



# West Chicago Sharks

## Parents' Manual

# WEST CHICAGO SHARKS PARENTS' MANUAL

**OVERVIEW** - The West Chicago Sharks is an age group swim team, which has been a part of West Chicago and the surrounding communities for over 50 years. The Sharks started at Reed-Kepler pool as a summer program. With the completion of the West Chicago Community High School pool in 1979, the Sharks moved the program into the new facilities. In 1982 the team expanded becoming a member of Illinois Swimming Incorporated. During the winter, the Sharks belong to the Chicagoland Swim Conference and during the summer, the Sharks belong to Chicagoland Area Swim League. The Sharks are not associated with any YMCA, park district, or school taxing body. However, we rent pool time at the West Chicago Community High School pool and work closely with their staff to establish mutually beneficial pool availability for practices and meets.

The West Chicago Sharks are registered in the State of Illinois as a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation and are governed by the laws of the State. All parents become members simply by your children joining the team.

**MISSION** - The purpose of the Sharks is to teach team members good sportsmanship, promote physical health and to develop and promote the sport of competitive swimming.

The objective of the Sharks shall be to provide fair competition with the intent to stimulate interest for all swimmers on all levels, with guidance and sound coaching. We believe that through competitive swimming children will experience the hard work, dedication and discipline needed not only for success in a sport, but in everyday life as well.

**PARENTS GROUP** - Parents automatically become members of the West Chicago Sharks Parent Group upon registration of a swimmer. The team is a self-supporting group, which relies totally on the involvement of the West Chicago Sharks Parent Group to manage the business and associated activities.

The Parent Group selects executive officers each year, at the conclusion of the Winter Season. The Board of Directors is composed of all elected officers, appointed chairpersons and the Head Coach. The board meets regularly to plan and implement the various activities for the team, set fees, employ professional coaching staff and approve the operational budget. The Board sponsors a minimum of one informational meeting for parents each swim season. As members of the Parent Group, you are encouraged to actively participate and provide feedback to the Board regarding the direction and viability of the West Chicago Sharks. A list of the Board of Directors and their phone numbers is distributed each season.

As a member, your participation is required during each season to operate a successful swimming program. Parents and guardians agree to volunteer as meet workers at dual meets, hosted meets and championship swim meets. Also, parents are expected to

provide food donations for concessions and/or hospitality and participate in any fund raising efforts for the swim team.

Communication with team members and families from the Board of Directors or coaching staff is provided by email and through the web site; [www.wcsharks.org](http://www.wcsharks.org). Click on the link on our website to register to receive emails. A mailbox system is set up at the pool for swimmers to receive awards. Other information may be available and swimmers should check their boxes on a regular basis. As of September, 2011, all meet sign up, swimmer entry and billing has been centralized under our Team Unify web site.

**USA SWIMMING** - USA Swimming is the national governing body for competitive swimming in this country. Illinois Swimming, Inc. (ISI) is the Local Swimming Committee (LSC) of USA Swimming that covers Illinois. The West Chicago Sharks, Inc. is a chartered club in ISI. USA Swimming provides swimmers with a broader exposure to competitive swimming than local dual meets and a frame of reference on a national level.

**ELIGIBILITY** - To be eligible to compete in a sanctioned meet, a swimmer must be registered and current with ISI/USA Swimming. Each swimmer will pay an annual fee to USA Swimming to become an athlete member of ISI. These memberships are renewed during the winter season for the next full calendar year. This membership is included in your fees. You will receive a USA Swimming number, your ID number for entering all USA and ISI Swimming meets. Your account with West Chicago Sharks must also be current and in good standing.

**QUALIFICATIONS** - USA Swimming meets are divided by time standards - levels C up to AAAA. These time standards provide each swimmer an opportunity to compete at his/her ability level. In order to swim in an "A" event, the swimmer must have times equal to or faster than the "A" minimum time. A "BB" swimmers time must fall between the "BB" maximum times (.01 slower than the "A" minimum) and the "BB" minimum time. A "B" time is .01 slower than the "BB" minimum and faster than the "B" minimum time. A "C" swimmer must equal or have slower times than the "C" maximum time. Please see your coach for the ISI age group time standards chart. These time standards can be found on the Illinois Swimming website, [www.ilswim.org](http://www.ilswim.org), under time standards.

**AGE REQUIREMENTS** - There is no minimum age to be a member of the West Chicago Sharks but prospective swimmers must be able to swim at least one lap (25 yards or meters) to join the team. A swimmer's age group for a swim meet is determined by his/her age on the first day of that meet.

**ENTRIES** - The Sharks will provide a list of USA Swimming ISI meets that the team will attend. The registration sheets for each meet will be posted on the pool entry wall. Parents must indicate the swimmers participation by the deadline listed on the registration sheet. Failure to meet this deadline may result in no participation at the

event(s). A copy of the meet information is posted on the pool wall. All Shark team swimmers are entered automatically by the coaches in the ISI meets which we host throughout the year. If you are unable to participate, please contact your coach prior to the event.

**ENTRY FEES** - There are fees that are charged to enter ISI/USA Swimming meets. The host team charges a \$3.00 fee for each event a swimmer is entered. ISI collects a \$2.00 surcharge for each swimmer entered in the meet. The 4 swimmers entered in a relay divide equally the \$8.00 relay fees. Should your swimmer cause the team entry to scratch, you will be charged the entire relay entry fee. In addition, some meets require a facility fee to help cover janitorial costs. These fees are not refunded if the registered swimmer does not attend the meet or if they "scratch", (choose not to swim) that event.

All West Chicago Sharks swimmers are entered into home meets. Swimmers need to sign up with the coaches to attend away meets.

**ENTRY LIMITS** - Swimmers are usually allowed to swim 3 to 4 events, plus relays, per day. To participate in a relay, the swimmer must swim in at least one individual event. The coach determines relay entries.

**SCHEDULE** - Meets usually span one, two or three days divided by age groups into AM and PM sessions. Warm-ups and starting times vary with each individual meet. Afternoon warm-up times are usually noted as "not before noon" or "following morning events." Your swimmer only needs to be at the meet for the period his/her age group is swimming.

**AWARDS** - Awards are typically given for individual events for the number of lanes being swum and the top three places in relay events.

"A" times usually receive large rosette ribbons

"B" times usually receive large straight ribbons

"C" times usually receive single ribbons.

Awards are determined by the host team and may vary from meet to meet. Many meets also award heat winner tags/prizes.

**COMPETITION** - The Sharks go to great lengths to provide fair competition for all team members. To provide different levels of competition, the team schedules a variety of meets offering each swimmer the best opportunity in which to compete. The following is a summary of different types of meets that the team participates in.

**Conference Dual Meets** - In both short course (winter) and long course (summer) the team competes in dual (2 teams) meets with other conference teams.

**ISI Meets** - Illinois Swimming Incorporated (ISI) meets have an entry fee that each swimmer must pay in order to participate. See USA Swimming for more information

**IV League Conference** - The IV League is WCS's summer and winter conference. All swimmers participate in this exciting championship meet.

**Age Group Championships** - This is the state championship for 10 and unders, 11-12's and 13-14's. To qualify, a swimmer must achieve a minimum time set by Illinois Swimming, Inc. For ages 11-14, swimmers must first advance through preliminaries to move on to finals. Ages 10 and under compete in timed finals only- no preliminaries. Age Group Champs is a great thrill for everyone who has ever had the chance to attend and/or compete.

**Senior Championships** - This is the state championship for senior level swimmers – typically 15 and older. Illinois Swimming, Inc. establishes similar, though more difficult minimum cutoff times. Here the top high school, club and college swimmers meet in one big top level meet.

**Zones Championships** - Held each August, "Zones" are championship meets which represent one-fourth of the United States. To qualify swimmers must have achieved an AAA time standard. Once the swimmer has made the AAA time, he/she will join Team Illinois (an All Star team of Illinois swimmers) and compete at the meet. Team scores are kept by state. An additional fee is collected by ISI for this meet.

**Mid-States Quadrangular** - This meet, similar to Zones, is held each January in Indianapolis. Swimmers apply to Illinois Swimming to be considered for selection for Team Illinois.

**Sectional Championships** - A 10 state senior level championship meet.

**National Age-Group Swimming Association (NASA) Age Group Classic** – Is the Sharks newest meet. This is a national meet for 14 and under swimmers that requires AA times for odd ages and AAA times for even ages.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION** – General info that didn't fit anywhere else.

**Communication** – All families that register through Team Unify are asked to provide an e-mail address. This address is used to provide communication from coaches and parent volunteers. Regular updates, team records, forms and links to other important information can be accessed through the Sharks home page. Meet sign-up is handled via Team Unify. Watch dates carefully as most meets have entry dates and swimmers typically cannot be added later.

**Team Apparel** - Team members and their families take great pride in being identified with the West Chicago Sharks. The Shark swimmers are expected to wear the team cap in competitions. Team suits were redesigned in 2011 and it's highly desirable swimmers wear them in all meets. Each season a team shirt is provided to each swimmer. Spirit wear is also available via the Sharks Web site.

**Socials** - The Sharks take time to have fun!!! Socials are planned throughout the season. Sharks have had bowling parties, golf outings, pizza parties, and many others. Please contact any board member or your child's coach if you would like to plan an event or have a suggestion. Team photos are also scheduled each season and can be purchased at the family's discretion.

**Awards for everyone** - The Sharks swim program gives each swimmer an opportunity to strive for his or her own personal best. By attaining a best time at a meet, each swimmer will receive a Shark pin and when 10 best times are earned, he/she can trade in those 10 pins for a special Shark pin that reads "10 Best Times".

A recognition event is held at the end of each season. At this time the Shark's coaches & Board President present several awards for the season. The awards include "High Points" given to the top swimmers in each age group; "Coaches Special Recognition", is given for effort; "Most Improved" for boys and girls in each age group. "Rookie of the Year" can be given to first season boy(s) or girl(s).

The Brad Price Award is given to a 10 and under swimmer who demonstrates team spirit, dedication and who always tries his/her very best throughout the season. This award is given in memory of Shark Swimmer Brad Price who died at age 8 of "ADL" disease.

The Steve Gannon Award is given to the most valuable swimmer of the season, in memory of former Sharks coach Steve Gannon who died of cancer at the age of 26.

The Ray Inman award is given to the parent or set of parents who selflessly give of their time, effort and most of all display a Team Oriented attitude, in helping with meets and other Shark related activities.

**PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES** - Parents constitute the Parent Association and children constitute the Team. This reflects the attitude of family participation, which is a necessary element for the Sharks' existence. Parents are vital,

their responsibilities include:

1. See that your swimmer is on time and ready on the pool deck at designated practice times. (This means get there a few minutes earlier than start times)
2. Pick-up should be scheduled no later than 15 minutes after the conclusion of practice.
3. Quiet observation of practice in the balcony is welcome. Please do not speak to your child or the coaching staff during practice.
4. The coaches encourage questions regarding swimming or a swimmer's progress and are willing to provide answers. However to avoid disruption of practice, please do not attempt to discuss these matters during practice time. Parents may e-mail the coaches with concerns and they will respond as soon as possible.
5. All of our swimmers are important. They all deserve our encouragement and support. Have a kind word for all of the swimmers including your own. Encourage by examples of "good sportsmanship" and "good manners."
6. Encourage your swimmers to stay until the conclusion of dual meets. If our team has won, they should celebrate together. If our team lost, it is important for them to reinforce each other.
7. Pay your fees on time as stated in the fee schedule. The team has bills to pay and this cannot be done without your fees being paid timely. The Treasurer has a big job and it will be made much easier if you do your part as well.
8. It is required that at least one parent (although both would be appreciated) be available to work at all home meets and some away meets their swimmers attend. In addition, everyone will help pitch in with cleaning up after home meets. It takes everyone's participation to maintain the Sharks well deserved and long standing reputation of running the best meets in the area. Parents who are not actively volunteering are required to pay the admissions fee.
9. It is required that parents volunteering for meet jobs arrive slightly before the designated time to perform their work assignments. A meet cannot start and run smoothly until all positions are filled and final instructions have been given.
10. Each swimmer entered in a meet could be charged additional fees to cover incidental costs such as facility fees in addition to normal individual and relay entry fees. Parents should refer to the website under registration information for an in depth explanation of all fees that could be incurred during a season and how your bill is calculated.
11. All fees must be paid when invoiced or a \$10 late charge will be applied and if delays continue, possible suspension of your swimmer(s) from practices and meets.
12. Parents must follow all rules and regulations of Illinois Swimming and United States Swimming at all swim meets. These rules can be obtained by contacting your current Board President or designee.

**SWIMMER'S RESPONSIBILITIES** - In order to achieve both team and individual goals, certain rules must be established and followed.

1. Swimmers should be punctual for all practices and meets. Swimmers are to be dressed and on deck ready to practice at set times. Pool time is very valuable!
2. Swimmers are expected to attend as many practices as possible. Season after season the swimmers who attend the most practices, show the best improvement in their swimming skills and in their race times.
3. Our Coaches' purpose is to help you. You are expected to pay attention and do as they instruct at all times.
4. For safety, there will be no running on the pool deck, in the locker rooms, and outside the pool foyer entrance area. Absolutely no ball playing or physical games are allowed in the foyer area at any time. Remember - we are guests in this building.
5. At all practices, swim meets and team functions, you (parents and swimmers) are a representative of the West Chicago Sharks and your behavior is a reflection of our team. Misconduct of any kind (i.e. horseplay, rowdiness, fighting or insubordination toward any Coach or Meet Official) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with accordingly. The Coaches are authorized to dismiss a swimmer from practice for continuously disrupting others. Repeated offenses may warrant expulsion from practice, a conference with your parents and/or suspension from the team.

**FUND RAISING** - The West Chicago Sharks Swim Team is not a part of a Park District, a YMCA and/or other school taxing body. Our program is only partially funded by your registration fees. The fees you pay are applied to an extensive budget. We have several categories of expenses such as, coaches' salaries, pool equipment, pool rental, insurance, awards, and conference fees along with other day to day operational costs. To meet the expense budget of this large team, additional fund raising is necessary each season. Parent support and participation is an integral part of our budget process in order to meet our financial goals and fund raising keeps fees low.

The West Chicago Sharks host several ISI meets throughout the year. Entry fees, heat sheet sales, admission, concession and apparel sales along with advertising comprise the major fund raising elements for these meets. Hosting ISI meets has been very successful, provides excellent competition for our swimmers and is a great opportunity to showcase our swimming facility and program.

Parents are required to volunteer when their swimmer is in the water at ISI meets and stay to the end. Families who are not fulfilling work requirements may be assessed a special fee as noted in the registration form.

Various other fund raising activities may be available during the swim season. Look for announcements in the newsletter and at the Sharks home page. Please also feel free to contact any board member (though Ways & Means VP handles fund raising) if you

would like to run a fund raising idea or just to share a suggestion.

**PARENT MEET JOBS** - As stated earlier, all families are required to work at the meets when they have a swimmer participating. The good news is, that with everyone pitching in, no one has the bulk of the work to do, and there is always someone available to cover your spot so that you should never miss your child's swim. After all, the kids are the reason we're there and it's soooo great to see their faces after they've finished the race or if they need to be consoled with a hug. Coordinators of certain jobs may take a bit more commitment, but it's worth it getting to know so many of our families and really understanding what it takes to make the Sharks a first class organization. If you're not sure, you can always try a job, someone will be there to teach you, back you up, and give you support. You might even be surprised - it's fun!

About 3-4 weeks prior to our meets, we will post the available jobs on Team Unify where parents can then sign up for their preferred jobs. If there are any questions with this – please let Kim Rockwood or Bridget Fors know.

The following jobs need to be filled in order to run successful meets -

**Admissions** - collects admissions fees and sell psych sheets at pool entry - must be available at least one hour prior to the meet/session and during the entire session.

**Announcer** - Announces events and racers names over the PA system.

**Awards** -Responsible for ordering all ribbons and trophies to be utilized during the season. During a meet, responsible to verify and place tags on ribbons and place in team files. Also will keep track of and place awards for "Best Times" in swimmers folders as directed by coaches.

**Bull Pen (on deck)** - line up and move the swimmers from the bench area to the starting blocks

**Bull Pen (Field house)** - Line the swimmers up by heat and lanes in chairs in the field house. Move the swimmers from the field house onto the pool deck where they will then be double-checked by the deck crew before going to their races.

**Concessions Coordinator(s)** - responsible to post concessions donations lists about one month prior to ISI meets. Determine quantities of inventory necessary for meets. Make arrangements for ice!!! Shop and deliver supplies as needed for meets. Set up prior to beginning of meets and break down at the end of each day. This person must also be accountable to all monies taken in and spent with various vendors throughout the meet. When counting money, it is policy to always do so with another person. May want to coordinate with hospitality as to shopping needs, no sense in doubling efforts.

**Concessions worker** - work at selling concessions during the meet - may also be

required to assist in set-up or clean-up during a session.

**Computer** - Runs the meet on the computer using Hy-Tek software. Must be available at least 1 hour prior to meet to input all final entries.

**Safety Marshal** - Safety for the swimmers is our primary concern. The Sharks are required to have marshals on deck and throughout the meet. STAY ON DECK and control flow of traffic, kids running, and over-all policing to make certain that we provide the best environment possible. Must be available to be on deck no later than warm-ups for this job.

**Heat Winner Tag Maker** - Utilize software and laminating to make all of the heat tags for use in the ISI meets. May also work with volunteer coordinator to make parent name badges.

**Heat Winner Tag Presenter** - Stands on deck at the end of the pool and passes out heat tags to the winner of each heat.

**Hospitality coordinator** - Plans hospitality menu to serve to coaches and officials. Posts donations needed for hospitality (especially home prepared foods) in coordination with concession meet donations. May work with concessions coordinator to be sure efforts are not duplicated.

**Hospitality** - assists with set up, serving and clean-up of food & beverages to coaches and officials during meets

**Meet Director** - This is the person in charge of planning and running ALL aspects of the meet. This may include, but not be limited to preparation of the facility, arranging for equipment & supplies, processing entries, printing programs, preparing & distributing results within 14 days. Must work well in coordination with all other areas to see that everything comes together.

**Officials** - Referee, Starter, Stroke & Turn Judges and Administrative Officials all must complete Illinois Swimming Inc. training to fill these positions. Please refer to ISI's website at [www.ilswim.org](http://www.ilswim.org) for more information on how to become an official.

**Positive check-in** - cross off swimmers names when they arrive for meet. Work with computer person to input. Must be available 1 hour prior to start of meet/session.

**Runner** - delivers paperwork from the computer table to the officials, coaches & timers. Hang heat/lane assignments and final results

**Timer** - Uses provided stopwatches to time each heat. Starts their watches each race. They are there in case a touchpad malfunctions on anyone of the lanes and to record

times on heat sheets.

**Time Sheet Runner** - Collect time sheets & deliver to computer table every two events. May also hand out heat winner tags in meets where they are awarded.

**Timing Console** -Operates the timing machine that registers official times as indicated by the touch pads. Works closely with the Administrative Official.

**Volunteer Coordinator** – About one week prior to the meet, checks volunteers against swimmers entered and contacts families who have not signed up and assigns them a job and makes certain that all positions are filled. Must verify that workers arrive and do assigned jobs. Also order and distribute name badges of volunteers.

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP** - Besides helping out at meets, there are other opportunities to help out the team. While these take more commitment, it is worth it getting to know so many of our families and really understanding what it takes to make the Sharks a first class organization. If you have any questions on the various positions – feel free to contact: Kim Rockwood (Team President).

Team Apparel Coordinators
Awards Banquet Volunteers
Age Group Parent Liaisons
Fundraising Event Volunteers
Other Event Hospitality Coordinators & Volunteers

**SHARKS' CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY** - Occasionally on a team like the Sharks we may have a behavioral issue with a team member. Almost always, a word or two from the Coaches has taken care of the inappropriate behavior. When verbal reprimands have not stopped the misbehavior, consequences are in place to provide the framework for the Coaches to deal with this inappropriate behavior. A "disciplinary continuum" has been developed which outlines the procedures that will be followed if further steps are needed to correct any misbehavior. The disciplinary continuum will involve:

FIRST OFFENSE	Verbal warning from the Coach.
SECOND OFFENSE	Parent notification of behavior and warn of suspension on next misbehavior.
THIRD OFFENSE	One week suspension from practices & meets.
SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE	Two week suspension from practices & meets.

Depending on the severity of the offense, the corrective action will be up to and including dismissal and immediate suspension and or separation from the team may be issued. The Coaches and the Executive Board will review each case on it's individual merit. This policy, as in any disciplinary policy found on a team, is not designed to punish, but is useful as a preventative measure in that there are consequences for repeated misbehavior. This gives you a better understanding of the behavioral expectations of a positive team member of the West Chicago Sharks.

# **CONTACTS**

## **Coaches:**

Coach Emeritus	Dan Johnson (DJ)	<a href="mailto:dan-johnson@comcast.net">dan-johnson@comcast.net</a>
Head Coach Senior Program	Nick Parry	<a href="mailto:nparry@gmail.com">nparry@gmail.com</a>
Lead Coach Senior Regional/State & Junior Elite Programs	Kelly Loftus	Keloftus16@aol.com
Head Coach Age Group Program	Dan Fors	<a href="mailto:Forsd@wego33.org">Forsd@wego33.org</a>
Assistant Coach Age Group Program	Mary Beth Zarndt	Zarndtm@wego33.org
Coach Gold & Silver	Kara Parry	<a href="mailto:Kparry82@gmail.com">Kparry82@gmail.com</a>
Coach 9-10, 8 & Under	Kelly Mateas	mateask@aol.com
Assistant Coach Senior Group	Gary Rockwood	Gary.rockwood@here.com
Assistant Coach 10& Under	Natalie Nelson	
Leyden Head Coach	Chris Cook	<a href="mailto:ccook927@comcast.net">ccook927@comcast.net</a>
Leyden Age Group Coach	Jonathan Burke	

**Board of Directors:**

President	Kim Rockwood	630-876-0034	<a href="mailto:g3smom@sbcglobal.net">g3smom@sbcglobal.net</a>
Vice President	Dave Todd	630-514-5108	<a href="mailto:dmtodd458@comcast.net">dmtodd458@comcast.net</a>
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Meet Director	Bridget Fors	630-406-0679	<a href="mailto:Bridgetfors44@gmail.com">Bridgetfors44@gmail.com</a>

**Parent Coordinators:**

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