit to each registered member of USA Swimming. The newsletter includes a variety of articles and information about every level of competitive swimming.

**Websites:** The following websites are helpful for information.

* BPR: www.bprswim.org
* Allegheny Mountain Swimming: www.amswim.org
* USA Swimming: www.usaswimming.org

## Supporting Your Swimmer

It is the coach’s job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer’s performance. It is the parent’s role to provide love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help a young athlete feel positive about him/herself. Be the person that your swimmer can look to for constant, positive reinforcement.

Strive to provide your swimmer with the basic opportunities s/he needs to have a positive swimming experience. Make sure your swimmer regularly attends practice and swim meets.

A parent’s attitude often dictates those of the swimmer. A swimmer might not be consciously aware of what is taking place, while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about a parent’s desires and feelings. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your swimmer to practices, helping at swim meets, and participating in team activities. Please don’t look at these functions as chores.

Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of skill presentation. Some swimmers take more time to learn; this requires patience on the part of the coach and the parent, both of whom must remember that the swimmer’s ultimate swimming potential may be as great or greater than that of a faster learner.

Avoid comparing the skill, courage, determination, attitude, performance, or improvement of your swimmer to other swimmers. Swimmers mature physiologically and psychologically at different ages; the weakest swimmer in a practice group this year could be leading practices in the future.

The etymology of the word “competition” goes back to the Latin words “com” and “petere,” which mean “together to strive.” It is important to teach young swimmers to compete with, not against others, and to use competition to help them strive to be their own best self.

## Guidelines for Watching Practice

Parents are encouraged to watch practice from time to time. Here are some important guidelines when observing practice.

First, young swimmers want parental approval more than anything in the world. For swimmers to learn as much as possible during practice, it is imperative that coaches have each swimmer’s undivided attention. Please do not communicate with your swimmer during practice and do not compete with the coach for your swimmer’s attention.

Second, we insist that parents do not interrupt the coaches on deck while they are coaching. If you need to communicate with a coach, please do so before or after practice (if they are not coaching another group).

Third, our coaches spend a considerable amount of time planning weekly training sessions for each of their practice groups. Every training set or instructional drill has a purpose. One practice and/or practice set often builds on another during each week. If you have not watched all of the practice sessions, you may not understand the purpose of what the swimmers are doing on any given day.

Finally, please do not try and coach or advise your swimmer based on what you see (or think you don’t see) him/her do during practice. Many times when teaching stroke skills, coaches ask their swimmers to do things that may not look correct or actually might be illegal during competition. However, the drills have an important purpose in teaching skills. Swimming a one-arm butterfly stroke or using a flutter kick with breaststroke are examples of drills with a specific purpose.

To reiterate, please stay off the pool deck during practices, and do not attempt to coach your swimmer based on what you observe at practice.

Parents should watch practice from pool gallery, which is accessible from the main gym, close to the Athletic Entrance to the high school.

Note: Please make sure siblings at the practice are safe, courteous, and well-behaved. Also, please make sure the area is clean before leaving.

## Supporting the BPR Program

**Important: Know and understand the BPR philosophy.** Keep in mind that we champion a long-term approach regarding each swimmer’s participation in the program.

**Strive to stay informed**. This is crucial. Read the newsletter, check the website, watch practice periodically, and communicate with the coach. Indirect involvement with the program sends a powerful message to your swimmer regarding your interest in his/her activity.

**Remember: Involved Parents = A Successful Program!** Volunteers are needed in nearly every aspect of the BPR program. Your gift of time is a great way to have fun, make new friends, and contribute to your swimmer’s team.

**Always complete meet entry forms and other requested information on time and in full.**

**Use our open lines of communication.** When you have a specific question or concern regarding your swimmer, go directly to your swimmer’s coach. Most questions are answered quickly at this level.

If you need additional help, please consult the Head Coach. If you feel that your question has not been answered satisfactorily, please consult the President of the club.

## Why Should You Volunteer to Help Your Swim Team?

(*reprint from USA Swimming Website*)

The simplest reason why you should help is also the most powerful. You should help because your child benefits greatly from the program. The second reason is that most clubs cannot function without substantial volunteer help. The economics are not there for a full professional staff to do all the things that need doing.

Look at the finances of youth sports for a moment. Count up the hours that are available for your child to participate in your program. Divide your monthly fee by those hours, and you will come out with substantially less than you pay your baby sitter. Now imagine if you had to pay for all you get from your team. Teams can’t do it without your help. Add to that the fact that few clubs have all full time coaches so you can recognize the need for parental involvement.

In most volunteer organizations, including swim teams, a very few people do a tremendous amount of work that benefits everyone. This is a bad deal for everyone. That person sooner or later burns out, leaving a big hole to fill. Meanwhile, that individual holds a great deal of power in the club, perhaps too much power.

If you find your lawn uncut, the dishes three days deep in the sink, your cat starving on the porch and you have just driven home from the team practice forgetting half of the carpool, you may be over committed. The club needs a little bit of time from everyone, a little more from some and on an occasion, a great deal from a few.

*-- Adapted from “News for Swim Parent”, published by the ASCA*

# BPR Parent Volunteers

BPR hosts two or three meets each year. We work diligently to make sure our meets start on time, end on time, results are posted in a timely manner, and delays are kept to a minimum. In order to continue our tradition of hosting well-run, well-staffed meets, we depend on our parents to fill the many meet positions each year.

## Meet Volunteer Questions

**Who?** Meets are staffed entirely by volunteers from the BPR Parent Association, with the exception of officials. Membership in the BPR Parent Association carries a volunteer commitment to fully support our athletes at home-hosted meets, as well as to remain in good standing with the association. There are volunteer positions to fill both on- and off-deck.

While some officials are affiliated with BPR, if there are not enough to fully assess the meet, we rely on officials from other clubs. All officials are cleared to work closely with children in the state of Pennsylvania. We encourage interested parents to take the training and testing associated with becoming an official. As a club, we are required to provide a certain number of officials to oversee meets. Without officials, our ability to host meets is inhibited, which eliminates our main source of revenue that funds the club.

**What?** We need all families to volunteer at home meets to make these meets successful. The number of sessions required will vary from year to year depending on the meets we are awarded, the number of sessions those meets will entail, and the number of families involved in BPR.

We also require Ways and Means donations from each family for each meet. Ways and Means donations provide the concession stand with food, drinks, and supplies. It also stocks the lunch tables so that the coaches from every team and officials spending all day working the meet can take time to eat between sessions.

All information regarding meet dates, the number of sessions required, and signups for both Ways and Means and volunteer positions will be provided at the September Parents’ Meeting.

**When?** BPR families’ requirements are met by working at BPR hosted meets from October to March.

**Where?** BPR hosts meets at Bethel Park High School.

# BPR Group Placement Philosophy

Group placement is based on many factors and a fair amount of coaching instinct. However, there is a big picture, team-wide philosophy that drives group placement decisions. The BPR program has a plan that we follow for athlete progression. We hope that communicating these ideas will allow for a better understanding of the coaches decisions in determining group placements.

Some of the most important factors driving group placement are the following:

* Commitment (practice attendance, meet participation, priority of the sport)
* Maturity (chronological age, physiological age, and emotional development)
* Training ability and technique.

Racing times are not a primary factor for group placement, although they may be an indirect factor as racing times translate to meet qualification and training needs.

The swimmer’s group placement determines a floor, not a ceiling. Each group has different standards for membership (the floor), but does not have upper limits of achievement (the ceiling). In no way does group placement communicate the coaches’ belief about a swimmer’s potential.

A swimmer’s group is not meant to be a predictor of future success, nor an indicator of his/her worth to the team or to the coaches. First and last, we view swimmers as outstanding young people, and the more we can do to remove inaccurate status labels from groups, the better.

Finding the appropriate group for each swimmer is the goal, and doing so is our challenge. As the swimmers grow physically and emotionally (often rapidly), their needs change. The more we think and talk in terms of appropriate group placement and the changing needs of swimmers, the healthier our team culture will be.

Also, we understand that group moves are not a small change in your lives as parents. Group moves often change schedules, which potentially affects other activities, car pools, team dues, coaches, and expectations. But just like going from middle school to high school, or from one level of math to the next, these moves can be looked upon as necessary steps along the way.

One final note on the athlete-coach relationship: at BPR we believe that teaching each swimmer to take ownership of the sport is critical to self-development and success. A major part of that ownership is having a relationship with his/her coach that is built on trust and open communication. A swimmer’s face-to-face conversation with his or her coach can go a long way toward answering any questions a swimmer may have. As a parent, you play a major role in helping to develop this relationship by providing background information to the coach about your child, including medical conditions and past experiences which may be useful in knowing more about your child.

# Year-Round Swimming

## Short-Course and Long-Course

Every year is divided into two swimming seasons—short course and long course. Each swimmer at BPR is registered with USA Swimming and allowed to participate in both swimming seasons. The BPR coaching staff encourages all swimmers to continue swimming through both seasons.

The **short course season** usually runs from early September through March. A series of championship meets for all ages and levels of swimmers is conducted from late February through March. These competitions are held in 25-yard pools.

The **long course season** typically runs from April through early August. These competitions are held in 50-meter pools. We strongly encourage our swimmers to swim during the long course season for their long-term development.

The United States is the only country in the world to swim in 25-yard pools.

Swimming in 50-meter pools is the best opportunity to compare our swimmers to the world. All world records are given in meters, and international competitions, such as the Olympics, are conducted in long-course pools.

**Swimmers in the Sharks program** (our seasonal developmental team) will continue to compete in short course pools from June through July.

Practices are offered throughout the entire year—from the start date of the short course season (at the end of August or early September) until the end of the long course season (end of July or early August).

## Questions Regarding Swimming During the Summer at BPR

1. **My swimmer wants to swim with the neighborhood team this summer. What is the best way to have him/her involved with both BPR and summer league?**

The coaching staff encourages summer league swimming.

As swimmers progress through the BPR program, they need to attend as many of the BPR practices as possible.

1. **Why is it important for my young swimmer to continue with BPR through the summer?**

The BPR program is a year-round swim team and is progressive in nature. Swimming during the summer helps young swimmers continue to build on the skills they have worked so hard to obtain from September to May. In addition to technique, swimmers continue to build their aerobic/conditioning base during the summer months.

1. **Can my swimmer get anything out of his/her summer league practices?**

Summer league coaches have a tough job. They usually are working with large numbers of kids who are very diverse in ability and experience. The coach has to teach to the norm of the group, which is behind where your swimmer is since s/he has been swimming for the past nine months. Remember, the majority of the neighborhood swimmers have not been swimming since last August.

1. **How do we compare our swimmer’s times from short course to long course?**

It is best not to try to compare or convert times from short course to long course. Each swimmer is different, and many factors play a part in the difference between a short-course and a long-course time—factors such as the type of stroke, speed of turns, and level of conditioning. Typically, the long-course times will be slower than short-course times because 50 meters is longer than 50 yards.

For entering meets, if your swimmer is a ‘BB’ swimmer in one course, s/he will be a ‘BB’ swimmer in the other course. Senior swimmers who are considered Senior Circuit – Short Course are qualified for Senior Circuit – Long Course.

1. **What advantages does my swimmer get from swimming long course?**

Whether your swimmer is practicing in a 25-yard pool or a 50-meter pool, the coaches are working on two important factors. The first factor is teaching the swimmers to stretch out their strokes and concentrate on “distance-per-stroke.” The other factor is working on conditioning and building a strong aerobic base. Both factors are important skills for the long-term development of your swimmer.

During the summer, older swimmers have more time to train. We encourage them to take advantage of every opportunity possible to swim and improve.

The BPR program is progressive, and we view your swimmer’s development as a “swimming career.” Each skill we teach is meant to build on what was taught earlier in the season in order to help your swimmer reach his/her long-term potential in swimming.

1. **How many long-course meets should we try to attend?**

There are not many opportunities for long-course meets. Try to take advantage of each meet that your swimmer is qualified to attend. Since the strategy for long-course races is different than short-course races, it takes time and practice to learn how to swim a race using long-course strategies.

1. **When does the summer practice schedule go into effect?**

The summer schedule is available in the spring. The start date varies based on when the swimmers get out of school for the summer.

1. **Do you have any other advice for us regarding the long-course season?**

We encourage families to take vacation after the championship meets. If your swimmer has worked hard all year, for them to take full advantage of their hard training, it is best not to interrupt their season with a week off. Also, older swimmers have more opportunities to train since they are out of school and have more time and fewer pressures. Long-course practices not only will help them now, but also are important for their long-term swimming development.

Lastly, the best advice we can give you is the following: if you have any questions about the best schedule for your swimmer at this point in his/her swimming, please speak with your swimmer’s coach.

# BPR Competition

## The BPR Philosophy of Competition

In preparing for your swimmer’s meets, the following are some basic fundamentals of competition that BPR coaches stress.

1. Each swimmer should compete with him/herself. It is more beneficial to improve one’s time and/or technique than to win a ribbon or medal.
2. In addition to earning best times, the coaches praise swimmers for working on technique and/or racing strategies. Please note that it is possible that a swimmer won’t improve his/her time when s/he tries something new (e.g., flip turns, technique, etc.). However, if a swimmer continues to try a new skill or technique, s/he will improve more in the long run.
3. The swimmers are taught to set realistic goals, and as they get older, they are taught to relate performance in practice to their goals times.
4. The coaching staff encourages age-group swimmers to swim every event they are eligible for. This helps to promote versatility since swimmers are continuously switching best events as they grow, mature, and change body shapes and sizes.
5. Sportsmanship is a MUST at BPR. We expect all swimmers, parents, and coaches to respect the officials, competitors, and the facilities we use. We also want swimmers to encourage and support their teammates.
6. It is important that each swimmer has a copy of his/her times. Keeping these times in a logbook helps the swimmer to see the progress s/he has made throughout the season and also from year to year.
7. SUCCESS = Improving one’s own, best self.

## How to Enter Swim Meets

The BPR meet schedule is posted on the website (www.bprswim.org).

Meet schedules can sometimes be confusing to determine which particular meets swimmers are eligible to swim. Please direct any questions concerning the meet schedule and your swimmer’s eligibility to your swimmer’s coach.

Scheduled meets are not required, but are encouraged. The meets are a fun time for swimmers, as well as a way to measure their improvement. Meets also give swimmers a strong incentive to attend practice.

BPR families receive meet information via the weekly News & Notes e-mail as well as on the bprswim.org website. Every meet announcement includes the following:

* Meet format
* Order of events
* Location
* Warm-up and starting times
* Eligibility guidelines

**NOTE: Coaches will select the events each BPR team member will swim at a meet. Swimmers will ONLY be entered for a meet if their commitment to attend has been entered into TeamUnify by the entry deadline.**

**The process to indicate whether your swimmer will or will not participate in the meet is as follows:**

1. Sign-in to your TeamUnify account.
2. On the front page of the website, you will see a list of Swim Meets.
3. Click on the **Edit Commitment** button located next to the meet name. This will bring up the Athlete Signup page.
4. Your swimmer’s name will be shown in the lower left hand corner of the working pane. It is active as a link. Click on your swimmer’s name.
5. You are now on the Athlete Event Signup page. Under the Signup Record title, there is a list of options including “Yes, sign up <athlete name> for this event” and “No thanks, <athlete name> will NOT attend this event.” Select the appropriate indication.
6. If “Yes” was selected, you will now see a section to indicate which **Days/Sessions** of the swim meet your athlete would like to participate in. Click on the selection(s) that match the sessions your swimmer wants to attend.
7. There is a **Notes** section on this page. You may use this section to indicate any notes that the coach should consider when assigning your swimmer’s events, including whether or not they would be open to participating in a relay, should the coach decide to enter a team.
8. Once you have completed either the intent to attend or decline, click on the **Save Changes** button in the lower right hand corner.
9. The coaches will review which athletes will be attending each meet once the commitment deadline has passed and will assign the swimmers to their events. Once the entry is completed, your swimmer’s account on TeamUnify will show which events have been assigned.

Once the deadline has past, you will NOT be able to un-commit your swimmer. At this time the entries are processed.

**Please be aware that once meet entries are sent to the meet host, the swimmer’s entry fees have been paid. It is too late to get the fees refunded.**

Thank you in advance for adhering to the meet entry deadlines.

## Everything You Wanted to Know About Swim Meets

Swim meets are a great experience for both team building and individual athlete development! Listed below are in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as detailed and specific as possible.

**Swim Meet Procedures**

1. The week before the meet, check the entries for your swimmer on TeamUnify. If there are any problems with your swimmer’s entries, let your swimmer’s coach know as soon as possible.

1. Arrive at the pool at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time, and locate the BPR team area where all team members sit. The meet warm-up time is listed in the meet information, as well as on the BPR website (www.bprswim.org).

1. Obtain a heat sheet, and check to see if your swimmer is properly entered in all events. If there is a mistake, discuss it with your swimmer’s coach so corrective action can be taken if appropriate.

1. Warm-ups are always conducted by the BPR coaching staff. **It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.** Swimmers’ bodies are just like cars on a cold day—they need to get the engine going and warmed-up before they can go all out in a race.

1. All BPR swimmers are required to wear the BPR team cap during both warm-ups and actual competitions. The coaches strongly encourage all swimmers to wear the team t-shirt as part of their gear when attending meets. We offer a team suit and other gear through our vendor, which is not required. Wearing the team uniform promotes team unity and pride.
2. Each swimmer is responsible for knowing which events s/he is swimming and for being on time to swim his/her event. It is customary to write event numbers, heat and lane assignments on a swimmer’s hand, arm, or leg. Swimmers usually carry a permanent marker with them in their bags for this purpose.

1. At the conclusion of each race, the swimmer should ask the lane timers for the stopwatch time. Younger swimmers are expected to go immediately to their coach. Older swimmers should warm down first, if possible, and then see their coach. The coach discusses the race with each swimmer individually and gives positive comments concerning splits, stroke technique, and race strategy.

1. Electronic timing is used at most meets. Generally, the official time is the one recorded in the computer when the swimmer touches the touch pad. This time appears on the scoreboard. However, if a swimmer misses the touch pad, or if there is a mechanical failure, various back-up times may be used. The timing and score keeping personnel analyze all times to determine the official times, which are then posted as final results.

1. **NOTE: According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed in the immediate competition venue unless they are serving in an official capacity.** Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet should be referred to the BPR coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

1. In between races, swimmers are asked to rest and stay warm. All energy should be stored up and used in competition. If swimmers must eat, a light, nutritious snack is recommended.

1. It is very important that parents and/or swimmers check with the coaching staff prior to leaving the swim meet, making certain that their swimmer has not been placed on a relay.

## What to Bring to a Meet

***Note: Be sure to put your swimmer’s name on all belongings and equipment!***

1. Team swimsuit
2. Team swim cap (and a black cap for backup)
3. 2 pairs of goggles
4. BPR team t-shirt
5. 2 towels minimum
6. Old blanket or sleeping bag
7. Quiet games or books
8. Food—nutritious snacks
9. Water bottle

Once you and your swimmer have attended one or two meets, this will become routine.

Please do not hesitate to ask any veteran parent on the team for help or for information.

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! They get to visit with friends, play games, and meet swimmers from other teams. Swimmers get to race and see how much they have improved from all the work they have put into practice.

## Competition Apparel

BPR swimmers are not required to wear the BPR team suit during meets attended by BPR, but it is encouraged.

If swimmers wear a cap, they should wear the black BPR cap provided. A plain black cap should be substituted if the team cap is damaged or has not yet been provided.

Swimmers are expected to wear the assigned BPR t-shirt for each session of a swim meet. All other BPR apparel is optional.

**Note: Be sure to put your swimmer’s name on all belongings and equipment!**

## Meet Entry Fees

Like last year, TeamUnify will handle all meet fees online. Meet fees will be posted to your account on the first of the month. This can only be done by credit card.

#  CODE OF CONDUCT

In addition to the Allegheny Mountain Swimming Code of Conduct that each family is required to sign and submit to the coaching staff annually, there are some additional expectations to which BPR athletes and their families must comply.

**General Swim Meet Policies**

1. No Swimmer, 18 years of age or younger, shall attend a meet unless accompanied by a parent or a Chaperone arranged for by the Swimmer’s parent/guardian. Swimmers, 19 years of age or older, may travel alone to an away swim meet, but must receive approval from the Coaching Staff.

1. No Swimmer shall drive to or from away swim meets unless accompanied by a parent or Chaperone. Swimmers, 19 years of age or older, may drive themselves to or from a meet, but may not be accompanied by younger Swimmers, including siblings.

1. Meet warm-up times are to be strictly adhered to by all team members.

1. Team members must check with their coach prior to leaving a meet. Should it become necessary for a Swimmer to leave a meet early, his/her Coach must be notified.

1. Swimmers are expected to meet with their Coach before and after each of their events.

1. In “prelim & final” meets, all Swimmers who qualify to compete in the finals are expected to participate in the finals. All team members are strongly encouraged to return to the finals sessions to support the team and take advantage of the opportunity to learn from watching the finals. At times, alternate and relay positions open up that need to be filled.

1. All team members are expected to follow the team uniform policy (t-shirts and caps). Be proud to wear your black and orange! Your personal appearance shall be neat and appropriate at all times.

1. Swimmers are expected to sit with the team at meets.

1. Team members and parents are expected to display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, meet administrators, and fellow competitors.

1. As a matter of team pride and courtesy to the meet host, swimmers are expected to leave the BPR team area in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion at each session of the meet.
2. All questions Swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the BPR Coaching Staff only. Our Coaches, in turn, will pursue the matter through appropriate channels.

1. In accordance with USA Swimming policy, parents are expected to remain in the spectator area and off the immediate competitive deck unless they are working the meet in an official capacity.

1. No “deck” changes are permitted. Swimmers are expected to use available changing facilities.

1. Athletes, Coaches, Parents, Chaperones and Team Managers are to refrain from any immoral, inappropriate, or unacceptable behavior such as abusive or inappropriate action toward another person.

# Competitive Swimming 101

**USA Swimming**

USA Swimming is the national governing body for the sport of swimming. Participants in the BPR year-round competitive swim programs must be members of this organization. Membership, which is renewed in the fall of each year, provides limited, co-benefit accident and liability insurance for swimmers participating in supervised workouts and swim meets.

**Allegheny Mountain Swimming**

Allegheny Mountain Swimming is a member of USA Swimming and is the Local Swim Committee (LSC) that governs our geographic area.

**Time Standards**

Time standards, which are listed in the appendix, and age determine the type of meet in which a swimmer may participate.

Age group standards are in the following (from slower to faster):

B, BB, A, AA, AAA, AAAA, and NRT (National Reportable Time).

In addition, there are specific time standards for the Championship Meets.

**Year-Round Swimming**

Year-Round Swimming is divided into two seasons: Short Course and Long Course.

**Short Course** lasts from September through April. All practices and meets are typically conducted in 25-yard pools. The United States is the only country that competes in 25-yard pools.

**Long Course** lasts from May through early August. Most swim meets are conducted in 50-meter pools. Practices are held in a combination of 25-yard and 50-meter pools. All international competition takes place in either 25-meter or 50-meter pools.

**Type of Swim Meets**

* **Allegheny Mountain Swimming Meets**—These meets always have specific time standards that a swimmer must obtain in order to enter the meet.

For in-season meets, 12 and under age-group swimmers are typically classified as follows:

* “BB” swimmers have two “BB” times in two different strokes.
* “A” swimmers have two “A” times in two different strokes.
* “AA” swimmers have two “AA” times in two different strokes

Senior level swimmers are divided into two categories—Senior Development and Senior Circuit swimmers. Senior Circuit swimmer must have obtained two 13-14 “AA” times in two different strokes. All other swimmers are considered Senior Development swimmers.

Note: If a swimmer has not previously competed in a USA Swimming meet, s/he will be entered as NT (for No Time) in the event. If the swimmer has competed in a USA Swimming meet with another team, please turn in his/her best times to one of the BPR coaches so the times can be entered in our database.

* **Championship Meets—**These meets are held near the end of the season.

 **Age Group Sectional, Senior Sectional, and Junior and Senior National Championship Meets—**These meets have specific time standards.

**2013—2016 Motivational Time Standards**

The 2013—2016 Age Group Time Standards are listed in the appendix of the handbook. USA Swimming updates the Age Group Time Standards every four years.

Prior to the first meet your swimmer enters, s/he will be entered as NT (No Time) for the events. The Age Group Time Standards are meant to be motivational for age group swimmers.

#### BPR Meet Schedule

Each season’s meet schedule will be distributed via BPR email and available on the

BPR website ([www.bprswim.org](http://www.bprswim.org)). When the meet entry periods open and as the deadline approaches, you will receive a notification via the News & Notes e-mail.

Please note the following regarding participation in scheduled swim meets:

* It is not mandatory to attend meets, but it is strongly encouraged.
* One-day meets are offered as well as two-day meets. A swimmer can choose to enter only one day of a two-day meet.
* As a general rule, BPR does not want swimmers to attend meets on back-to-back weekends.
* The coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning which meets BPR swimmers may attend as well as which events the swimmers are entered to swim.

# Appendices

**Addresses of BPR Facilities – Standard and Seasonal**

**Bethel Park High School –** 309 Church Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102

**Mount Lebanon Swim Center –** 900 Cedar Blvd., Mount Lebanon, PA 15228

**South Park Wave Pool –** 1 Wave Pool Complex, Bethel Park, PA 15102

## 2013-2016 Time Standards

 Please use the following link to identify your swimmer’s current motivational times:

<http://www.amswim.org/ezamslsc/UserFiles/File/Timstandard/2013%20-%202016%20Motivational%20Time%20Standards.pdf>

The chart is divided into Long Course Meters, Short Course Yards, and Short Course Meters, reflecting the different swimming seasons.

## BPR Swimming Glossary

***AGE GROUP SWIMMING*** - the program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent.

***ANCHOR***- The final swimmer in a relay.

***ATTACHED*** - A registered swimmer who is attached to a registered USA Swimming swim team.

***BACKSTROKE FLAGS*** - Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately five yards/meters from the wall that notify backstroke swimmers that they are approaching the end of the pool.

***BPR –*** The official abbreviation for Bethel Park Recreation for use on heat sheets.

***BUTTON (AKA PICKLE)*** - The manual Timing System stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. The button is at the end of a wire, plugged into a deck terminal box. It is the timer’s responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.

***CHAMPIONSHIP MEET*** - The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.

***CHECK-IN*** - The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check in, the coach will mark each swimmer’s name on a list posted by the meet host. Once a swimmer is checked in they must swim the event or they will be scratched from his/her next event.

***CIRCLE SEED*** - In a “Prelims and Finals” meet, the fastest three heats of each event in Prelims is specially seeded: the fastest swimmer is in the fastest heat, the second fastest swimmer is in the next heat, the third fastest swimmer is in the next heat, the fourth fastest swimmer is in the fastest heat and so on until the three heats are filled up. As opposed to the normal slowest to fastest seeding in the rest to the heats (used in a Timed Finals format).

***CIRCLE SWIMMING*** - When swimming in a lane with several swimmers – staying to the right of the black line.

***CLERK OF COURSE*** - The USA Swimming-certified official responsible for deck seeding and organizing swimmers into heats (usually, a parent-volunteer). Also, where scratches and relay cards are turned in, and on-going meet information is available for the coaches.

***CLUB*** - A registered swim team that is a dues paying member of USA-S and the local LSC.

***CODE OF CONDUCT*** - an agreement between swimmer and club, stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

***CUT (STANDARD)*** – slang for Qualifying standard; a time set for entry into a meet or event.

***DECK SEEDING*** - The process of organizing swimmers into events, heats, and lanes (by the Clerk of Course) at the meet as it progresses (as opposed to pre-seeding prior to the meet).

***DEHYDRATION*** - The abnormal depletion of body fluids (water). The most common cause of cramps and sick feelings.

***DISQUALIFICATION "DQ"*** - the loss of points and a time due to an infraction of the rules that govern the meet.

***DIVE OVER STARTS*** - Start procedures at a meet in which swimmers of the previous heat remain in the water, close to the wall, during the start of the next heat. Usually used in senior sessions/meets to save time and/or allow swimmers to rest before exiting the pool.

***ENTRY FEE*** - a set fee paid to swim each event at a meet.

***FALSE START*** - occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start of a race, prior to the starting signal. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in disqualification.

***15-METER MARK*** - Marks on the sides of the pool and on the lane lines 15 meters from the ends of the pool. In Free, Back, and Fly events the swimmer must surface at or before these marks.

***FREESTYLE RELAY*** -In the freestyle relays, four swimmers each swim one fourth of the total distance. As in the medley relay, no individual may swim more than one leg of the relay.

***HEAT*** - a division of any event in which there are too many swimmers to swim at the same time (set up by the submitted times and number of lanes in the pool being used).

***HEAT SHEETS*** - a printed program of events and "who swims when" sold at most meets, a MUST for parents.

***IM*** – slang for Individual Medley; an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

***LANE LINES*** - Continuous floating dividers stretched from the start end of the pool to the turn end, used to delineate the individual lanes.

***LAP COUNTER*** – a set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race by the person who counts for the swimmer, stationed at the opposite end of the start.

***LENGTH/LAP* -** Technically, a length is once across the pool; a lap is across and back. However most coaches use the terms interchangeably to mean simply once across the pool. Thus, 4 lengths in a 25 yard pool would be swimming across the pool 4 times, totaling 100 yards.

***LONG COURSE*** - a pool 50 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its summer competition in long course. The Olympics are conducted in 50 meter pools.

***LSC*** – Local Swim Committee, the governing body that oversees swimming at the local level. There are 59 LSCs in the country. Our LSC is Allegheny Mountain Swimming.

***MARSHAL*** - The officials (usually, parent-volunteers) who control the crowd and swimmer flow at a swim meet. They are primarily responsible for safety in the venue.

***MASTERS SWIMMING*** - A program for swimmers aged 19 and older who wish to continue swimming, but not necessarily at the senior level. Age groups are in five-year increments.

***MEDLEY RELAY*** - In the medley relay, all four strokes are swum by four different swimmers. No swimmer may swim more than one leg of the relay, which is swum in backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle order.

***NT*** - No Time - Abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swum that event before an does not have an official time of record.

***OFFICIAL*** - a judge on the deck of a pool at sanctioned and approved competitions that enforce USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers and referees.

***OPEN WATER SWIMS*** – conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river or ocean.

***PERSONAL BEST*** - The best time a swimmer has achieved so far in a given event.

***PRELIMINARIES (PRELIMS)*** - also called trials. Races in which swimmers qualify for the finals, typically to be swum later in the day.

***PROOF OF TIME*** - A requirement some meets have to make certain that swimmers have legally met the time standards for that meet. Monetary fines are typically assessed for any failed swim at meets if the entry time can’t be proven.

***PSYCH SHEET*** - A printed order of events by session with swimmers listed in order, usually fastest to slowest according to their entry times. It does not show heats.

***QUALIFYING TIMES*** - Published times that must be achieved during a given period in order to enter certain meets.

***REFEREE*** - the head official at a meet that makes all final decisions based upon USA Swimming rules.

***SANCTION*** – A competition or time trial must be sanctioned (approved) by USA Swimming (through the Local Swim Committee) for the times swum to count and to be used in other sanctioned meets.

***SCRATCH*** - to withdraw from an event (with the forfeit of the entry fee), only to be done by the Coaching Staff.

***SEEDING TIMES -*** The time a swimmer uses to enter a meet. This time determines one’s heat and lane in the particular event.

***SESSION*** - Portion of meet distinctly separated from other portions by time (usually a morning or afternoon set of events for different age groups).

***SHORT COURSE (SC)*** - a pool 25 yards/meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in short course.

***SPLASH MAGAZINE*** - The USA Swimming magazine that is mailed to members’ home on a bi-monthly basis. (A benefit of being a member of USA Swimming.)

***SPLIT*** - a time taken at an intermediate distance, e.g., a 50 yard time for a 100 yard race

***STARTER*** - a Certified Official responsible for starting each event, and being sure that each start is fair for all participants.

***STOPWATCHES*** - watches used to time the swimmers during a competition. When automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method.

***STREAMLINE*** - the position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as straight and tight as can be.

***STROKE AND TURN JUDGE*** - a Certified Official that walks the deck or stands at the end of the pool during a meet to certify the legality of individual strokes and turns.

***STROKE DRILL*** - an exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

***SWIM-OFF*** - In a Prelims and Finals (championship) format, a second race after the scheduled event to break a tie between swimmers, in order to determine which swimmer makes it into which finals heat or the order of the alternates.

***TIME STANDARDS –*** Certain qualifying times, which have been set up annually by USA Swimming or Allegheny Mountain Swimming for all events in all levels of meets to ensure that all competitions are reasonably of the same ability in their respective meets. The swimmer’s goals should be betterment of his or her time, progressing from the ”B” standard to the Nationals.

***TOUCH PAD*** - a large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

***UNATTACHED*** – is a registered swimmer who is not attached to a registered USA swim team. If a swimmer changes teams, that swimmer must swim unattached for 120 days from the last day of meet competition representing the former team.

***USA SWIMMING, INC.*** – the National Governing Body that regulates our sport. All BPR swimmers are registered with USA Swimming and each has been assigned an identification number. This USA Swimming registration expires at the end of each year. This is the organization that sends swimmers to the Olympic Games. USA Swimming is a member of FINA.

***USA SWIMMING CARD/NUMBER*** - a membership card with a unique number assigned to a swimmer when he/she joins USA Swimming. The formula for deriving a swimmer’s USA Swimming # is the following: Birth Date (6 digit format MM/DD/YY), first three letters of the first name, middle initial, and first four letters of the last name.

For example: John A. Smith was born September 1, 1959. His USA Swimming number is the

following: 090159johasmit

***WARM-DOWN*** - low-intensity swimming used by a swimmer after a practice, set, or race to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce the heart rate and respiration.

***WARM-UP*** - low-intensity swimming used by a swimmer prior to a practice, set, or race to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.

***WAYS & MEANS*** – the donations of food, drinks, cash, and coaches’/officials’ table dishes that enable the BPR concession stand to function at hosted meets.

*Revised September 2015*