

# **GREENFIELD COMMUNITY AQUATIC TEAM HANDBOOK**

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# **SECTION ONE: WELCOME!**

Congratulations! You are now the member of one of the top competitive swim clubs in Indiana! You have selected an activity that will provide a wholesome, healthy, and enjoyable activity for your child.

Unlike many other sports, swimming is a year-round and lifetime sport. While there is the possibility your child may someday choose another activity, your child may enjoy swimming so much they continue to swim competitively through and beyond their college years.

Through GCAT, swimming provides the opportunity to:

- Learn how to achieve. The process of achievement is as important as the achievement itself, and our staff coaches this philosophy.
- Compete with one's self. At GCAT, being first is not over-emphasized, but continuing self-improvement through goal setting, and the pursuit of those goals is encouraged.
- Develop life, and life-saving skills. GCAT builds a tradition where children and young adults develop into excellent swimmers, well-rounded people with leadership talents and attitudes of good sportsmanship, cooperation and dedication
- Form strong personal friendships. Swimming binds families together and provides a great community. Swimmers will likely form strong, life-long friendships.

We provide you this handbook to serve as a valuable resource on all club related matters. Experience teaches that informed parents are more team-oriented, patient with the progress of their child, and tend to become long-term members of GCAT. Informed parents make better volunteers and are great supporters of all GCAT swimmers.

Remember; take your experience one season at a time. Swimming will be a meaningful and rewarding experience, but keep in mind, even Rome wasn't built in a day. Patient and positive support are the keys to ultimate success. Life is not a destination, it's the daily opportunity to participate and recognition of our daily progress that provides the most reward.

**THANK YOU for joining GREENFIELD COMMUNITY AQUATIC TEAM, and for encouraging your child to SWIM!**

## **“WHY YOU SHOULD BE GLAD YOUR CHILD CHOSE SWIMMING”**

Sports are supposed to be good for your kids. In theory, a sport should build strong bodies, not tear them down. It should promote sportsmanship, self-discipline, and perseverance. Unfortunately, not all sports fulfill these ideals. Swimming, however, fulfills all in abundance.

According to many authors on child sports, swimming uniquely develops the cardiovascular system to its maximum. This makes it an ideal sport for children since an efficient cardiovascular system is key to life-long health. In addition, swimming runs very little risk of injury. Swimming is rated as the ‘most desirable’ sport by insurance company actuarial tables. Simply put, swimmers live longest!

Swimming is a SPORT in the truest sense of the word. It’s a pursuit of personal excellence. Its very nature demands self-discipline and great strength of purpose. Different from most other sports, there is no existence of ‘luck’ involved in swimming. No teammates or bad luck to blame in swimming, there is only the swimmer, the water, and the clock. Swimmers, more than many athletes, learn early the relationship between hard work and results.

Striving for excellence is what ancient Greeks revered as being the character quality bringing out the best of mankind. Supposedly, the development of these qualities is the reason for sports in our schools. By striving for excellence in swimming, swimmers develop an attitude of demanding excellence in everything they do. For example, in the ’96-’97 Big Ten Conference, of the 298 student athletes given academic all-conference, 58% of the nominees were from one single sport: swimming! These numbers say a great deal about swimming, and swimmers.

GCAAT statistics show this statistic even better! In 2011-12, Greenfield Central girls were ranked number ONE in Indiana, and number FIVE in the nation for combined team GPA, with a staggering combined GPA of 3.94. The boys HS team was not far behind, with a combined team GPA at 3.47. Our own local swimmers are the perfect example.

## ***SWIMMING TEACHES THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE!***

### **THE SPORT OF SWIMMING**

#### **THE SKILLS**

There are four competitive strokes: Freestyle (crawl), backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

#### **THE COMPETITION**

Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances for each age group and classification. Each swimmer may enter up to five individual events per day in a timed finals meet, and up to three events per day at a prelims/finals meet.

In Freestyle, the swimmer can swim any stroke. The most common used is the crawl. Alternate overhand arm motion and flutter kick while face down in the water is the motions.

Backstroke consists of alternating arm strokes and flutter kicks while swimming with back in the water, face up.

The Breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on a horizontal plane. The hands are pulled up from the breast in a heart-shaped pattern, and recovered under water except at the finish. The legs/feet perform a simultaneous circular motion similar to a frog kick. On turns and finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously, shoulders in line with the water's surface.

The Butterfly features simultaneous overhand arm strokes with an undulating dolphin style leg/feet kick. Both legs must stay together and in unison. Butterfly was introduced in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

Individual Medleys, or IM, feature all 4 strokes in one event. The order is Fly, Back, Breast, free.

Medley Relays also feature all 4 strokes, but one swimmer is assigned one stroke. The order in this relay is Back, Breast, Fly, and Free.

Starts, turns, finishes: Many races are won or lost by the swimmers skill in these critical areas.

## **Strategies**

Sprint races are 50 or 100 yard in length. Middle distance events are 200 to 500 yards, and include both a pace, and sprint period in the race. Long Distance events are 800, 1000, 1500, and 1650 yard events. Swimmers must constantly be aware where they are in the event. Start too fast and leave no energy for the finish, or start too slowly and lose sight of the leaders. There are strategy options for the middle and long distance events. Pace, or negative splits, where the swimmer deliberately swims slower in the first half and faster in the second are a couple of the options. Strategies are selected by joint discussions between swimmer and coach. Regarding race strategies please refer to section 6, commandment 3!

## **The Course and Season**

Competitive pools can be short course (25 yards or meters) or long course (50 meters). GCAT trains year round, and competes in both types of pools. Summer is long course season, and fall/winter/spring is our short course season. The Olympic standard pool is 50 meters.

## **SECTION TWO: GETTING TO KNOW GCAT**

### **GCAT HISTORY**

Greenfield Community Aquatic Teams was founded in 2008 by head high school coach Tom Moore and the dedicated parents of swimmers at that time. The initial club membership was @ 35 swimmers. For the first two years, GCAT operated as a branch of the Southeastern Swim Club of Fishers, practicing in the Hamilton Southeastern High School pool, and all GCAT swimmers were members of SSC.

In 2010, GCAT officially stepped away from SSC and began existing as its own entity. For the first 3 years of existence, GCAT was the fastest growing, and fastest improving swim club in Indiana. Membership grew to over 85 members. Swimmers began achieving state cuts, and our first swimmers went to club state championship meets.

As of summer, 2012, GCAT ranks 36<sup>th</sup> of 105 swim clubs in Indiana, and have a membership of over 100 swimmers.

GCAT also welcomes its second head coach with the hiring in June, 2012 of Mark Logan. Mark and his wife Emily also take over the head coaching positions for men's and women's swim teams at Greenfield Central High School for the 2012/13 school year.

Greenfield Community Aquatic Teams is open to all residents of Hancock County and surrounding areas. Levels begin with the twice annual 'Learn to Swim' lessons offered, with GCAT members and coaches as instructors. Four additional levels of swim and competition swimming are offered.

GCAT is a member of USA and Indiana Swimming Inc, the official development program and structure of USA Olympic Swimming. GCAT swim members who meet time qualifications are eligible and invited to compete in State, Zone, National, and Olympic trial swim competitions.

## **SECTION 3: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

It is a basic assumption that for an age-group competitive program to succeed, it must begin with children at an early age, encompass and challenge all who participate, and follow a continuous developmental progression. The five levels of instruction and training for GCAT are designed to allow for gradual and complete development of an individual's potential. The progression of an athlete from one group to the next is solely a coach's decision based on many variables and usually not age alone. Please keep in mind that movement from group to group can be down as well as up depending on which group would most accurately fit each athlete's ability. Therefore, if athletes are not performing at the level of the group and its requirements, he/she will be moved to a group that will challenge them in a more realistic manner.

Possible, one of the most important and confusing factors concerning program development is the challenge of insuring that the program focuses on creating a life-long swimming progression. It has often been said that it is not difficult to teach 10-unders how to swim really fast, but where will they be when they are 16, or in college? At GCAT, we feel that the young or beginning swimmer should focus more on technique than speed. We want to insure that the swimmer feels challenged every year and that we are constantly offering more to the athletes as they mature physically. A large majority of elite college swimmers today were mediocre 10-unders, if they even swam at that age.

At GCAT, we believe that many athletes have been encouraged to focus strictly on speed at an early age, and that often this leads to the overused term "burnout". We believe that progression should be planned and coordinated for natural development in a fun and supportive atmosphere. We want swimmers to be most successful when their bodies are physically and mentally prepared for top performances.

Please keep in mind that one of the most influential aspects of how a swimmer progresses in this program is their attendance. There is not an attendance policy at GCAT because participation in other activities is encouraged. That said, it is important to keep in mind that parents and swimmers must understand that progression will come with attendance and that families need to be as comfortable with the progression as they are with attendance.

## AGE GROUP CLASSIFICATIONS:

Swimmers are evaluated at first registration by the club coaching staff, and then placed into a group appropriate to the new member's age and skill level. Following is a description of the different groups and levels of skill progression:

### Cougar Cubs

→**Age:** Age 5 and up.

→**Time:** 6:45-7:30 Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursday.

→**Equipment needed:** Goggles, Caps (girls required, boys optional), kick board

→**Criteria:** -Coaches discretion.

-Swim 25 yards/meters freestyle without stopping (side breathing)

-Swim 25 yards/meters backstroke without stopping

→**Expectations:** To learn and perform the correct technique for all four competitive strokes (Free, Back, Breast, and Fly) by using drills and games. Freestyle flip turns will be introduced as well as "open" turns for Back, Breast and Fly. Introduce and progress from diving to competitive starts.

### Panthers

→**Age:** Ages 5 to 11

→ (50% or less in practice attendance)

→**Time:** 6:00-7:00 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (no dry land)

→**Equipment needed:** Goggles, kick board.

→**Goals:** -Coaches Discretion (Must achieve 1 out of 2)

-Swim a 100 I.M. showing correct technique and with no disqualifications or stopping.

-Swim 200 Free with side breathing, no stopping, and with flip turns.

\*Must be under 4:00 (yards) and 4:15 (meters)

→**Expectations:** Members of this group should be able to demonstrate correct technique of all four competitive strokes. Build on the base knowledge to improve technique of freestyle flip turns and open turns of Fly and Breast. Backstroke flip turns and starts will be introduced. Continue with progression of starts. Begin building swimmers endurance for competitive swim meet format.

# Wildcats

→**Age:** Ages 8 to 11

→(60% or more practice attendance)

→**Time:** 5:30-7:00 Tuesdays and Thursdays (1/2 hour dry land at beginning)

6:00-7:00 Mondays and Wednesday (no dry land)

10:00-11:30 Saturdays (occasional)

→**Equipment needed:** Goggles, swim bag, paddles, kickboard, pull buoy, and fins

→**Criteria:** -Coaches discretion (Must achieve 2 out of 3)

-Swim a 200 I.M. demonstrating correct technique, and with no disqualifications or stopping.

-Swim a 200 Free with side breathing, no stopping, and with proficient flip turns.

\*Must be under 3:45 (yards) and 4:00 (meters)

-Swim a 500 Free with side breathing, no stopping, and with proficient flip turns.

\*Must be under 8:30 minutes (yards)

- Swim 5 x 100 Free on 2:00 with correct technique, and perform great flip turns.

→**Expectations:** Must be able to perform all requirements in group A as well as the criteria in group B. Continue correcting and perfecting technique of all four competitive strokes. Progress technique of all starts and turns for the best technique. Introduce underwater breast stroke pullouts off starts and turns. Build endurance for longer distance races at competitive meets. Goal is to swim 200's at meets. Begin to introduce training intervals and learning the basic fundamentals of training workouts (clock reading, length, etc).

# Pumas

→**Age:** Ages 11-14

→**Time:** 7:00 to 8:00 Monday thru Thursday

→**Equipment needed:** Goggles, kickboard,

→**Goals:** Members of this group should be able to demonstrate correct technique of all four competitive strokes. Build on the base knowledge to improve technique of freestyle flip turns and open turns of Fly and Breast. Backstroke flip turns and starts will be introduced. Continue with progression of starts. Begin building swimmers endurance for competitive swim meet format.

# Jaguars

→ **Age:** Ages 11-14

→ **Time:** Monday thru Thursday 6:30 to 8:30 (1/2 hour dry land at beginning)

Odd Weeks: Tuesday and Thursday A.M. (with high school)

Even Weeks: Wednesdays A.M.

\*Weeks of meets, Puma and Jaguar will practice Friday A.M. with high school.

→ (51% or more practice attendance rate)

→ **Equipment Needed:** Goggles, swim bag, paddles, pull buoy, snorkels, kickboards, and fins.

→ **Criteria:** -Coaches Discretion (At least 3 out of 4)

-Any 11 and up swimmer with 1 or more AGS cuts

-Swim 200 I.M. with correct technique, proper turns, and without stopping under 3:10 (yards)

-Swim 500 Free with proficient turns, and technique under 7:30 minutes.

-Swim 12 x 50's IMO with: 15 RI with legal strokes and turns

-Swim 6 x 100 Free on 1:45 with correct technique and with great flip turns.

→ **Expectations:** This group is considered the elite group of our Age Group Program. Swimmers in this group will be held accountable for their attendance, training, and dedication to the team. Members in this group will continue working on perfecting technique of all four strokes as well as starts, turns, and underwater work. Emphasis will be placed on improving efficiency of strokes for longer distance racing. Swimmers in this group will be encouraged to swim distance events (400 I.M., 500 Free, and mile) at meets. The workout schedule of this group is to help prepare them for high school swimming.

## Jr. Cougar:

→ Age 12-14

→ Swimmers with Zones, or Junior National Cuts

→ This group will practice with Senior Cougar group

# **SECTION FOUR: TRAINING** **GUIDELINES**

Our physical and mental training programs are geared to bring about individual improvement in several areas. The harder and more consistently a swimmer trains in each of these areas, the better they will condition themselves for peak performance. Through that development process, the swimmer will change their body and swim faster. The degree a swimmer is “conditioned” depends on the type, amount, and quality of the training that he/she may have done. Each time stress is placed on the body, the body attempts to adapt to this stress by changing itself.

All team members must realize that the body changes and adapts to changes in direct correlation to the effort and consistency put into the training. These changes most commonly come very slowly and there are no short cuts. This is true for all athletes, regardless of age. Many times the younger swimmer is learning to focus on perfecting strokes and becoming comfortable with the sport. Alternatively, the older more experienced swimmer focuses on a more physically demanding training schedule. Both ages, however, will find that their success is directly related to a consistent and focused approach to their sport.

## Expected habits, practice policies & code of conduct

GCAT coaches expect each swimmer to display these habits

- 1. Always be punctual*
- 2. Train to your limits*
- 3. Use the pace clock*
- 4. Begin each repeat precisely on time and at :05 intervals*
- 5. Start and finish every swim at the wall.*
- 6. Listen-**No talking** when directions are being given*
- 7. Perform every set and drill exactly as stated.*
- 8. Do every stroke and turn legally.*

9. *Learn to enjoy a hard challenging practice since this is what helps you reach your potential.*
10. *Always have the necessary equipment including mesh bag, extra suit & goggles.*

## **PRACTICE POLICIES**

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the coach's policies regarding practice. These policies have been developed over many years and are designed to provide the best practice environment for all.

1. GCAT does not have a set attendance policy. As with most athletic activities, competition will improve as practice time increases. Your coaching staff has spent a great deal of time preparing a practice schedule that caters to the variety of ages and ability levels for GCAT. The coaching staff will take attendance on a daily basis so that the progress of each athlete can be tracked.
2. GCAT swimmers should arrive at the pool practice facility no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their workout time. They should also be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their practice time is over. This is for their safety and protection.
3. In order to continue the good relationship that we currently have with our High School, no swimmers are allowed in any areas of the High School other than the workout facilities and the halls that lead to them. It is also extremely important for siblings of swimmers, as well as any other young children involved with the team, to be under constant supervision.
4. While at practice, swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. During workouts, swimmers are not to leave the pool area without the coach's permission. In addition, a parent must notify the coach verbally or with a written note if any swimmer would need to leave practice early.
5. GCAT is the guest of Greenfield Central High School and it is our responsibility to respect this privilege. Any damage to the school property may result in the financial liability of the swimmer's family. Any damage may also result in the swimmer being asked to leave the team permanently.
6. Our preference is that GCAT practices be closed to coaches and athletes only. However, if necessary, parents may sit in the stands during practice sessions as long as this does not create an excessive amount of noise in the pool area. Please refrain from contacting the

coach or communicating with any swimmer during practices. This is not only disturbing to the swimmer, but is also distracting to the entire team and the coach.

7. Promptness is a must for practices to be worthwhile. Therefore, a swimmer will not be allowed to practice if he/she is more than 15 minutes late to practice. Exceptions to this rule will be allowed if the parents have arranged for this with the coach or if the parents would come on deck and explain the circumstances of the tardiness to the coach.

## **GCAT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Purpose: To promote the best possible conduct of GCAT swimmers at all functions. To create the best possible individual, and public team impression at all times.

- Drugs, Tobacco and alcohol are strictly forbidden for all GCAT swimmers.
- Unsportsmanlike, indiscreet, destructive and distractive behavior, including the use of obscene language will not be tolerated.
- Interference with another swimmer's progress is not acceptable.
- Swimmers are expected and required to conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner at all times as they are representatives of GCAT and the Greenfield Community.
- Swimmers cannot scratch from an event without coach clearance.
- Disrespectful behavior towards meet officials and workers and unsportsmanlike conduct at any meet is forbidden. Problems should be brought to a coach and allow the coach to handle any meet issues.
- Friendship and camaraderie between teammates is priceless and essential to the success of our team/club GCAT. Comments that are unsportsmanlike, inappropriate, racial, sexist, and/or damaging to the team spirit by a GCAT swimmer, whether directed at opposing club swimmers or at GCAT teammates will not be tolerated.
- Respectful behavior towards coaches, officials, and parents is expected. Any inappropriate behavior or comments directed towards coaches, officials, or teammates will not be tolerated.

Violation of the GCAT code of conduct are grounds for disciplinary actions, which can include parent contact, swimmer & parent meetings with coach and/or club board, temporary suspension from team practices and meets, and expulsion from GCAT. The severity and frequency of violation will determine the appropriate disciplinary action. Minor violations may be handled by team coaches only, but all violations will be reported to the board and kept on file.

## **Mental Training Guidelines**

Performing your best on a consistent level, no matter what kind of pressures you are experiencing, certainly is a challenge faced by most competitive individuals today. To become and remain a consistent top performer, you must first know and understand yourself. Furthermore, the development of an action plan allows you to understand and deal effectively with the highs and lows of your competitive arena; you need to become aware of your own strengths and barriers.

At GCAT, we believe that once an individual enters a competitive situation, there is no time to develop techniques or skills. Rather, the mental aspect of the task takes over. If the individual knows and understands themselves and has done a thorough job of mental preparation, a top performance can be expected. The following strategies are the focus of GCAT's mental training and have been used successfully by coaches, champion athletes, competitors in business, students, and parents – both in their personal and professional lives.

- ✓ **The two components for consistent top performances are HARD WORK and a complete understanding of your MENTAL PROCESS.**
- ✓ **There is no substitute for HARD WORK.**
- ✓ **A sound MENTAL PROCESS consists of:**
  - **Knowing, understanding, and appreciating yourself.**
  - **Your approach to mental strategies; learn, practice, and use them.**
- ✓ **Your SELF-TALK builds your SELF-IMAGE, which controls your PERFORMANCE, which stimulates your SELF-TALK, therefore, a thorough evaluation of your SELF-TALK is important.**
- ✓ **Know your STRENGTHS! It is worthwhile to acknowledge your weaknesses and then highlight and focus on your STRENGTHS.**
- ✓ **LAW OF CUMULATION=the result of many little things is not little. Be sure to acknowledge the many LITTLE WINS in your life.**
- ✓ **GREEN LIGHTS = Think about, talk about, look for, expect, and acknowledge the GREENLIGHTS in your life.**
- ✓ **RELAX! Two keys to relaxing in pressure situations are proper breathing (belly breaths) and using relaxing thoughts and images.**
- ✓ **IMAGING! Build clear, crisp images when setting goals or sending a message to others. Remember, people think in images, not words.**
- ✓ **Attempt to use a positive attitude as your dominant thought process. Always use productive and positive thoughts!**

# A SWIMMER'S GUIDE TO MENTAL TOUGHNESS

By: Dr. Alan Goldberg

If you really want to maximize your potential as a competitive swimmer and reach the goals you've set for yourself, then you have to start today to train yourself mentally as well as physically. Without the right head set and mental strategies, you'll always swim slower than your capabilities. In order to gain the Competitive Advantage and swim like a winner you've got to first think like one. Understand and practice the following ideas and steps, and they'll help you on your way to becoming a champion! Remember you can't go fast without using your head, and you can't develop mental toughness without consistent practice.

**# 1. Keep your swimming fun.** Do not wait until you win before you start having fun. Champions go fast because they are having fun! When you enjoy yourself you'll be physically looser and will swim much faster. Make your practices and meets fun! If you're too serious and turn your swimming into all work and no fun, you will definitely run in to performance difficulties and be a candidate for burnout. Remember fun and speed goes together. If you find yourself dreading your meets, something's wrong.

**# 2. Have clear goals-**You can't get to where you want to go unless you know exactly where that is. Your success as a swimmer starts with a dream, a goal of how far you'd like to go in the sport. The more detailed a picture you can paint of this goal, the better your chance of turning your dream into a reality. Saying you want to be as good as you can or go faster are goals that are general and too vague to be useful. Qualifying for Senior Nationals, or going 50 flat in the 100 fly are clear, specific and more reachable. Your goals are like magnets, which will pull you in their direction. The more specific and detailed you make them and the more time you spend thinking about them, the stronger the pull. Try to have your goals broken down from long term to intermediate to short term so that even on a daily basis you will have specific goals for practice. This will help you stay motivated over the long haul.

**# 3. Make your practices important: Use simulation in practice-**Most swimmers spend the same amount of time practicing weekly. However, only a small fraction of athletes improve to their potential. The reason behind this lies in your practices. Practice does not make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect. Too many swimmers go through the motions in practice. They put their time in but not their minds or their emotions. They daydream during sets or wish they were elsewhere. During difficult sets they look for ways to dog it. You will compete the way you practice. Practice just like meets, mentally as well as physically; that is make your practices important, use your imagination to simulate meet or race conditions. Take a few of those long, boring, painful sets and pretend you're actually competing. Practice race turns, finishing fast, getting your pain to work for you, etc. The more important you can make your practices and the more similar to actual meets, the more you'll get out of them. Every chance you have, set up specific race scenarios in your head and then swim as if everything was on the line. If you consistently practice this way, the way champions do, you'll soon find your meet times dropping.

**# 4. Focus on your race one stroke at a time-not winning or qualifying-**You will swim your best when your concentration is on your race, one stroke at a time. You will choke and swim badly when you get caught up with outcome thoughts (i.e. winning, losing, qualifying, times, etc.). The outcome of your race, which is in the future, is totally out of your control! Swimmers who get distracted with this kind of future focus almost always swim tight and fell heavy. Stay in the now as you race; concentrating on what you are doing, while you are doing it. If you find yourself thing "what if..."that's a reminder that you are mentally in the future and need to change your focus.

**# 5. Concentrate = Recognize (step #1)=Bring yourself back (step#2)**-In order to swim as fast as you can, you've got to have your mind in the right place. Concentration is the key mental skill to swimming excellence and mental toughness. Here's how to do it! Step 1: Recognize that you are mentally in the wrong place, i.e. in the future worried about an outcome or a swimmer in the next lane. Step 2: Quickly and gently bring yourself back to a proper focus. You learn to concentrate by catching yourself when you're not concentrating! This is the heart of championship concentration.

**# 6. Learn to quickly let go of your mistakes and failures**-Champions do one thing better than everyone else. FAIL! When a champion has a bad race, they not only use this failure for feedback (What did I do wrong... How can I improve) but just as important, they let it go quickly. In other words, they don't dwell on the past. When you hang onto your bad races and mistakes at a meet, the one thing you can count on happening is that you'll get more of them! Learn to recognize when your mind's in the past and quickly and gently let it go. Telling yourself things like "Here we go again," "Why does this always happen to me?" are indicators that your focus is stuck in the past. Only go into the past if your past is a positive, self-enhancing one!

**# 7. Stay within yourself-swim your own race-stay mentally in the "here"**-You will swim your very best when you can learn to mentally stay within yourself, focusing on what you have to do and are doing. Psych-outs and intimidation can only occur when you choose to start focusing outside of yourself or on another swimmer. Staying within yourself means that you have to want to mentally stay in your own lane when you compete. Thinking about someone else's best times, how fast they finish, or how awesome they are will only make you choke and swim tight. Stay in the "here" by recognizing when you're in the wrong mental place and bringing yourself back right away to what you're doing.

**# 8. Control your eyes and ears for championship meet performances**-Related to #7, learn to control what you look at and listen to, both before and during the race. That is, only visually focus on things that keep you calm, composed, and ready to perform well. If looking at the gallery, or other racers, makes you uptight... don't do it! Instead look down at the blocks or at a spot across the pool or keep one eye on the water, which keeps you, relaxed. Similarly, make sure any things you "look" at in your mind's eye are positive and confidence enhancing. If you are using imagery and keep seeing a false start, either change the image or actively look at something else. Controlling your ears means that you only want to listen to things that will keep you calm, composed, and confident. If your self-talk is making you uptight, change it! Or block it out by listening to your iPod. Control your eyes and ears for mental toughness.

**# 9. See what you want to have happen, not what you're afraid will happen**-Winners in and out of the pool have learned to use their imagination (mental rehearsal and imagery) to help them reach their goals. Make it a practice to focus on exactly what you want to have happen, not what you're afraid will happen. Focusing on positive images will calm you down, raise your confidence, and increase your chances of achieving your goals. Practice mental rehearsal 5-10 minutes at a time, preceded by relaxation in an area free from distractions. Make your pictures (sounds, feelings) as vivid and detailed as possible, seeing, hearing, and feeling yourself performing just the way you'd like to.

**# 10. Let it happen = speed**-when you swim your fastest, there is an automatic, effortless quality to your performance. You are working hard without trying hard. It feels easy, yet powerful. When you get in to a meet situation, you have to remember that in order to swim your best, you have to relax and let the race happen. If you make your race too important, you'll get into trying too hard and will swim slower. Trust that you've done everything you need to, your body and muscle memory knows what to do, and then just let the performance happen. Swim with effortless effort.

# 11. **Swim with no-mind to go fast**-A corollary to #10, if you want to go fast you've got to keep your conscious mind and all of its thoughts out of the pool. In your best races, not only did you swim on autopilot, but most likely there was a no-thinking quality to your race. Conscience thought slows you down and distracts you. You want to swim unconsciously with no mind. In baseball Yogi Bera once said, "a full mind is an empty bat." The same applies to you and your swimming. The more you think, the slower you'll go. Practice, in practice, doing "no-think" swims.

# 12. **GIGO-you swim the way you think**-The difference between your best and worst swims is usually related to your mental "strategies" just before and during your race. That is, what you think, say to yourself and image both before and during your race determines whether you'll go fast or slow. If you program garbage into your computer (brain) before a race ("What if I false start," "What if I blow my turn," or "He'll probably catch me at the finish and win."), you will get garbage back out in your performances. Learn to "program in" good stuff, and that's what you'll get back out.

# 13 **Be positive-nothing good comes from negativity**-When you're negative or down on yourself, you sap your energy, drain your confidence, and insure that you will swim poorly. Practice being positive about yourself, teammates, and coaches, NO MATTER WHAT. A positive attitude will help you overcome hardships and setbacks and keep you going. A negative attitude will trick you into giving up too soon. Winners in and out of the pool are positive. "Can't", "Never," and "Impossible" do not exist in the dictionary of their minds.

# 14. **Reframe adversity**-Learn to look at obstacles and setbacks as a way to get more motivated and to increase your confidence. Most swimmers complain bitterly about pool temperature, lane assignments, rain, and fatigue. The great swimmers use any kind of adversity to help them get the competitive advantage over their opponents. For example, you can do one of two things with the pain and fatigue. You can dread it; fight it; complain about it and consequently tighten up and back down from it=going slower; or you can refrain from it. You can say to yourself "Everyone in this race has to deal with this pain, and I'm mentally tougher to handle it than everyone else....pain and fatigue is an indicator that I'm going fast, that my body's working well, and a signal for me to move towards it, stretching it out, and lengthening the stroke". Learn to think like a winner by reframing. When your swimming gives you lemons....make lemonade out of them.

# 15 **Act as if**-If you want to become a winner, first you have to learn to act like one. 'Acting as if,' is a master strategy of champions. If you act the way you want to become, you'll become the way you act. 'Acting as if' has to do with your posture or how you carry yourself physically. Watch swimmers after they've had a bad race and you'll see some interesting stuff. Their heads will be down, shoulders drooping, facial expression down, and they'll be dragging their feet. If you act this way physically, like a loser, you'll perform like one. A winner's fallback position is to 'act as if'. If you're totally intimidated and freaking out before a race, 'act as if': act calm and confident. Have your head up, put a smile on your face, pick your shoulders up and put a spring in your step; even if you're dying inside. Show your opponent someone who on the outside looks in control.

# 16. **Learn to be your own best fan**-It's real easy to be nice to yourself and supportive when you're winning. Champions, however, separate themselves from everyone else because they've learned to be supportive to themselves when things are going badly. Getting down on yourself for bad performances will not help you in the long run. It will kill your motivation and make you an unhappy camper. Learn to be your one best fan. Someone who is here to share the success and to help you through the tough times. After all, that's when you need support the most, especially from yourself.

# 17. **You are not your races**-Learn to separate who you are as an athlete and person from how you do in your meets. You are not the results of your races. If you have a great meet this does not make you a great person. More importantly, if you have an awful meet, this does not make you the scum of the earth. If you get caught up in putting your ego on the line whenever you compete, you can be sure of one thing; you'll take a fall a whole lot. A swim meet should never be viewed as a measure of self-worth and respectability, by you, your coaches, or your parents.

# 18. **Learn to relax**-In order to stay within yourself and swim your won race you need to have the ability to handle competitive pressure. For many, this ability does not come naturally. You can learn to stay composed under pressure by practicing one or two of the many relaxation techniques available to athletes. Probably on of the best is to learn to slow and deepen your breathing. By taking a few slow diaphragmatic breaths, you can very quickly calm yourself down pre-race. Practice at home sitting for five minutes at a time, inhaling slowly through your nose to a count of 4, and the exhaling to a count of 7-8, and continuing this process for the allotted time. Every time you drift, you can practice recognizing that you've lost your focus and then bring yourself back.

# **SECTION FIVE: MEET**

## **INFORMATION**

### **OVERVIEW OF A SWIM MEET**

The purpose of a swim meet is to showcase the improvements that a swimmer has made in each event and stroke. Coaches choose meets that they believe will be beneficial for all swimmers. The listing of swim meets that GCAT attends is usually posted on the GCAT Website a month before the said meet, giving the parent/s opportunity and time to check their schedule and see if their child will be available to participate in that meet. USA Swimming meets are usually held over 2 – 3 days, (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday). Friday evening events usually consist of the distance events, while Saturday and Sunday are divided into AM and PM sessions according to age groups. The session assignments differ from meet to meet, and this information will be available to parents on the GCAT website after the meet entry is received from the host club.

Competitive swim meets have two formats. One is called a timed finals format. In this type of meet, the swimmer swims his/her events only one time and that swim determines his/her final placing in the meet. Most meets are run on a timed finals basis. The other format is called prelim and finals. The preliminary swims are during either the AM or PM session with the objective being to qualify for an evening finals session. Depending upon the meet, either the fastest 8 (in an 8-lane pool) or the fastest 16 swimmers return to swim in the evening finals competition. If the fastest 16 swimmers return, the preliminary swimmers in places 9 – 16 will compete in the consolation finals (“consi”) while the preliminary swimmers in places 1 through 8 will compete in the championship heat. If a swimmer does not wish to return for the evening session, he/she may “scratch” the event and not be penalized if the scratch is made within one-half hour of the posting of preliminary results.

### **PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION**

Participation in meets is completely voluntary, but encouraged as part of the swimmer’s development. GCAT is a competitive swim team, and therefore, it is pertinent that we do compete in meets. All members are encouraged to participate in at least two meets per season. Meets are scheduled as close as two weeks apart or as far as one month apart. This happens when the meets available to us offer no other alternative.

The GCAT coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning which swim meets GCAT swimmers may attend.

## **MEET SIGN-UP**

GCAT Swim Club has available online meet signup. For more instruction on using our website, please refer to Section 7 (Social & Communication) of this handbook.

## **MEET ENTRY FEES**

The host team for a meet will assess a charge for each event in which your swimmer is entered ranging from \$1.75 to \$4.00 per event. If your swimmer is signed up to participate in the meet and signed up for certain events, the coach will approve the events, and the swimmer will be charged only for those approved events. The GCAT team sends one large check for the entire amount of the GCAT Entry Fees. The Treasurer then receives a list of the individual charges, and those charges will appear on your monthly invoice.

GCAT must pay the fees for all entered swimmers regardless of whether they actually swim in the meet or not. Therefore, if you signed up for a meet on the club website, you are responsible for your meet fees even if your swimmer doesn't swim in the meet. This includes non-participation due to injury or non-participation due to being scratched from Friday night events if the host club chooses to limit those events.

## **RELAY SELECTION AND PAYMENT**

Relays are included in some meets and provide a source of excitement for the team. Many times athletes perform better on a relay than in an individual event. Relays score double the point value of individual events in a meet. All swimmers must check with the coaching staff at the meet to find out if they are scheduled to compete for GCAT on a relay.

Coaches will enter all the relays. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff. There are many variables to be considered including the swimmer's fastest time, how well the swimmer has performed at the particular meet in question, how much rest the swimmer has gotten since his/her previous event, the swimmer's ability to perform under pressure, and the general attitude and practice attendance of the swimmer. With all these many factors to consider, it is difficult to predict which four swimmers will perform the best in an upcoming event. Support of the coaching staff in making relay selection is greatly appreciated.

The meet entry fee for a relay team is equally divided among the four swimmers selected for the relay. If any relay swimmer would choose to leave the meet early, thereby prohibiting the relay team from competing, that swimmer will be billed for the entire entry fee for the relay.

## **CLASSIFICATION AND TYPES OF MEETS**

### **Classified Age Group Program –**

There are seven age groups in USA Swimming. The Senior Age group includes any USA Swimming registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event regardless of age. Age on the first day of a meet determines the swimmer's age for the entire meet.

### **AGE GROUPS**

8 and Under

10 and Under

11 -12

13 – 14

15-16, 17-18, or 15 and Over

Senior

### **Championship Meets –**

At the end of each short course (winter) and long course (summer) season, a meet recognized as the Indiana State Championships is held. It provides an exciting end to the season for qualified age groupers and seniors. To qualify for participation in a state championship meet, a swimmer must have achieved a state cut in his/her age group as listed on the "Time Standards" chart. The winter state meets are in March and the summer state meets are in July. Both are three day meets with preliminaries and finals.

### **Divisionals –**

This meet is for swimmers who have times for any event between the "slow to fast" times listed on the Divisional short course yard time standards. The Divisional Championships are held in the winter only and are "prelim" and "finals".

## **“Everything You Always Wanted To Know About a Swim Meet, but Were Afraid To Ask”**

Swim meets are a great family experience and a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are a few guidelines geared to help you through your first swim meet.

### **BEFORE THE MEET STARTS:**

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This information will be posted in the meet information and will be on the GCAT website.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer’s blankets, swim bags, etc. GCAT team members try to sit together in one place; so look for familiar faces.
3. Find the check-in location, and either you or your swimmer will need to check in. This should be the first thing you do when you get to the pool. Check-in is usually near the entrance to the pool. Look for signs or ask a meet worker. Highlight your name and events on the sign-in sheets. If this is not done, the swimmer will be scratched from the meet and not be allowed to swim that day. Sign-in sheets are typically taken down one half hour prior to the start of the meet. Sign-in is done so that people running the meet know exactly who has shown up to swim that day.
4. Once checked-in, write each event number on your swimmer’s hand in Sharpie permanent ink. This will help the swimmer remember what events they are swimming and what event numbers to listen for when announced.
5. The swimmer should get their cap and goggles and report to the pool and /or coach for warm-up instructions. It is vitally important that all swimmers warm-up with the team. Swimmer’s bodies are like cars on a cold day – they need to get the engines going and warmed up before they can go all out.
6. After warm-ups, the swimmer will go back to the area where he/she placed their towel and sit there until their first event is called. This is the perfect time to take a bathroom break, get a drink, or just get settled in to compete.
7. The meet will usually start 10 to 15 minutes after the warm-ups are over.
8. According to USA Swimming rules and for insurance requirements, parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. All questions concerning meets results, an officiating call, or the conduct of the meet should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
9. Psych Sheets. A psych sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all the swimmers in each event in order of “seed time”. When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his previous best time in that event are listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he will be entered as a “NT” or “No-Time”. A “no-time” swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

## **THE MEET STARTS**

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she are swimming. (The reason for the Sharpie!) They may swim right after warm-up or may have to wait awhile.
2. A swimmer's event number will be called over a loudspeaker, and the swimmer will be asked to report to either the "clerk of course" or to their designated lane assignment. At all meets, this information will be posted somewhere in the pool area for easy access. The swimmer will report directly behind the blocks in their assigned lane by giving their name to the timers in the lane. The swimmer will need their cap and goggles. Girl's events usually are odd-numbered, and boy's events are even numbered.
3. The "Clerk of Course" may give a card to each of the swimmers swimming the event. The card will tell each swimmer his heat and lane number. Sometimes, the clerk will line up all swimmers and take them to the pool in the correct order. The swimmer or the clerk will give the card to the timer. The cards will tell the people running the meet who actually swam each event.
4. You can usually expect at least 4- 8 heats of each event.
5. The swimmer swims his race.
6. After each swim, the swimmer is to ask the timer for his time. The swimmer will then immediately go and inform his coach of the time and the coach will discuss the swim and areas of improvement.
7. Things you, as a parent can do after each swim:
  - a. Tell your swimmer how great they did! The coaching staff will discuss stroke technique.
  - b. Take the swimmer back to the towel is to relax (only if that area is not on deck)
  - c. This is another good time for the swimmer to take a restroom break, get a drink, or eat something light.
8. When a swimmer has completed all of their events, they are free to go home. Make sure that the swimmer checks with the coach before leaving to make sure they are not included on a relay.

## **WHAT TO TAKE TO THE MEET:**

1. Most important items to remember: team swim suit, team swim cap and goggles.
2. Towels – Realize that your swimmer will be there a while, so pack at least 2 towels.
3. Something to sit on. Example: Sleeping bag, old blanket, etc. The swimmer will be spending a lot of time on it between events.
4. Sweat Suits: Bring at least one. It may get soggy and wet.
5. T-shirts: Two or three because they may get wet and soggy.
6. Games: travel games, coloring books, anything to pass time.

7. Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring your own snacks even though there usually are snack bars at the meets.

a. Drinks: Water, Fruit Juice, Gatorade

b. Snacks: Granola Bars, Fruits, yogurt, cereal, sandwiches

Once you have attended one or two meets, this all will become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any GCAT parent on our team for help or information.

### **NOTE TO PARENTS:**

The pool area is usually VERY Warm! Therefore, you need to make sure that you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet as it makes the time pass slowly. At some meets, the parents can sit with the swimmers in the “camping” area. If you don’t think that a gym floor will be comfortable bring folding chairs to sit on. In addition, please take into account that there may be considerable “down-time” for your swimmer and especially for younger siblings. Plan to bring games, snacks, decks of cards, and other items to help pass the time between swims.

### **BASIC SWIMMING RULES:**

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules, a disqualification (DQ) will result. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event.

Disqualifications may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, advancing themselves by walking or pushing off the bottom of the pool, pulling on the lane lines, or unsportsmanlike conduct.

DQs are also a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to the following:

Freestyle – Walking on the bottom; pulling on the lane rope; not touching the wall on a turn; or not completing the distance.

Backstroke - Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned past the vertical onto the breast; turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.

Breaststroke – An illegal kick such as flutter, dolphin, or scissor; shoulders not level; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

Butterfly – Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

For specific language on any technical rules, consult the United States Swimming Rules and Regulations book.

### **MEET OFFICIALS:**

Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so that the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test, and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

1. Timers (you do not have to be an official to be a timer) – Operate timing devices (watches or automatic timing systems) and record the time for the swimmer in their lane.
2. Turn Judges – Observe the swimmers from each end of the pool and ensure that the turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke.
3. Stroke Judges – Observe the swimmers from both sides of the pool; walking abreast of the swimmers, to ensure that the rules relating to each stroke are being followed. The positions of Stroke Judge and Turn Judge may be combined into one position call the Stroke and Turn Judge.
4. Relay Takeoff Judges – Stand beside the starting blocks to observe the relay exchanges, ensuring that the feet of the departing swimmer have not lost contact with the block before the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.
5. Clerk of Course – Arranges the swimmers in their proper heats and lanes.
6. Starter – Assumes control of the swimmers from the Referee, directs them to “take their mark,” and sees that no swimmer is in motion prior to giving the start signal.
7. Referee – Has overall authority and control of the competition, ensuring that all the rules are followed; assigns and instructs all officials, and decides all questions relating to the conduct of the meet.

Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee, and the rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmer or his coach of the reason for the disqualification. If your

Child is disqualified in an event, be supportive rather than critical. For beginning swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer’s stroke need to be corrected. They should be considered in the same light as an incorrect answer in schoolwork by pointing out areas that need further practice. Disqualifications are necessary to keep the competition fair and equitable for all competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, coach, and parent can make a positive situation out of the disqualification.

**PARENT OBLIGATIONS:**

Each GCAT family must provide workers to volunteer a minimum number of meet sessions at our home hosted meets. Volunteer workers must be above the age of a high school student or incoming high school student for the family to receive volunteer credit.

Every GCAT family will be asked to donate home-cooked food items for the hospitality room at the meet. A sign-up sheet for food donations will be posted at the pool prior to the meet or listed on the GCAT website. Any person who works at least one session on a given day may eat in the hospitality room. However, no children or swimmers, are allowed in the hospitality room.

**BECOMING AN OFFICIAL:**

**Each season, GCAT will conduct officials training classes. We encourage as many parents as possible to consider becoming officials so that we can host quality swim meets. Becoming an official requires taking the course, completing the written test, and serving as an apprentice at three sessions of a meet. You will be notified of upcoming official's classes through the GCAT Club website.**

## **Section 6.0:**

# **Role of GCAT Swim Parents**

In order for any swim program to be successful, there must be a strong relationship between the athletes, the coaches, and, most importantly, the parents. Besides providing a reliable transportation system and athlete support network for the swimmers, parents also help run the meets and help in day-to-day operations of the club. There must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches.

It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join GCAT Swim Club.

You, the parent, set the groundwork in raising your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning their children's athletics. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective and help your child reach his/her full potential as an athlete.

We want your child to develop an excellent relationship with his/her coach concerning swimming matters. A relationship that emphasizes and relies upon the communication between coach and swimmer produces the best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and oftentimes, insurmountable confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. This is why we stress that if a parent would have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact the coach.

The coach's job is to inspire and constructively criticize the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply love, recognition, and the encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice. This, in turn, gives each athlete the confidence to perform well in competition.

If your swimmer is young and new to this sport, please keep the long term outlook in mind. Ten and unders are the most inconsistent swimmers. This can be frustrating for the parents, the coaches, and swimmers. Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer first joins GCAT, there may be a brief period when he/she appears to slow down. This is due to the added concentration on stroke technique and will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual.

Even the very best swimmer will have meets where he/she does not achieve their best times. These "plateaus" are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season, times should

improve. Parents should be supportive of these “poor” meets. The older swimmers may have only two or three meets a year for which they will be rested and tapered.

## **Communicating with Coaches**

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 taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but, in fact, this approach often results in new problems being created.

Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach.

1. Remember that your coaches have irregular hours and that many times are on the pool deck for 3 to 7 hours 5 to 6 days a week. On most weekends, a coach can often be on deck for over twenty hours. Coaches are constantly attempting to balance the needs of the team with each individual swimmer’s needs.
2. Keep in mind that you and the coach have the best interest of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach’s goals match yours, even though their approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy a good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
3. The coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of a large training group. On occasion, an individual child’s interest may need to be subordinate to the interest of the group. In the long run, the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short-term inconveniences.
4. Contact the coach to set up an appointment. Please call and leave a voicemail or email message for the coach. GCAT Team Coaches cannot discuss matters with you on deck during practice.
5. If your child swims for one of the assistant coaches, please discuss the matter first with that coach following the same guidelines noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask that the head coach join the dialogue as a third party.
6. Do not fall prey to gossip. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach’s performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly with the coach. Remember, the coach is the only one who can resolve the problem.

The following is an article reprinted from “Sports Illustrated for Kids” with some advice for parents.

## TOP 10 LIST – of the most embarrassing things NOT to do at one of your child’s swim meets (or games)!

1. **No More Tears (Please!):** If your kid makes a game-winning play or game-losing error, don’t embarrass him or her by crying out loud about it. Kids say that tears – no matter how loving – are not cool.
2. **Let it Be:** Don’t overreact to little hurts – or big ones for that matter. “When I busted my nose, my mom thought I was going to die,” wrote one child. “She ran out to me when the coach was already there.”
3. **Keep Your Eyes on The Ball:** Kids want you to really “watch” their games. Complained one child, “My mother was putting her makeup on in the stands!”
4. **Father (or Mother) Doesn’t Always Know Best:** Kids like it when their parents know something about the sport they’re playing, but parents who think they know it all can go too far. “Mom yelled at the ref when the ref was right,” said one kid.
5. **No Bragging:** In addition to being *totally* embarrassing, bragging about your child to other parents puts unnecessary pressure on the kid.
6. **Close Encounters:** Fixing your child’s uniform, washing his face, or brushing her hair between innings is considered a personal foul by most kids. It’s okay if your kid saunters over for a mid-game snack, but *don’t* go over to the bench to tie his shoes. And don’t ever make that terrible mistake one dad made: He sat down on the bench and drank out of his kid’s water bottle!
7. **Curses:** Kids don’t want you to say anything you wouldn’t want *them* to say. As one Little League coach told a mother who was yelling obscenities at the umpire, “Remember, our children are watching!”
8. **Too Much of a Good Thing:** Your child may not mind if you come to his game with the dog, a cowbell, and a video camera, but most kids do mind. Be cool!
9. **Think Before You Speak:** Kids take exception to yells such as “Pull up your pants” and “Are you okay, honey?” Even cheering gets booed if it’s for the wrong team, at the wrong time, or too loud.
10. **Affection Rejection:** Keep the hugs, kisses, and love pats to the confines of your home - preferably when none of your child’s teammates are within a 10-mile radius.

Remember, your child wants to be respected by the team, just like you want to be respected by the coaches and other parents.

This page represents the “10 Commandments for Swimming Parents”. This excerpt was written by Rose Snyder (adapted from Ed Clendaniel’s, 10 Commandments for Little League Parents)

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS**

### **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 every person can strive to do his/her personal best.

### **2. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.**

There is only one question to ask your child, “Did you have fun?” If meets and practices aren’t fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

### **3. Thou shalt not coach your child.**

You have taken your child to a professional coach; do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. This is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.

### **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 cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.

### **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.

### **6. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.**

If you do not have the time or desire to volunteer as an official, don’t criticize those who are doing the best they can.

**7. Honor thy child's coach.**

The bond between the coach and swimmer is a special one, and the 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 not jump from team to team.**

The water is always bluer at the other team's pool. This is not necessarily true. 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 time by teammates they leave behind. Often times, swimmers who switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

**9. Thou shalt have goals besides winning.**

Giving an honest effort no matter 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. This does not make me a failure. In fact, I was very proud of that swim."

**10. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.**

There are 225,000 athletes in United States Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every 4 years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in about 4,300. Swimming is so much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he coaches. Chances are, he was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that he wants to pass that 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, and you should be happy your child wants to participate.

Be enthusiastic and supportive. Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not overburden your child with winning or achieving best times. The most important part of your child's swimming experience is that he will learn about himself while enjoying the sport. This healthy environment encourages learning and fun which will develop a positive self-image within your child.

In the meantime, while your swimmer is working toward his goals, keep encouraging him to reach out and to strive towards excellence, and be sure to let him know you think he's pretty terrific!

# **Section 7: Social and Communication**

## **END OF SEASON CELEBRATIONS**

July marks the end of our GCAT swim calendar year. Around the end of July we celebrate with a party. Awards for significant achievements are announced. The annual open board meeting is held, where elections are held for members and officers for the upcoming swim year.

## **TEAM ACTIVITIES**

Team activities will vary from year to year. These activities include parties, celebrations, and of course, fund raising. Announcements for these events are posted on our website and emailed to the family's address. If you have an idea for a fund raiser or fun activity, please contact your child's swim coach, who will bring the idea to our club board.

## **FUND RAISING**

Greenfield Community Aquatic Club is a 501c3 Not-for Profit Corporation. We survive solely on the membership fees, and fund raising events. Our goal is to hold a monthly fund raising event. As a member of GCAT, we hope you will not only participate in each event, but also volunteer to help in the logistics needed for these events; planning and execution. Successful fund raising is critical to the survival and success of GCAT.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Announcements are sent via email. Please keep your email address up to date with the club. The club will also post announcements at the pool. Check the doors, and the front lobby for posters and announcement postings.

# **SECTION EIGHT: FINANCIAL**

## **OBLIGATIONS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES**

Greenfield Community Aquatic Club cannot exist without the support and fulfillment of the financial obligations of member families. GCAT must maintain a positive cash flow to assure prompt payment of expenses and coach payroll. Payment of fees when due is expected.

## **CLUB FEES**

Club fees are posted each year on the annual membership application. There are multi-child discounts for families, and a discount for payment in full of fees available. There is also a monthly payment option to assist in budgeting. This option allows for automatic payment withdrawal through your credit or debit cards, however there is a 2% fee added to cover the cost of the credit processing fees.

Dues to USA/Indiana swimming are due at initial registration, as well as the GCAT initial registration fee. Indiana Swim fees are non refundable.

Each group level has its own fee. If a swimmer graduates to a higher level group during the season, the club treasurer will contact the family with the prorated, adjusted rates.

## **MEET FEES**

A fee is charged by the host swim club for each event a swimmer enters at swim meets. These fees are paid through GCAT. The GCAT treasurer will calculate and add the meet fees to your account. Each event charge ranges from \$2 to \$5 per event. At most meets, swimmers can compete in 3 to 5 events per day. Meet fees are non refundable.

## **PARENTAL PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT**

By joining GCAT, you agree to participate as a volunteer in a certain number of events as determined by the board of directors. Events include swim meets, fund raising and other official club events.

The requirement is our effort to maintain an equitable spread of duties amongst the club's parents. Non-participation by member parents will result in an additional charge to your account.

**SPECIAL CREDIT GIVEN TO PARENTS WHO BECOME SWIM OFFICIALS.** See a board member for details.

## **TEAM RESIGNATION**

If a member chooses to resign from GCAT, he/she must notify the club Treasurer in writing. Dues for the month in which the member resigns are considered payable upon resignation. GCAT may refund a portion of dues upon resignation, once all other financial obligations are fulfilled.

## **APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

A member may apply for financial assistance. Members that qualify for reduced or free school lunches are eligible to apply. Approved applicants receive discounted membership fees.

## **DUES COLLECTIONS AND PROCEDURES**

Bills that are over 30 days past due are considered delinquent. Coaches will be informed that the child cannot participate in competition meets until delinquent balances are paid.

Accounts 60 days delinquent: coaches will inform that the child cannot participate in practice or meets until balances paid.

90 day delinquent: account is suspended and will be forwarded to a collection agency. Collection fees will be included into the amounts due.