 



Surprise Storm

Athlete & Parent Handbook

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to explain what Surprise Storm is about, and to outline

various policies that affect all swimmers and parents new and continuing. All members are required

to read this handbook thoroughly so that they may become familiar with the policies and

procedures of the club. We hope that this will become an invaluable reference source as well as

an educational tool for new swimmers and their families.

Updated: 2/14/18

Team Information

Surprise Storm offers a multi-level program for children approximately ages 7 and up. At each level of

the program swimmers learn the values of fitness, character, sportsmanship and teamwork. Our goal is to provide tools for athletes to take ownership of their abilities! We will provide a positive environment to teach responsibility and life-skills that will remain with our athletes well beyond their swimming career.

Communication

Good communication is vital to any organization. Therefore we have established a number of channels to facilitate information gathering, clarification, and problem solving as they relate to the team.

E-Mail and Phone

E-mail and phone are the primary methods of communication. It is the team member’s responsibility to make sure that we have the most recent email address and family contact information. There is a place for this information on the mandatory registration form. You may contact us by phone at the Surprise Community Recreation Services office at 623.222.2264

Website

Surprise Storm maintains a website at [www.surprisestorm.com](http://www.surprisestorm.com) Up-to-date announcement, practice and meet schedules and online event entry are posted on our website. There is an option to receive text alerts only used in facility emergencies (shutdown, etc). The website is a very valuable method of communication. All team news, email and event announcements / instructions will be sent directly from the team website.

On the Pool Deck

If you need to speak with the coaching staff directly. The best way to speak with the coaches is to meet with the either before or after practice. Please do not interrupt coaches during practice so that they are able to focus their time on the athletes. In order to discuss an issue at length with one of the coaches, a mutually acceptable meeting time and location should be arranged in advance.

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than directly with the coach. Rarely is the problem ever resolved that way, and this approach often results in new problems being created.

▪ Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests and safety of your child at

 heart.

▪ Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective with what is best for your child and the needs of

 the team and their training group.

▪ Trust your coach and encourage your athlete to ask constructive questions if they are confused. A coaches

goal is not only to train your athlete, but to educate your athlete to take ownership of their abilities.

Contact Info:

Head Coach: Tim Manley 623.222.2264 tim.manley@surpriseaz.gov

Recreation Supervisor: Joann Estfan 623.222.2243 joann.estfan@surpriseaz.gov

Financial Responsibility

All team training fees shall be paid through the Surprise Community Recreation Department. Once a swimmer is registered, the recreation account (family) will be billed on the 1st for the month unless an amendment/withdrawal form is received by the coach or by the Community & Recreation Services Office two weeks prior to the absence date.

Team fees are due on the first of the month, team fees are not pro-rated for team breaks, missed practice, vacations or electing to be inactive. Families who decide to use automatic payment can expect their team due to be drawn on the first day of each month. Auto-payment must be set up by filling out an auto-payment form and registering a credit card on the Surprise Recreation Website. Online registration may be found at [www.surpriseaz.gov/recreation](http://www.surpriseaz.gov/recreation) One practice session during a month equals one month’s team fees as attendance it taken daily. Swim meet fees will be emailed to each family upon entry into the registration system. Checks should be written to the City of Surprise.

USA Swimming Insurance

All swimmers are required to be USA Swimming registered. This fee supports our local swim committee (Arizona Swimming, Inc.) and covers the swimmer in case of accident or injury at any Surprise Swim Team practice or any USA Swimming sanctioned event. This fee is covered each year by paying your annual team registration fee $75 which expires on December 31st. Checks should be made payable to the City of Surprise.

Surprise Swim Team Hosted Swim Meets

All parents are required to work at the Surprise Swim Team home meet(s). Work assignments may include working on a planning committee, serving as timers, working in the bullpen, concessions, fundraising, or acting as a task runner.

Team Equipment

Surprise Swim Team requires that all swimmers be outfitted in team cap at all meets. Team suits are not required. Team Spirit wear will be available throughout multiple times of the year.

Athlete’s Responsibilities

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases so does his/her responsibility. Our program

is designed to encourage swimmers to be the best they can be. As swimmers improve it becomes

a deeper commitment that requires greater effort and affects all swimmers and families. A swimmer

has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her parents, and most importantly to themselves although nobody should want a higher level of performance than the athlete themselves.

Practice

▪ Swimmers need to prepare themselves for 100% effort both mentally and physically each time they come to

 practice, as well as; having all of their appropriate gear.

▪ Swimmers should be at practice a few minutes early to prepare for practice, if they do come to practice late

 the athlete should join right in without distracting other athletes and ask their teammates for direction until a

 coach can get them caught up.

▪ While at the pool, the swimmers are under the responsibility of the coaching staff. During

 practice sessions, swimmers are not to leave the pool area without their coach’s permission.

▪ Surprise Swim Team members and their families have an obligation to act as guests while at each practice or

competition facility. Every member of the club needs to do everything possible to respect this privilege as well as abide by the rules. Any damages to property may result in financial liability to the swimmer’s parents. Any damage may also result in the swimmer being asked to leave the team permanently.

Attendance

Obviously as coaches we want to see your athlete excel, but we can’t control how often they come to practice. I like to equate swimming to school. You can’t go to school 50% of the time and expect to get an A or even a B for that matter. Once athletes get to an elite level they may participate in Age-Group & Senior Sectional, Junior & Senior National Level Meets and at this point they will be required to have a nearly 100% practice attendance to attend these travel meets.

Meets

Swim meets are scheduled by the coaching staff before and during each season. Parents will receive invitations to attend swim meets via email and they will be able to register for meets online. It is the parents and swimmers responsibility to know the details of a meet beforehand. Specific meet information will be posted on our

website, when it becomes available. Swimmers are required to arrive at the meet at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm up time begins. Swimmers will swim all events entered unless determined otherwise by the coaching staff. Only the coaching staff can scratch a swimmer from an event. After their event, the swimmer should go directly to the warm down pool for a 3-5 minute cool down, and then to their coach. Parents are encouraged to sit together in the spectator area. If you sign up for a meet and do not attend you will still be responsible for the swim meet fees. The cost of each meet varies with the level of competition (i.e. Age Group, State, Nationals) and the nature of the event (individual vs. relay). On average, fees are typically $20-50 per meet depending on how many events / days of competition.

Swimmer’s Code of Conduct

▪ No swimmer should use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco are subject to immediate suspension from the team.

▪ Never interfere with the progress of another swimmer, during practice or otherwise.

▪ Never interfere with a coach’s ability to provide instruction to other swimmers.

▪ Never use foul language during practice or events and never bring down a teammate with negative talk.

▪ At all club functions, whether practice, meets, or social gatherings, we expect each swimmer to

 behave in such a way that their actions reflect positively on the team and the City of Surprise.

Discipline

Discipline is always subject to the circumstances at the time of the offense and the coach’s discretion.

First Offense – Verbal Warning or 3 to 5 minute break

Second Offense – Removal of remainder of practice and written reprimand

Third Offense – Week to Month Suspension, depending on circumstance and written reprimand

Final Offense – Removal from the team

Coaches

The Head Coaches’ job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Surprise Storm coaching staff

is dedicated to providing a program for swimmers that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself - “to be the best you can be.” Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition. The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the ability of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging group by the coach. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the coaching staff. Each group’s practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared towards the

specific goals of that group. At meets the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race and the athlete has completed a cool down the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance.

Parent Responsibility

Parents are required to have the mandatory registration materials completed before the swimmer enters the pool either as a returning team member or a new swimmer. It is the parent’s responsibility to register their swimmer(s) for meets via the website. Once registered for a meet, the account will be charged for the entry regardless of whether the swimmer actually competes or not.

USA Swimming Membership

Each athlete’s registration fee is an annual fee that remains current through December 31st of each year. This fee must be paid each year upon registration, or may be renewed between September 1st and December 31st for the next annual year. USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming in the United States, USA Swimming promotes the culture of swimming by creating opportunities for swimmers and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through events and education. Our membership is comprised of swimmers from the age group level to the Olympic Team, as well as coaches and volunteers.

USA Swimming is also responsible for selecting and training teams for international competition including the Olympic Games. USA Swimming also provides a primary liability and excess accident medical insurance policy, subject to a $100 deductible when participating in an approved team or swimming event.

Input is always welcomed, and parents and swimmers are encouraged to confer with the coaching staff prior to a problem with a competition (i.e. high school, other sports commitment, family obligation, work conflict, illness, injury, or attitude adjustment). Swimmers will participate in all entered races unless determined otherwise by the coach. Scratches will only occur by a member of the coaching staff. Relays are determined by the coaching staff with the best interests of the team in mind and may not be run with the four fastest swimmers in an age group.

It shall be the policy of the Surprise Swim Team to make every effort to meet requests for volunteers at USA swim meets we attend, to the best of our abilities and resources.

Let the coach - Coach! We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces the best results. When parents interfere with how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact your athletes coach. Remember, needlessly involving the swimmers in an atmosphere of controversy is neither useful nor helpful. It is the parent’s job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child want to work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition. When a swimmer first joins us there may be a

brief period in which he/she appears to slow down. This is the result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual. Even the best swimmers will have meets where they do not do their best times. These plateaus are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season, times should improve. Please be supportive of these “poor” meets.

**Team Philosophy**

Athlete Development

Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) is a sports development framework that is based on human growth and development. In short, it is an athlete centered approach to swimming development. As with any child, growth and development never occur at the same time in any two individuals. The following development classes are not set in stone for any one athlete.

Surprise Storm Philosophy is based on the LTAD framework and should be used to review and shape our swimming programs so that we are all moving in the same direction and ultimately to get more athletes swimming, to get existing athletes to practice more frequently and to add to our growing pool of talent.

Our athlete development includes the following:

Skill Development 7 to 12 year old

Athletes begin their career by learning specific skills including body position, efficiency and general swimming rules and knowledge while enjoying the process in a spirited environment.

Skill to Speed 11-14 year old

There should be an emphasis on maintaining high skill levels while putting the swimming skills under increasing pressure through covering short distances, at high speeds and to develop an endurance base. This stage coincides with a period of rapid growth and peak endurance gains.

Speed to Endurance: 11 to 15 year old

There should be a continued emphasis on maintaining high skill levels while increasing volume, all while increasing intensity. The emphasis should be on developing individual strengths and weaknesses through race practice, simulated race situations and starting to specialize in particular strokes and distance. This stage coincides with a period of rapid strength and body maturation.

Elite Athletes**:**14+ years old

There should be an emphasis on specialization and optimizing performance. Swimmers should be trained for specific events and competitions. As a result, all aspects of training should be individualized with the maintenance of high skill levels and variations to both volume and intensity.

Training Philosophy

There are very few teams in the United States who coach swimmers using a science based training system and race model which mimic’s each other, such systems are used by very successful European countries. Therefore what is done during practice is so critical and teaching athletes to understand the relationship between times achieved in practice and times achieved in swim meets. For example you cannot swim slower times in practice and expect to swim faster times in swim meets.

During practice athletes are given chances to mimic race speeds, for instance a set of # x 50’s repeat on 2:00. During the beginning of the season it may only be 4 x 50, but by the end of the season the athlete may advance themselves to 20 x 50 repeats on 2:00. The athlete is asked to hold these race speeds or swim faster than their race speeds in practice, but they cannot swim slower than race speed or there will be no progression in performance. This constantly allows the coaching staff to monitor improvement and predict race results. *Attendance* in this type of program is very important and can effect meet performance.

By training in this model not only is the athlete becoming physically conditioned to swim at race speed, but also to make training time more effective so that more time can be spent on developing the technical skills of the athlete.

Technical Skill Philosophy

A swimmer will never go faster than they do on the start of each race during the dive and the second fastest portion of their race is when they push off the wall during a turn. Every time an athlete has this opportunity a streamline is a must. Creating a straight line with arms against the head with either hands pressed together or overlapped without creating over extension or pressure in the shoulders, the most important factor is that the arms stay straight and strong during the streamline. When pushing off the wall the swimmer should create the “power triangle” with their feet just wider than their shoulders with the sides of the triangle running up their legs to the top of the streamline. Pushing off the wall with legs wider than their shoulders creates the optimum position of power production for the legs.

All strokes begin with a platform or “boat”, the main platform of the swimmer is located from the shoulders to the hips. The head, neck and legs act as extensions of the “boat”. The arms are “levers” and work with the body to create “traction” in the water.

In order for the “boat” to be effective in swimming it must be strong yet fluid in movement we often speak of this as “posture or tone.” During freestyle and backstroke the “boat,” should remain “connected,” and in a straight “line” at a parallel plane to the water. The head and neck create the parallel positioning of the body by leading. The chin should be slightly tucked towards the back of the neck creating a stronger and straighter “boat”. The “connection” of the “boat” is very important, while swimming both freestyle and backstroke the “boat” should move together. Both hips and shoulders should rotate around the center axis at the same time if there is a delay this becomes lost energy through a weak “boat.” A great way to develop “connection” and proper strength of the “boat” is to introduce small jump-rope hops to the athletes. You can’t jump-rope effectively without a strong “connection” of the core. This small exercise combined with swimming short distances and the athlete thinking about their core tension can help create some great “connection” of the “boat!”

During Butterfly the “boat” “undulates” at the hips and the legs become an important part of the “boat”. There is no kick in Butterfly it is an “undulation,” there is very little knee extension or flexion. If there is too much knee flexion the hips will drop creating and upward body line, this creates drag and most importantly extra energy use. Once again there must be a “connection” of the body, but differently in butterfly. The core tension is now needed from the waist down and the waist up with a pivot point at the hips. The stomach to the top of the head should remain strong and not flex too much. Same with the legs down, only a small knee flexion resulting in a little whip at the bottom of the “undulation.”

During Breaststroke the “boat” remains mostly straight from the tailbone to the back of the head. There should be a small “undulation” towards the end of the kick to help level the “line” of travel and to direct the forward energy. The “connection” and “line” become very important in breaststroke mostly because the stroke is divided between two separate sources of propulsion, the pull and the kick. During the pull the “boat” must stay “connected” through the breathing phase as any flexion of the neck will cause a vertical change in the “line” of travel. Any neck flexion that may occur will cause the hips to drop. Secondly during the kicking phase “connection” of the body allows for further forward movement during the short glide portion of the stroke. Planking on the pool deck can help teach the proper breathing position, combined with some short breaststroke swims the athlete can think about their core “connection” to the stroke.

Anterior scapular plane movements occur within the front of the body (try to picture Divinci’s “Man in a Circle and a Square” painting!) This movement is the body’s most natural elevation of the arms above the head mostly because it is the path of least resistance and has very little impingement. It allows for optimum alignment of the deltoid and the supraspinatus. Standing with your back to a wall place your arms and hands directly out to your side parallel to the floor with palms facing forward. Now look straight ahead and slowly bring your arms and hands forward until you can see both hands at the same time while only using your peripheral vision. Now keeping your eyes straight ahead slowly move the arms up and down keeping them within your peripheral range. This is a scapular plane movement. Now let’s alternate arms, what are we doing? All swimming movements for butterfly, backstroke and freestyle can be explained through scapular plane movement and breaststroke falls within its parameters.

Now let’s talk about “connection” within our movements! Try something; demonstrate a freestyle stroke reach while breathing to the side! Now, pull the head of your humerous back into your humeral scapular joint. Most people have about two inches of subluxation of the joint. When the head of the humerous is outside of the joint any pressure, flexion and or stress can cause injury to the shoulder capsule. Strokes should be developed with safe scapular plane movement and connection in mind. The amount of energy transfer to a connected joint is much greater than those outside of the joint. Think Streamlines? Freestyle / Backstroke Hand Entry? Butterfly / Breaststroke Reach?

The propulsion of all strokes depends upon the amount of “traction” the athlete can create in the water. We prefer to not think of it as pulling, but of setting an “anchor” creating “traction” and moving the body past its “anchor” point.

The easiest to understand is freestyle, although for decades coaches have been teaching the “S” pull, made famous by Doc Counsilman. He was correct the pull does make an “S” pattern, but it’s not the pull that makes the pattern it’s the movement of the body around the hands “anchor” point. The hand enters above the head and presses down as the body is on its side, as “traction” occurs the body moves forward and rotates towards the other side finishing by rounding out the “S” with the little finger leading out of the water first! The leg’s and kick act to complete the whole stroke, while studies have shown that the kick constitutes 10-15% of the propulsion of the stroke try swimming without legs at all! The kick completes the system so the kick and legs should be long, strong and consistent.

Backstroke is kind of the same concept of setting an “anchor” although the “anchor” cannot be set quite so deep. Keeping in mind the body roll place the hands into the water with pinky finger first with finger tips towards the lane lines in the 11 o’clock / 1 o’clock positions. As you rotate press down to create “traction” and slide the body past the hand and naturally the thumb side of the hand will exit the water first following the natural scapular plane movements. Thinking of setting the “anchor” on backstroke is much like grabbing the lane line and giving yourself a free ride!

Breaststroke and Butterfly both use an “anchor” once you press the hands to the outward position or “Y” then the finger tips press down to create “traction” then the body slides down and in towards the belly button. Obviously on breaststroke the hands round in towards the chest and recover under the chin. On butterfly the remainder of the stroke is much like freestyle in that it should finish within the “scapular plane” but by rounding out the bottom of the stroke making big arm circles with both arms.

The Ten Commandments of Parents of Athletes:

1. Make sure your child knows that -- win or lose, scared or heroic - you love them, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.

2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child’s athletic ability, his/her competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their actual skill level.

3. Be helpful, but do not coach them on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast and so on. It’s tough not to, but it’s a lot tougher for a child to be overwhelmed with advice, pep talks, and often critical instruction.

4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be “doing their best," to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the reward of competing, for trying hard, and for having fun.

5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that it creates pressure. Do not pressure your child because of your pride. If he/she is comfortable with you-win or lose- he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.

6. Do not compete with the coach. Allow the coach to direct their athletic development.

7. Don’t compare the skill, success or attitude of your child with other members of the team, it is a process.

8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy; attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.

9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.

10. Make a point of understanding fear, and that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but the mastery of how you handle that fear.