



VERNON HILLS PARK DISTRICT
Turtles Swim Team

Team Handbook

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VHPD Turtle Mission

The mission of the Turtles Swim Team is to develop both strong competitive swimmers and well-rounded individuals. Coaches work diligently to teach the skills of dedication, responsibility, teamwork, positivity, honesty and respect to each and every swimmer.

Through the competitive training regimen, coupled with these teachings, swimmers are able to develop themselves as strong, positive human beings. Our hope is that through hard work and diligence, the swimmers will become fierce competitors, compassionate teammates and develop skills that will build upon positive growth paths in life.

The coaching staff firmly believes that the sport of swimming does more than strengthen the body and the mind; it has a lot to offer to one's spirit. Each coach shares the positive effects swimming had in each one's healthy living and social responsibilities. The teachings of self-discipline, teamwork, time management and hard work have helped mold the coaching staff into who they are today. We hope that every swimmer in the program will walk away with the same, if not more.

Accessing the Turtles Swim Team Website

Our website, www.teamunify.com/ilvhpdtst, is used for most lines of communication. Enter the web address in your browser window or access it through the Vernon Hills Park District website. Within a week of registration, you will receive an email from the team website with login information. Once you login, please verify and update your account information. Any inactive members or swimmers who no longer participate on the team will be removed after 30 days.

The website is where swimmers and parents are able to access all of our team's information including:

- **Important documents**: Coaches' contact information, meet entries, meet results, calendars, and important updates.
- **Registration for events**: Swim meets, fundraising events, special events, volunteering opportunities, and community service opportunities.
- **Contact Information**: All swimmers currently on the roster are listed on the website with parent contact information.
- **Team Records**: View any Team Records for Short Course Yards (SCY), Short Course Meters (SCM), and Long Course Meters (LCM).

All swimmers are required to register for swim meets through the website. Registration for swim meets cannot be guaranteed if a swimmer does not register through the website.

Parent Code of Conduct

The purpose of a code of conduct for parents is to establish consistent expectations for behavior by parents.

As a parent/guardian, I understand the important growth and developmental support that my child's participation fosters. I also understand that it is essential to provide the coaching staff with respect and the authority to coach the team. I agree with the following statements:

- I will set the right example for our children by demonstrating sportsmanship and showing respect and common courtesy at all times to the team members, coaches, competitors, officials, parents, and all facilities.
- I will get involved in fulfilling my team volunteer obligations, observing practices, cheering at meets, and talking with my child and their coach about their progress.
- I will refrain from coaching my child from the stands during practices or meets.
- I will stay off the pool deck during practices at all times unless approved by the Head Coach.
- I will not take pictures and/or videos of my child's practice unless approved by the Head Coach **AND** parents of all other members in the pool.
- I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward coaches, officials, volunteers, and/or any participant swimming will not be tolerated.
- I will respect the integrity of the officials
- If I have concerns, I will direct them first to the appropriate level Head Coach then, if not satisfied, to the appropriate supervisor.
- I understand the above expectations and that my failure to adhere to them may result in disciplinary action.
- Communication via phone or text message with coaches during practice, meets, and/or outside the communication policies timeframe is deemed inappropriate. The primary source of communications with any coach other than the Head Coach is should be via email.

Athlete Code of Conduct

The purpose of a code of conduct for the athlete is to establish a consistent expectation for the athletes' behavior.

I agree to the following statements:

- I will respect and show courtesy to my teammates and coaches at all times.
- I will set a good example of behavior and work ethic for my younger teammates.
- I will be respectful of my teammates' feelings and personal space. Swimmers who exhibit sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be faced with consequences.
- I will attend all team meetings and training sessions, unless my coach excuses me.
- I will show respect for all facilities and other property (including locker rooms) used during practices, competitions, and team activities.
- I will refrain from foul language, violence, behavior deemed dishonest, offensive, or illegal.
- If I disagree with an official's call, I will talk with my coach and not approach the official directly.
- I will obey all of the USA/NISC/NIWSC rules and codes of conduct. I understand that if I violate this code of conduct, I will be subject to disciplinary action determined by my coaches and the swim club.

Coaching Staff Code of Conduct

The purpose of the coaches' code of conduct is to establish consistent expectations for behavior and team procedures. It is also to be used as a guide to promote a positive team environment and good sportsmanship.

As a coach I understand the importance of my understanding of the below expectations and procedures to the growth of the program.

1. Attitude and Behavior

- Set a good example of respect and sportsmanship for participants and fans to follow.
- Respect officials and their judgment and abide by the rules of the event.
- Treat opposing coaches, participants, and spectators with respect.
- Teach sportsmanship to all swimmers and demand they display good sportsmanship.
- Coach in a positive manner and do not use derogatory comments or abusive language.
- Treat every athlete fairly, justly, impartially, intelligently, and with sensitivity.
- Always place the well-being, health, and safety of swimmers above all other considerations, including developing performance.
- Always maintain a professional separation between coach and athlete. Any complaints of a coach violating code of conduct should be brought to the attention of the head coach, his/her supervisor and/or the club's president

2. Professionalism

- Act and dress with professionalism and dignity in a manner suitable to his/her profession.
- At meets, coaches are required to follow the Head Coaches apparel request.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes before a practice starts or when you are supposed to arrive for a meet.
- Coaches are expected to be at every practice their group is training. If not able to attend, coach is responsible for finding a sub and needs to communicate with the Head Coach with appropriate lead-time.
- Cell phone usage on deck is to be kept to a minimum. Text messages and phone calls are not necessary unless an emergency for family/spouse. Attendance tracking will be done on phone/iPad via OnDeck app.

3. Coach Professional Development

- Continue to seek and maintain their own professional development in all areas in relation to coaching and teaching children.
- The head coach will encourage and support all certifications that may help evolve you as a coach (ASCA, NISCA, NSCA, etc.).
- USA coaching membership is the minimum requirement for all Turtles Swim Team Head Coaches.

4. Communication

- Coaches are required to stick around for 10 minutes to answer any questions of parents and athletes.
- Coaches email address will be posted on website with their bios.
- If you've received an email from a parent you are required to respond within 24-48 hrs. Please CC the Head Coach on any important email response to make sure they are in the loop of any issues.
- Communicate with each other and the Head Coach. Coaches meetings will be held every 1-2 months to evaluate how the program is doing.
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5. Season, Weekly, & Workout Planning

- Follow Season plan & weekly plans that the Head Coach has provided for you (The Head Coach will collaborate with the coaches of the group to finalize plans).
- Provide the current weeks workouts for your groups by Monday AM of that week. This way the Head Coach can look through them and ask questions/or make any adjustments that he sees fit to the plan
- The Head Coach will provide a list of drills to all the coaches that the team should follow. Purpose of this is to be on the same page with terminology and the progression from one group to the next is smooth; this is always open to feedback and collaborations.

Practice Policies

- Swimmers should arrive at a minimum of 15 minutes before practice so to be on deck and ready 10 minutes before practice begins. This time is to be used to stretch and socialize so practice can start on time and make efficient use of allocated time.
- Swimmers should make every effort to attend all of practice, including the dryland portion, if applicable.
- For swimmers' protection, parents should make sure a coach is at practice and that there is practice before leaving their child at the pool. Check team website for changes. (www.teamunify.com/ilvhpdst)
- If a swimmer is late to practice, it is our hope that the parent will send a note with the swimmer explaining the reason for tardiness. If a swimmer needs to leave early a note is also required.
- **Parents are not allowed on the deck during practice.** Parents may observe practice from the pool viewing room. Please refrain from communicating with your swimmer during practice.
- While at practice, swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. During practice sessions, swimmers are never to leave the swim area without coach's permission.
- Any damage done to Vernon Hills Park District property may result in financial liability to the swimmer's parents. Any damage may also result in the swimmer being asked to permanently leave the team.
- Swimmers should demonstrate self-control and respect to all parents, athletes, officials, lifeguards and coaches in the program. It is important that the coaches conduct practices without distractions. The coaches must have swimmers undivided attention at all times.
- All swimmers are expected to follow the oral and written directions and instructions of any coach or staff.
- Use of profanity or verbal abuse will not be tolerated.
- Misconduct and interference with the rights of others will subject the swimmer to suspension or possible dismissal from the program.
- Practice schedules are posted on the team website. (www.teamunify.com/ilvhpdst)
- Vernon Hills Park District Turtles Swim Team is not responsible for changes in your schedule. Makeup practices will not be permitted.

Turtles Swim Team

Team Descriptions

Bronze I (Beginner)

Age: 5-11 years

Skill Requirement

Introductory level with previous lesson experience, 25 yards of freestyle with rotary breathing, and 25 yards of backstroke.

Goals

Build interest in the sport, learn correct body position, learn correct breathing technique, how to streamline, begin a foundation in all 4 competitive strokes, and introduction to swim team environment/competitive rules/training.

Practice Schedule

1 time/week, 60 minutes

Equipment

Swimsuit, cap, goggles

Meet Expectation*

Spring/Summer: 2 meets per season

Fall/Winter: 2 meets per season

To be considered for Bronze II:

Consistency of attendance, meet & volunteer expectation met, coach's discretion.

Bronze II (Developmental)

Age: 5-13 years

Skill Requirement

50 yards of freestyle with rotary breathing, 50 yards of backstroke, 25 yards of breaststroke, 25 yards of butterfly.

Goals

Refining all 4 competitive strokes, learn dives, learn flip turns, kick development, build an aerobic base, and refine racing skills.

Practice Schedule

2 times/week, 60 minutes

Equipment

Competitive swimsuit (jammer or speedo), cap, goggles, water bottle

Meet Expectation*

Spring/Summer: 2 meets per season

Fall/Winter: 2 meets per season

To be considered for Silver

Consistency of attendance, meet & volunteer expectation met, coach's discretion, and interest in year-round swimming.

Silver (Competitive)

Age: 7-13 years

Skill Requirement

100 yards with rotary breathing and flip turns, 50 yards of backstroke with flip turns, 50 yards of breaststroke with legal turn, 50 yards of butterfly with legal turn, understanding of interval training and utilizing a pace clock.

Goals

Understanding of team drills/progressions, continue to refine/train all 4 strokes, strengthen kick, introduce dry-land exercises, introduce high-intensity endurance training, and race skills. Training will focus on 50-100s of stroke and 100 IM.

Practice Schedule

3 times/week, 60 minutes

Equipment

Competitive swimsuit (jammer or speedo), cap, goggles, water bottle, and fins

Meet Expectation*

Spring/Summer: 3 meets per season

Fall/Winter: 4 meets per season

To be considered for Gold

Consistency of attendance, meet & volunteer expectation met, coach's discretion, commitment to USA swimming and year-round swimming.

Gold (Competitive)

Age: 10-15 years

Skill Requirements

100 yards with rotary breathing and flip turns, 100 yards of backstroke with flip turns, 50 yards of breaststroke with legal turn, 50 yards of butterfly with legal turn, understanding of interval training and utilizing a pace clock.

Goals

Begin to master team drills/progressions, train all 4 strokes, consistent and strong underwaters off each wall, continued dry land activities, more incorporation of breath control, and sprinting/distance event training. Training will focus on 100s of stroke and 200 IM.

Practice Schedule

4 times/week, 60 minutes

Equipment

Competitive swimsuit (jammer or speedo), cap, goggles, water bottle, fins, pull buoy, paddles

Meet Expectation*

Spring/Summer: 3 meets per season

Fall/Winter: 5 meets per season

To be considered for Green

Consistency of attendance, meet & volunteer expectation met, coach's discretion, and commitment to USA swimming and year-round swimming.

Green (Advanced)

Age: 11-18 years

Skill Requirement

Cut times will be posted prior to team try-outs.

Goals

Mastery of team drills/progressions, advanced training for competitions, learn proper nutrition, time management skills, and goal setting for both short term and long term success

Practice Schedule

5 times/week, 90 minutes

Dryland

2 times/week, 45 minutes

Equipment

Competitive swimsuit, caps, goggles, water bottle, fins, pull buoy, paddles, and snorkel

Meet Expectation*

Spring/Summer: 3 meets per season

Fall/Winter: 5 meets per season

Meet Expectation per Level*

To promote team comradery and participation throughout all levels each team has a base expectation of meets they will need to attend. Meets are a culmination of the swimmers effort and hard work. Swimmers are encouraged to participate in swim meets (throughout the season) to help coaches determine how they are progressing. Meets are a great way for swimmers to have fun and to demonstrate their abilities and the work they have put in through the season.

In order to remain in the same level or advance levels, the swimmer must have met the meet expectation for previous active season. Please plan accordingly to attend the required meets per level. **You would not attend practice to then miss the games. Swim meets are swimming's version of games, so make sure to attend.** Continued failure to fulfill the minimum meet requirement will result in suspension or possible removal from the Turtles Swim Team.

Meet Information

Swim meets are a great opportunity for swimmers to improve and for parents to see how their child is developing as a swimmer. Below is information for parents and swimmers to remember regarding meets.

NISC/NIWSC (REC League): The Northern Illinois Swim Conference and the Northern Illinois Winter Swim Conference are recreational swim conferences for youth through 18 years of age. The emphasis of the Conferences is placed on learning competitive skills, enjoyment of the sport, and lifelong participation in swimming. The Conferences focus on dual meets and these meets are strictly for experience purposes. The purpose is to efficiently and economically provide a swimming opportunity, which is designed to provide wholesome, constructive and enjoyable leisure time experiences that benefit the individual and the participating member agencies. Rec Meets can be fast paced with little rest in-between each event. The coaching staff will ensure each swimmer swims his/her event to gain the experience of the swim but to also learn how meets are run. Once each swimmer has participated in a few Rec Meets, it is highly encouraged to participate in USA-S Meets.

Rec meets are focused around the less experienced swimmers. Seeing that these meets are usually dual meets, they are more relaxed and focus on the general aspects of a meet. These meets will help swimmers get ready for the more competitive USA-S meets.

USA Swimming: As the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming in the United States, USA Swimming is a 400,000-member service organization that promotes the culture of swimming by creating opportunities for swimmers and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through clubs, events and education.

Membership is comprised of swimmers from the age group level to the Olympic Team, as well as coaches and volunteers. USA Swimming is responsible for selecting and training teams for international competition including the Olympic Games, and strives to serve the sport through its core objectives: Build the Base, Promote the Sport, Achieve Competitive Success.

These meets are for USA-S registered swimmers only. You may apply for a membership through the Team Administrator. USA-S meets are designed around a fast-paced, highly competitive environment, not designed for the less experienced swimmers. There are associated fees that are included in your Green team registration at the beginning of the season, to include but not limited to: USA-S registration and meet entry fees. You will be able to pay these fees at the Lakeview Fitness Center or Sullivan Community Center front desks.

Team Uniform Policy

The Park District will be enforcing a Team Uniform policy for meets. This is to promote team unity, the image of the Team, and to promote self-confidence and a sense of unification in each swimmer. Team suits are TYR Durafast suits comprised of a poly-blend material designed to last over 300+ hours of use. Only performance/tech suits or another solid black suit will be acceptable alternatives. A Team cap or a solid black cap will be worn if a cap is to be worn.

A Note for Parents about Meets

Swim meets can vary. Some meets can be indoors or outdoors. Some meets have fees; some do not. It is important to check the information about the meet in the **events** section on the website. This will list the time, cost, location and duration for all meets. **The Turtles will be enforcing a strict cancellation policy. *All swimmers registered with USA Swimming will be required to sign up for auto bill pay using a credit card or checking account, this will be used to pay meet fees.***

For both indoor meets and outdoor meets, it is appropriate to anticipate it to be very hot. Often times at indoor meets swimmers will spend time in a gym or hall off the pool deck. These places tend to be cold so please pack accordingly. Summer meets tend to be outdoors; swimmers should pack extra sunscreen and protective wear for these meets. Keep in mind that some invitational meets can last more than six hours; please pack snacks and entertainment accordingly.

Pre-Meet

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled warm up or the designated time by coaches.
2. Check in with your coach, or at the check in (if the meet has a positive check in), and change into suit and warm ups.
3. Find the team and put your belongings at the team's designated spot. This will help ensure we don't lose anyone's belongings.
4. Swimmers may choose to write events on their hands to keep track during the meet.
5. Begin stretching with the team prior to the in-pool warm up.
6. Coaches will inform swimmers of warm up locations. It is very important to take the warm up seriously. Without a proper warm up, poor times or even injury may result.
7. Following in-pool warm up, swimmers should return to the team's location and prepare for their events.
8. Parents, you will be able to wait with your swimmers prior to their events if you wish. Heat sheets containing race information including estimated times generally are available at the concessions table for a fee. It is always good to encourage your swimmer, but please be careful not to psyche them out prior to their event.

During Meet

1. All swimmers should have their events memorized or written down so that they know when to report to the bullpen or pool deck.
2. If there is a bullpen, the event number will be called over a loud speaker and the swimmer will move to the bullpen. Here they will wait until instructed to move to the pool deck for their race. Be sure to bring your water bottle, cap and goggles.
3. During your swim, focus. It can be intense with everyone watching, so focus on your own swim and remember techniques and tips coaches emphasize at practice.
4. After your swim, you should report to your coach. Coaches will have valuable input regarding the race. Do not forget to meet with them immediately afterwards.
5. Swimmers then return to the team area. This is time to stretch, relax and have a light snack before your next event. Some events can be relatively close to each other, so judge what you do accordingly.
6. If a swimmer finishes and has no more events, individual or relay, he or she may leave early after the parents inform the coaching staff.

Packing for Meets

Below is a list of recommended items to bring to each swim meet to ensure that the swimmer will be prepared for the day.

- Team apparel and appropriate warm-ups (sweat pants, athletic shorts, anything to wear over one's suit).
- Two pairs of goggles and two caps.
- Flip-flops or deck shoes.
- Towels – We suggest at least two towels and a shammy cloth.
- Playing cards, a book or homework to keep oneself occupied between events.
- Healthy snacks, especially dried fruit, granola bars or veggies. ***Please no nuts***
- Do not forget to bring a water bottle. Gatorade is fine, but water is suggested.
- A chair or blanket to sit on.

****The Vernon Hills Park District Turtles Swim Team is not responsible for lost or stolen items including electronics.****

Swim Meet Cancellation Policy

After a swimmer commits to a meet, they are placed in both individual and relay events. Cancellations after confirmation jeopardize the team's ability to swim relays and leave other swimmers unable to race their planned events. Swimmers should always keep in mind that swimming is a team sport and each swimmer contributes to the team. Late cancellations affect the entire team.

USA Meets:

Due to fees associated with USA swimming meets, once entries have been accepted by the host team, the parents/swimmer are responsible for the fees associated with the meet, whether or not the swimmer participates in the meet.

REC Meets:

Any cancellations made after events have been posted or submitted to the REC hosting team will result in a \$30 cancellation fee. Meet no shows will also result in a \$30 cancellation fee.

All swimmers will jeopardize their ability to advance to the next level or remain on the team roster for the following season with any last minute cancellations. We do understand that last minute emergencies do arise. If your child is sick, please get a doctor's note to share with the team and communicate the absence to the Head Coach as soon as possible.

Parent Support Board

The Turtles' Parent Support Board was created to aid the coaching staff. Currently, the support board consists of three volunteer parents.

TBD: Parent-Coach Liaison - Responsible for distributing pertinent information between the coaching staff and the swimming parents. This helps channel important information, anonymous concerns and questions between the parents and coaches without delay or bias. Please feel free to address any concerns to the parent-coach liaison and he or she will pass them along to the coaching staff.

TBD: Officials Coordinator - Responsible for distributing information regarding changes to rules or regulations to parents or coaches, and for coordinating officials to work home and away meets.

TBD: Volunteer Coordinator - Responsible for organizing and managing the parent volunteers for home and away meets. This includes helping to ensure that there will be enough volunteers to aid at both home/away meets and to manage concessions at meets that we host.

Lauren Katzman: Event Coordinator – Coordinates events for team members and parents to participate in. Also responsible for coordinating team banquet and lock-in with the Head Coach.

Volunteer Expectation

Parent involvement is vital to running an effective swim team. Often times at home and away swim meets parents are responsible for a multitude of jobs so the coaching staff can focus on the swimmers in the pool. Swim meets hosted by the Turtles require our parents to fill at least 20 positions, while swim meets hosted by other organizations may require parent help to aid in timing races. Different volunteering jobs may include; race timing, donations to the concession stand, working the concession stand, working in the bull pen, labeling and organizing awards, and chaperoning social and fundraising events.

Parents are expected to volunteer throughout the season. During the season parents are expected to aid during 2 events. Parents can register to volunteer for events through the teamunify website and can choose the job they would like. At the beginning of each swim meet, parents check in with the volunteer coordinator and attend a training (no previous experience is necessary).

Volunteer Opt Out

Parent will have the opportunity to “opt out” of their volunteer expectation for \$150 per season, per swimmer. This will **only** be charged through teamunify. We prefer to have parents volunteer, rather than pay the money!

Bullying Policy

Adapted from USA Swimming

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the VHPD Turtles (the “Club”) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, Parent Support board member or athlete/mentor.

Objectives of the Club’s Bullying Policy:

1. To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all Park District staff, coaches, parents and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that the Turtles take bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- i. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member’s property;
- ii. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
or
- v. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents.
- Talk to a Coach or the Parent Liaison.
- Write a letter or email to the Club.
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team related activities, we stop bullying on the spot using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by finding out what happened and supporting the kids involved. Following the incident the Club will handle the situation in the following manner:

1. First offence – Verbal warning.
2. Second offence – Parent/Coach meeting.
3. Third offence – Suspension or possible removal from the Turtles Swim Team.

Depending on the severity of the offence, certain steps may be skipped upon the discretion of the Vernon Hills Park District Administration.

Respect & Behavior Policy

The Turtles' Swim Team is recognized in the USA/Illinois Swimming, NIWSC, and NISC conferences for our respect of both facilities and other teams. There are several expectations our coaching staff have established that both swimmers and parents should be aware prior to attending an away function.

- Swimmers are expected to always be respectful of our facilities and other facilities including but not limited to: locker rooms, pool decks, holding spaces, and parking lots.
- Swimmers are expected to keep all areas at our own facilities and at other facilities clean from garbage by picking up after oneself.
- Rough play, foul language, or commenting negatively toward teammates or other swimmers are not tolerated by the coaching staff and can disqualify a swimmer from competition. This includes hearsay from other members or adults.
- Occasionally swimmers may get excited and become loud. Always listen for instructions by coaches and do not make them repeat themselves.
- The use of drugs and alcohol will not be tolerated.
- Treat others with respect and compassion, even when faced with disagreement.
- Agreeing to disagree can be an effective solution, as well as walking away from a situation.

Minor infractions can lead to discipline in the pool, meaning harder workouts. If anything serious arises, parents will be contacted and the problem will be resolved.

10 COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS

By Rose Snyder

- 1. Thou shalt not impose your ambitions on thy child.** Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes and don't push them based on what you think they should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is people can strive to do their personal best and benefit from the process of competitive swimming.
- 2. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.** There is only one question to ask your child after a practice or a competition - "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.
- 3. Thou shalt not coach thy child.** You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offer professional coaching, do not undermine the professional coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to provide unconditional love and support and a safe place to return at the end of the day. Love and hug your child no matter what. Tell them how proud of them you are. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy or any other area that is not yours. And above all, never pay your child for a performance. This will only serve to confuse your child concerning the reasons to strive for excellence and weaken the swimmer/coach bond.
- 4. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.** If you are going to show up at a swimming meet, you should be encouraging, but never criticize your child or the coach. Both of them know when mistakes have been made. And remember "yelling at" is not the same as "cheering for". You also may want to consider being positive anytime you are around the pool.
- 5. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.** A first swimming meet, 500 free or 200 IM can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event if your child was not ready to compete in it. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming experience. Most of their fears are one's you have given them.
- 6. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.** If you do not care to devote the time or do not have the desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are doing the best they can. You too can be trained to be an official in an afternoon.
- 7. Honor thy child's coach.** The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child; it will only serve to hurt your child's swimming.

8. Thou shalt be loyal and supportive of thy team. It is not wise for parents to take their swimmers and to jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer in another team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time by the teammates they leave behind and are slowly received by new team mates. Often times swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

9. Thy child shalt have goals besides winning. Most successful swimmers are those who have learned to focus on the process and not the outcome. Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. Does this make me a failure? No, in fact I am very proud of that swim." What a tremendous outlook to carry on through life.

10. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian. There are 280,000 athletes in USA Swimming. Only 2% of the swimmers listed in the 10 & Under age group make it to the Top 100 in the 17-18 age group and of those only a small percentage will become elite level, world-class athletes. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about .0002%. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coaches why they coach. Chances are, they were not an Olympian, but still got so much out of swimming that they wanted to pass the love for the sport on to others. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal they may have won. Swimming builds good people, like you want your child to be, and you should be happy your child wants to participate.