

Welcome to CWAC

In 2004, David Stephens started the Chicago Wolfpack Aquatic Club (CWAC) with 35 swimmers and only 90 minutes of water time. Today CWAC uses 3 pools, including an 8 lane 50 meter, and is one of the top 5 club teams in the state of Illinois. CWAC is the largest program in the metro Chicago area with over 350 swimmers across 14 different training groups and also is home to the Wolfpack Swim School for swimmers just entering the sport.

CWAC Mission Statement

The Chicago Wolfpack Aquatics Club (CWAC) is a developmental and competitive swimming club in the heart of Chicago. The mission of CWAC is to embrace swimmers of every level and provide them with the best possible environment and resources, allowing them to progress from novice to the highest level of competition. The CWAC coaching staff strives to instill in swimmers an understanding and appreciation for such concepts as high self-esteem, personal accountability, sportsmanship, teamwork, self-discipline, goal setting and goal achievement. These ideals will translate into each athlete's success in training, competition and in life as they grow and develop into adults.

CWAC Objectives & Values

- To encourage and achieve excellence in developmental and competitive swimming.
- To promote competitive swimming on a local, regional, state and national level.
- To advance and promote a program that encourages attendance, develops team unity and builds life-long friendships between team members and club families.
- To operate all of our programs at the highest levels of integrity and fairness.
- To provide a positive environment that is challenging, safe, healthy and rewarding for all athletes.
- To offer a professional, motivated and talented coaching staff.
- To build a solid base from which we can grow and expand our membership in the community.

USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming

CWAC is a charter club of USA and Illinois Swimming. All coaches must be USA Swimming Members, undergo a background check and have certifications in First Aid, CPR, Athlete Protection and Coaches' Safety Training. USA Swimming is the governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States. The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) used to govern swimming, as well as all other Olympic sports in the United States. USA Swimming was founded in 1978 with the congressional passage of the Amateur Sports Act, which states that all Olympic sports are to be administered independently. The USA Swimming Headquarters office was established in 1981 and is located at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

As the National Governing Body (NGB) of swimming, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of competitive swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates rules, implements policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports' medicine information, and selects the athletes who represent the United States in international competition.

USA Swimming governs through Local Swimming Committees (LSC). There are 59 Local Swimming Committees in the United States. Each LSC is responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area. Our LSC is Illinois Swimming, Inc. (ISI). ISI implements USA Swimming policies in Illinois, sanctions swim meets, conducts state championship meets and sponsors swim camps and special programs in the state.

How decisions are made in USA Swimming

USA Swimming is a non-profit organization made up of very dedicated volunteers. Interested individuals donate their time, energy, and expertise at every level from the national Board of Directors to the local swimming clubs. All policy decisions are made through a chain of committees that report to elected vice-presidents. The USA Swimming House of Delegates meets once a year at the annual USAS convention and determines the rules and regulations for swimming for the following year. Between yearly meetings of the House of Delegates, the elected USA Swimming board of directors makes decisions for the organization.

Specific Rules Regarding USA Swimming Insurance

In order for USA Swimming insurance to be in effect at all practices and meets, the following rules must be observed:

- All coaches must be USA Swimming certified coaches.
- All swimmers must be members of USA Swimming.
- Parents may not be on deck at any time except when assisting in the operation of a meet and/or when conducting official team business.
- At practices and meets, swimmers must enter the pool feet first at all times, except when practicing starts or relay exchanges under the supervision of a coach.
- All diving must take place in the deep end (over 6 feet) of the pool.

Wolfpack Team Accomplishments

40 College Swimmers including NCAA Championship Qualifiers at the D1, D2 and D3 levels.

Division 2 & 3 All-Americans

Division 3 National Champion

45 Individual State Championships

15 National Top 100 All Time swims

7 State Record Breaking Swims

24 Scholastic Academic All-American Awards

39 Top 10 Finishes on the Annual USA Swimming National Top Times Report

2015 Illinois LCM Combined Senior State Champions

2015 Illinois LCM Girls Senior State Champions

Third Place Age Group State Finish – 2014 LCM, 2015 SCY, 2015 LCM, 2016 SCY

Becoming Part of the Wolfpack

Registering for CWAC

All swimmers must complete the registration process for each season of swimming. New swimmers must tryout for the swim team before they may begin registration.

Online Registration

Registration must be completed online prior to practicing with CWAC. New families will need to provide all information requested and returning families will need to update any new information. Please list multiple e-mail addresses. Families must agree to the following:

- Medical Release Waiver
- Liability Waiver
- CWAC Code of Conduct
- Agreement to Billing Terms & Conditions
- CWAC Family Volunteer Agreement

All information provided is secure on the website and not made public.

Website Account

Once you have received your acceptance to the team and completed your website registration, you will be given your own online account and should verify your e-mail address. Here you will have access to your personal information, financial account, swim meet sign up, etc. Your primary e-mail address will be used as the user name to log in to this account. E-mails from the website are system generated, so be aware that they may be initially received as junk mail. Meet reminders, invoices and group notifications are all sent via e-mail so please make sure it is an e-mail account you check on a regular basis.

USA Swimming Registration

All CWAC swimmers must register with USA Swimming. This annual membership allows athletes to practice with CWAC and compete in USA Swimming sanctioned swim meets. USA Swimming provides supplemental insurance coverage for all swimmers. The \$66.00 USA Swimming membership fee is in addition to the tuition fees for the CWAC program. **DO NOT** mail the USA form to Illinois Swimming. A discounted fee may be offered for those in the CPS lunch program. Documentation must be provided in a timely manner.

Club Transfers

Swimmers who transfer from another USA Swimming team to join CWAC must fill out a Club Transfer Form at the time of registration. All transferring swimmers are unattached for 120 days following the last date of competition as a member of the prior team. While unattached, a swimmer may practice with CWAC and compete in meets, but may not represent CWAC or compete on relays until the 120-day period has expired. It is the transferring swimmers responsibility to pay the \$10 fee with the completed form to the head coach.

[USA Swimming Transfer Form](#)

Team Tuition & Fees

Seasonal Tuition Commitment

Your tuition account is used to cover pool rental, coach's salary, operating expenses, awards, website and other administrative fees. Each child's tuition is based on the group that they are placed in. Fees can be found on the team information page of the website.

Prorating Tuition

Swimmers who sign up and join the team are expected to pay for the full season. Pro-rating of tuition is only done under the following circumstances:

- If the swimmer starts the season late and with head coach's approval
- If the swimmer changes groups during the season
- Special circumstances arise approved by the head coach

Refunds

Fees are not refundable unless (a) the program is canceled (b) a special circumstance arises or (c) you withdraw from a program for medical reasons. Special circumstances might include moving, family crisis, etc. You should immediately discuss any changes in your child's status with their coach and notify the head coach. If you do not notify the head coach, your account will be charged as though your child was training for that period. **Meet entry fees are not refundable.**

Billing & Payments

Invoices will be generated on the 1st of each month and will break down all charges. Balances are due by the 10th of that month. A \$10 late fee will be assessed for any outstanding dues after the 20th of the month.

Please remember that your child's tuition, USA membership, gear fee and meet entry fees are all separate. CWAC accepts cash and checks as well as credit cards and ACH (direct debit) transactions via the website. ACH and credit card fees are withdrawn on the first of each month and will deduct the entire amount owed for that billing period. For example, if your tuition dues for the month are \$100 and your meet entry fees are \$25 then \$125 will be withdrawn from your account on the first of the month. There is no additional fee for ACH usage, but due to the fees charged by the website and merchant provider there is a \$5 fee added to your monthly balance if you choose to use a credit card.

Checks should be **made payable to Chicago Wolfpack Aquatics Club (CWAC)**. Please note your child's name on your check or envelope. There is a \$30 fee for returned checks. Payments can be:

- Hand delivered to Coach Stephens at UIC
- Mailed to Coach Stephens at 1076 W Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL 60608

If you do not use an automatic payment option then you must start off with a \$250 deposit per child to cover the USA membership fee, gear fee and the first tuition payment in addition to meet

fees. Any swimmer who has an outstanding balance on their account at the end of each season will not be allowed to register for the next season until the balance is paid in full.

Billing Schedule

- Fall / Winter billing will start on October 1st and continue for five months
- Spring / Summer billing will start on May 1st and continue for three months
- High School Girls billing will occur on December 1st, January 1st and February 1st
- High School Boys billing will occur on October 1st and November 1st
- High School Spring Sports billing will start on June 1st and July 1st

Meet Entry Fees

A “meet entry fee” is the cost for participation in swim meets. Most meets we attend have entry fees associated with them. CWAC will initially cover the cost of the entries and then will invoice each participant for the amount owed. Entry fees for one swimmer for an average two day meet are about \$25 - 30. For every sanctioned meet that an individual participates in there is an additional \$2 surcharge that goes to Illinois Swimming. There may be an additional facility fee charge from the host team which usually ranges from \$3 - 7. Entry fees will be charged after each meet and are included in the monthly invoices. **Once the entries for a swim meet have been turned in to a host team, the swimmer is responsible for their entry fees whether they swim or not.** Families with a balance more than 30 days past due cannot register for meets.

CWAC Equipment / Gear Fee

Each registered CWAC swimmer will have a \$30 fee per year to cover the cost of their cap, t-shirt and equipment usage. Individual equipment purchased by the club for personal use will be invoiced separately. Examples of this type of equipment may include snorkels and tempo trainers.

Apparel items and additional equipment are available for purchase through our vendor, The Swim Team Store. This is an online store and items are shipped directly to you. Caps are available for purchase at the pool throughout the season (\$5 latex or \$10 silicone). A personalized name cap order will be placed in the fall and spring. Swimmers qualifying for championship meets will receive additional gear. CWAC offers a wide range of items (for swimmers and parents) including T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweat pants, parkas, shorts and jackets.

CWAC Website

The CWAC website aims to serve its members by providing news, accomplishments and updates during the season to its members. The following information can be found on the website:

- CWAC News – swimming links, swimmer tips, upcoming clinics / events, meet recaps, etc.
- Team Info – practice schedule, coach’s bios, handbook, groups, fees, forms, tryout info, etc.
- Swim Meets – meet info packets, meet schedule, etc.
- Team Records – short course and long course records, Illinois Top 10, etc.
- Wolfpack Swim School – lesson program information, schedule, registration, etc.
- CWAC Gear – team suits, apparel, equipment, vendor contact info, etc.
- Meet Results – results for current and prior seasons

CWAC Practices

Team Parameters

The team parameters are designed to give each group clear objectives in the following areas:

Training: practice sets requirements and physiological emphasis

Technique: physical skills and biomechanical emphasis

Tactical: races, meet skills, and competitive performance emphasis

Team Building: character development, life skills, and motivational emphasis

Teaching: nutrition, psychological, and other skills

Through these parameters athletes will be able to grow and develop at their own speed and learn all the aspects that swimming and CWAC offer. Parameters will be evaluated seasonally and can be adjusted based on group changes and program growth.

Practice Equipment

Equipment such as kickboards, pull buoys and zoomers are available to all swimmers for use as needed. If special equipment is required for your swimmer's group: nose plugs, paddles, snorkels, etc. that will be communicated by the group coach at the beginning of the season and reminders should be sent to swimmers on days equipment is needed.

Practice Conduct and Behavior

Swimmers are encouraged to attend all of their group assigned practices in order to facilitate continued advancement and ability to keep up in workouts. The number of practices that children attend is the greatest factor in their improvement. It is important that swimmers are suited and on the deck by the start of practice and they stay throughout the entire practice. **Please make sure your swimmer is only attending the practice times for the group they were assigned to.**

When dropping off swimmers, make sure they are safely in the building before you leave. It is also the parent's responsibility to pick up swimmers after practice. Swimmers should stay in the immediate pool area unless instructed otherwise by a coach. Swimmers and families should stay off any equipment not associated with the swim team's usage of the facilities. We are guests of UIC and EP and it is important we treat the facilities with respect.

Remember that during practice the coaches are working with the children. Please save comments or questions for the coaches until after the workouts are over. Parents choosing to stay for practice must sit in the bleachers and are not allowed on the pool deck. Parents are asked to refrain from coaching from the bleachers.

Practice Attire

Swimmers should take pride in their sport and ensure that they have prepared themselves ahead of time for every practice they arrive at the pool for. To do this swimmers should make sure their swim bags are completely packed with the necessities: swim suit, goggles, back up goggles to be safe, deck shoes if needed, towel, swim cap, and dry land clothes. CWAC caps must be worn during practice.

CWAC Swim Meets

Meet Requirements

In a season CWAC may attend 6-7 regular season meets; 1-2 of those meets being hosted by CWAC. Coaches may specify which meets their group should attend at the beginning of the season. As this is a competitive program, all swimmers are encouraged to participate in competition and should attend the highest level of competition they qualify for.

Meet Attire

SWIM MEET ATTIRE

All CWAC swimmers are expected to wear the team uniform when competing at meets. The team uniform includes a team swimsuit, team cap and team T-shirt. Team T-shirts and caps are distributed to team members at the beginning of the season. Team suits are sold on the website. Replacement caps and shirts are available for sale.

Wearing team swimsuits and caps, will help the coaches identify swimmers more easily, and will also improve team recognition, team unity and team spirit. Team uniforms display pride in our team and in our sport. Fans can easily identify CWAC swimmers by their swimsuits and caps, adding to the excitement of each meet. Team gear should be worn for all awards ceremonies.

Regular Season Meets: Swimmers should wear a CWAC team suit during competitions. If a swimmer does not have a team suit a solid colored suit should be worn in its place. Team suits can be purchased from our team store on the website. Technical suits should not be worn in season, unless a mid-season focus meet has been assigned by the group coach.

Championship Meets: It is encouraged that swimmers 11 years old and older, competing at the regional level and above should compete in a technical suit. A family or swimmer should never feel as though they MUST purchase a technical suit. Swimmers should consult with their coaches about if a technical suit should be worn during competition. CWAC is a Speedo sponsored team and has the ability to purchase these suits at a discounted rate.

Meet Entries

SIGNING UP FOR MEETS

All meet entry should be done in the "swim meet" section of the website. On this page is a list of meets the team is planning on attending and the sign up deadline for that meet. If you click on a specific meet it will take you to the meet page that provides information about the meet including the meet packet. The meet packet provides meet information about the sessions, entry limits and event listings.

Decide which meets you would like your child to attend and enter them with any comments. Comments might include the events they would like to do, or that they can only attend one day of the meet.

After the initial entry deadline has passed we will post and e-mail the meet entries for attendees to double check before sending in the official entry list. **Once the entries for a swim meet have been turned in to a host team, the swimmer is responsible for their entry fees whether they swim or not.** Changes or additions to the entries are at the discretion of the host team. A final entry report will be posted when the meet entries have closed.

All ISI meets have entry fees associated with them that will be invoiced to your account. Swimmers who compete in meets are accountable for paying their entry fees in a timely manner.

Most meets, with the exception of a few, **DO NOT** have any qualifying times, so everyone may participate. All championship meets **DO** have qualifying times and they are posted on the website.

Swimmers may not attend meets on their own without permission from the head coach.

CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS

It is assumed that all swimmers who qualify for regional, state, sectional or national championship meets will be available to compete in these meets. Meet entries for these swimmers will be handled on an individual basis by the coaches. If you have a conflict, let your coach know immediately.

MEET LINE-UPS

The coaches are responsible for developing meet line-ups. When constructing meet line-ups, the coaches use the following philosophy: First, swimmers compete only in the strokes that they can legally swim. This reduces the likelihood of a disqualification. Second, swimmers compete only in the distances that they are physically and mentally ready to handle. The coaches, however, regularly challenge swimmers to attain greater levels of performance. Finally, swimmers are placed into a wide variety of events (not just their favorites).

Swimmers need experience in every stroke and every race distance. This helps them develop as all-around swimmers and helps avoid burnout. Coaches will definitely take into consideration the entries of the swimmers and parents, but ultimately the coaching staff will make the final decision on meet entries. Typically swimmers are not allowed to “swim up” an age group.

Relays – Some meets will have relays and swimmers are expected to compete if asked. Championship meet relays are determined by the coaching staff.

SWIM MEET PROCEDURES

Meet Check-in – Swimmers must check-in with a coach 10 minutes prior to warm-up. Please arrive to meets in a timely manner.

Positive Check-in – Most meets have a positive check-in policy. When this is the case, swimmers must check in at the positive check-in table. When positive check-in closes (usually during the warm-up period), all swimmers who have not checked in are scratched from the meet. Scratched swimmers are not allowed to compete in the meet that day. There are no exceptions and no refunds.

Meet Warm-up – All CWAC swimmers must participate in the warm-up before all meets. The warm-up may last from 30 minutes to one hour. The reason for the warm-up is to allow swimmers

to adjust to the competition pool, loosen up their muscles and to make final preparations before competition. The warm-up is mandatory for all CWAC swimmers. Swimmers must be on time for meet warm-ups.

SWIM MEET ATTIRE

All CWAC swimmers are expected to wear the team uniform when competing at meets. The team uniform includes a team swimsuit, team cap and team T-shirt. Team T-shirts and caps are distributed to team members at the beginning of the season. Team suits are sold on the website. Replacement caps and shirts are available for sale.

Wearing team swimsuits and caps, will help the coaches identify swimmers more easily, and will also improve team recognition, team unity and team spirit. Team uniforms display pride in our team and in our sport. Fans can easily identify CWAC swimmers by their swimsuits and caps, adding to the excitement of each meet. Team gear should be worn for all awards ceremonies.

SWIM MEET FORMATS

CWAC competes in a wide variety of meets in order to accommodate the needs of every swimmer on the team. Below is a brief explanation of each type of meet:

Intra-Squad Meet - This is a meet that involves only CWAC swimmers. This meet offers events and opportunities to meet the needs of our swimmers. For instance, we may hold a meet specifically designed to introduce developmental swimmers to competitive swimming.

Dual Meet - This is a meet between two teams and swimmers compete in individual events and relays.

Pentathlon - In this meet, swimmers compete in 5 events (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley). The distances vary depending on the meet and the age group. The times for all 5 events are added up and places in each age group are determined by the total time for all five events.

ISI Meet - This meet includes multiple teams and often spans several days. Each day is divided into sessions that last four hours or less. Swimmers need to sign up for these meets well in advance and are required to pay entry fees. These meets are highly recommended for swimmers in the bronze, silver and gold training groups. Swimmers in the blue group are encouraged to attend when they are ready.

Conference Championship - CWAC is a member of the Windy City Conference with seven other teams. Two conference championships will be held each season (winter and summer). There are no time standards to compete in this meet and it serves as a championship meet for those who do not qualify for other meets with time standards. Swimmers may not compete in events in which they have regional times.

ISI Regional Meet - The state is divided into several regions and any swimmer who achieves a regional meet time standard may compete in that event as long as they have not qualified for the Age Group State or Senior State Championship Meet in that event. The age groups at this meet are:

10 & under, 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18. This meet is held during the short course and long course and held in a 25-yard pool.

ISI State Age Group Championship Meet - This is the state championship meet for swimmers ages 14 and under. The age groups at this meet are: 10 and under, 11-12 and 13-14. Swimmers and relays that achieve at least one Age Group State qualifying time will compete in this meet. During the winter this meet is held in a 25-yard pool and in the summer is held in a 50-meter pool.

ISI Senior State Championship Meet - This is the state meet for all eligible qualifiers with no age restrictions. Swimmers and relays that achieve at least one Senior Championship qualifying time will compete in this meet. Everyone competes in the same age group. In winter, this meet is held in a 25-yard pool. In summer, it takes place in a 50-meter pool.

Zone Championship Meet - Swimmers with at least one AAA time may compete in this meet. Swimmers compete for Team Illinois. This is a championship meet with Team Illinois competing against eight other states in the Central Zone. Every Olympic year it is a Mega-Zone Meet where Team Illinois competes against all 16 states in the Central Zone. This meet is held in summer only (usually in early August). The age groups at this meet are: 10 and under, 11-12 and 13-14. A separate Senior Zone Meet is held at a different location

Sectional & Futures Championship Meets - These are championship meets run by USA Swimming. The purpose of this meet is to qualify individuals and relays for the National and Junior National Championship Meets. Swimmers and relays (no age restrictions) that achieve at least one Sectional / Future Championship qualifying time may compete in this meet. Everyone competes in the same age group. During the winter, this meet is held in a 25-yard pool. In the summer, it takes place in a 50-meter pool.

JR National Championship Meet - This is the 18 & under national championship. Swimmers and relays that achieve at least one Junior National Championship qualifying time will compete in this meet. Everyone competes in the same age group. The meet dates and formats vary from year to year.

National Championship Meet - This is THE national championship. There are no age restrictions at this meet. This is the national team selection meet (the top finishers in each event are placed on the USA National Team that represents the United States in international competition). Every four years this meet doubles as the Olympic Trials. Swimmers and relays that achieve at least one National Championship qualifying time compete in this meet. Everyone competes in the same age group. This meet takes place in a 50-meter pool and is typically held in spring (March) and summer (August).

Olympic Trials - This meet is held every four years and takes place several months before the Olympic Games. There are no age restrictions at this meet, but swimmers must achieve an Olympic Trial cut in an event in order to compete. This meet serves as the selection meet for the United States' Olympic Team.

OTHER INFORMATION ON MEETS

Missed Meets - Please notify your swimmer's primary coach and the head coach as soon as possible if you cannot attend a meet that you signed up to attend. Giving coaches ample notice makes it much easier to make line-up and relay changes.

Away Meets - Swimmers are responsible for their own transportation to and from away meets unless the meet is a team bus / plane trip.

Coaches at Meets - The coaches rotate which meets they will attend. The number of coaches will usually depend on the number participants.

Parents at Meets - Parents are not allowed on the pool deck unless they are timing, volunteering or officiating. Please bring healthy snacks to meets for your swimmers. Parents should cheer and support all CWAC swimmers.

Volunteering at Meets - Typically our team needs to help time at meets that we both host and attend. Parents will be asked to volunteer 10 hours of their time throughout the year. There are numerous ways to get involved and timing is a great way to learn the sport and help support the team.

Officiating at Meets - Parents interested in becoming an official must take a class to become certified. CWAC will pay for officials USA membership upon completion of their course work. Please check with the head coach for more information on becoming an official.

CWAC Practice Groups

The CWAC program is divided into 5 levels; Blue, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Open. Each level is based on age and within each level swimmers are divided into practice groups according to ability level, group criteria, verifiable times, practice attendance, commitment and coach's recommendation. Each swimmer is allowed to progress at his/her own pace. As swimmers progress, they are allowed to move into more advanced training groups. Below is a basic description of each level and group, as well as criteria and requirements. This is a competitive swim team and swimmers are expected to participate in meets. All new swimmers must try out in order to participate on the team.

There is a 10 practice adjustment period allotted for each group at the beginning of each season. Group dynamics will change and require adjustments each season and with it so do swimmers. During this 10 practice adjustment period coaches will be taking a strong evaluation of their group to ensure all swimmers are properly placed. While it is never a goal to move swimmers down this is an adjustment that may occur to ensure that the swimmer is able to fully grow and succeed. Please respect the advice of the coaching staff; all of the Wolfpack staff are very experienced coaches and only have the best interest of the swimmers in mind.

Following the level descriptions is a flow chart to help parents and swimmers to see the progression from one group to the next.

Wolfpack Swim School – Ages 3-13

The Wolfpack Swim School offers a five level system for swimmers up to age 13. The program is designed to give all participants a comprehensive introduction to the water and the world of swimming. The swim school strives to teach water safety as well as proper swimming technique with the goal of preparing swimmers to join the team. Our instructors are highly qualified and trained using our proven teaching philosophy and tiered lesson curriculum. A Pack Prep level is offered for those swimmers looking to compete in swimming and who have knowledge of all their strokes.

Blue Level – Ages 8 & Under

This is an instructional level that introduces swimmers to all aspects of swimming. All practices involve instruction on proper swimming technique, body positioning, starts and turns. Swimmers are able to learn how enjoyable the sport is while building confidence in their abilities. Swimmers are encouraged to start participation in meets. Please note that this is not a learn-to-swim program and should not be thought of as swim lessons.

Bronze Level – Ages 9-10

This level is for swimmers familiar with all four strokes and continues to build on developing and refining their technique. Swimmers become accustomed with using the pace clock and doing sets with intervals. Training becomes more intense with an introduction to goal setting and drylands. Swimmers should begin to participate in swim meets.

Silver Level – Ages 11-12

This level continues to build on swimming technique while introducing swimmers to competitive swimming and training. Conditioning training increases as each swimmer progresses and

swimmers continue to emphasize swimming technique while building an aerobic base. Swimmers begin using more training equipment in addition to more interval work and drylands. Meet and practice attendance requirements may be established by the coaches.

Gold Level – Ages 13 & Over

This level is the entry point for senior swimming and is for swimmers looking to improve their technique with a significant portion of practice time devoted to aerobic training. Dryland and equipment usage are common as swimmers are challenged to push themselves both physically and mentally. Goal setting and accountability are an important part of this level. Meet and practice attendance requirements will be established by the coaches

Open Level – Ages 14 & Over

Swimmers in these groups are highly proficient in all four competitive strokes. Continued emphasis is placed on swimming technique, and a significant amount of time is devoted to conditioning and training. Training will encompass all energy systems as well as stroke specific and distance work. Practices are difficult both physically and mentally. Swimmers in these groups should desire to compete at a state, sectional and national level and are required to participate in the highest level meet for which they qualify. Double practices and drylands sessions are part of the training. These are year round training groups and swimmers are expected to fully commit to the training programs. Swimmers and parents will have a meeting with the head coach to discuss expectations before being placed in these groups.

CRITERIA EXPLANATION

These criteria were developed carefully and critically for several reasons. First, it is important to have set standards that must be achieved before a swimmer moves to the next level. This will ensure his/her success at the new level and sets an equal playing field for everyone. Second, when swimmers know what they need to achieve in order to progress in the program, they have an easier time setting goals for themselves. Third, this will help the team improve as a whole as each swimmer strives for specific standards. As each individual improves, the team improves. Finally, it is a goal of the program that each swimmer reaches his/her full potential.

When moving a swimmer from one practice group to another, the coaches will also take into account the swimmer's **level of commitment** to the sport, attendance, meet times, maturity and make sure that the swimmer is mentally ready for the next level. Swimmers may be promoted to the next training group at any time during the season and ultimately the coach has the final say as to when a swimmer is ready for the next group. Trial sessions may be offered to see how swimmers handle a different training group.

An important point to remember is that the coaches want to insure the success of each swimmer as they move from one practice group to another. **It not advisable to move a swimmer up to the next level when that swimmer is not ready**, regardless of mastering the outlined skill requirements. If a swimmer cannot maintain the standards listed for his/her practice group within the first four weeks of the season, he/she will be assigned to another practice group.

CRITERIA, PLACEMENT & ADVANCEMENT TO THE NEXT PRACTICE GROUP

The following criteria are used as guidelines when placing and/or moving a swimmer from one practice group to another. Please note that the time standards below are meant to be used as a point of reference and other factors will be taken into consideration as previously noted.

In order to be placed on the Blue Level, swimmers must be able to perform the following skills:

Willingness to attempt dives and flip turns

Ability to focus for the entire practice session

Learn basic lane etiquette for practice and acclimation to use of a pace clock

- Blue I – Near 10&Under 'B' Times
- Blue II – 4 Legal Strokes
- Blue III – Freestyle with side breathing, backstroke, understanding of fly and breast

In order to be placed in or moved to the Bronze Level, swimmers must be able to perform the following skills:

Freestyle and backstroke with good form

Legal butterfly and breaststroke (50 yards)

Forward and Backstroke start

Streamlines off all walls and after dives

Open turns (breaststroke and butterfly)

Flip turns (freestyle and backstroke)

Proficiency and understanding of basic drills of all strokes

Have the desire to participate in competitive swim meets

- Bronze I – 10 & Under Regional Times (3)
- Bronze II – 10 & Under 'B' Time Standards (3)
- Bronze III – 4 legal strokes

In order to be placed in or moved to the Silver Level, swimmers must be able to perform the following skills:

Freestyle and backstroke with good form

Legal butterfly and breaststroke (100 yards)

Proficient in starts (forward and back) and turns (flip and open)

Streamlines off all walls and after dives (5 yards)

Ability to maintain proper basic interval work in practice

Proficiency and understanding of basic drills of all strokes

Expectation to participate in competitive swim meets

- Silver I – 11-12 'AA' Time Standards (3) – Outstanding stroke technique in all four strokes
- Silver II – 11-12 'BB' Time Standards (3) – Technically sound in all four strokes

- Silver III – Near 11-12 ‘B’ Times

In order to be placed in or moved to the Gold Level, swimmers must be able to perform the following skills:

Racing starts with proper technique and breakouts
Open turns for butterfly and breaststroke with correct technique and breakouts
Flip turns for freestyle and backstroke with correct technique and breakouts
Individual Medley turns with correct technique and breakouts
Relay exchanges with proper technique
Ability to read a pace clock and maintain proper interval in practice
Proficiency in all stroke drills

- Gold I – Open Regional Time Standards (3)
- Gold II – 13-14 Regional Time Standards (3)
- Gold III – Near 13-14 ‘B’ Time Standards

In order to be placed in or moved to the Senior / National Teams, swimmers must be able to perform the following skills:

Outstanding stroke technique in all four competitive strokes
Ability to read a pace clock and maintain proper intervals in practice
Proficiency in all stroke drills
Calculate heart rate and relate to training charts
Strong desire to compete on a state, sectional and national level
Swimmers in these groups are required to maintain 85% practice attendance.

- Senior – Open Regional Time Standards (3)
- National – Senior State Time Standards (3) and be able to complete 10x100 1:20 LCM

The Parent's Role

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes, including self-discipline, good sportsmanship and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to deal with defeat, while becoming healthy and physically fit.

As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. Show your interest by ensuring your swimmer's attendance at practices and meets and by watching and cheering for your swimmer at swim meets.

Parents are not participants on their child's team but instead contribute to the success experienced by the child on the team. Parents serve as role models, and children often emulate their attitudes. Please show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates.

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 over burden your swimmer with winning. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, which will help your swimmer develop a positive self-image.

The best way to help your swimmer achieve goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake, however if your swimmer does make one, remember that this is a learning experience. Encourage your swimmer's efforts and point out the positive things. Your role is to provide support.

The Parent-Coach Relationship

It is important to remember that parents and coaches share the same goals. We both care about your child, and we are both working together to give him/her the greatest chance to improve as an individual and to succeed in a team environment. As a parent, you will have questions and concerns. Please approach your child's coach privately, in a respectful manner and at an appropriate time (i.e. not on deck during practice), and s/he will be happy to address your concerns. Please do not jeopardize the swimmer-coach relationship by bringing your child in the middle of a problem; again, save your comments for a private discussion with the coach. Keeping an open and honest relationship with your swimmer's coach will benefit everyone.

The Parent-Swimmer Relationship

In regards to knowledge about the sport of swimming, the coach is the expert. You, as a parent, are a cheerleader and supporter; please remember that staying positive is one of the most important things you can do for your swimmer. If your swimmer has a rough race/meet/practice/whatever, criticism is the last thing he or she needs. Instead, give a pat on the back and a positive observation. If any corrections need to be made, the coach will handle them. Even if you have been involved with swimming in the past, keep in mind that the sport changes and evolves; any swimming advice you give may contradict what the coach has said and, consequently, only serve to confuse your swimmer.

The Parent-Parent Relationship

As a parent, you are also part of a team...a team of fellow parents. You are always surrounded by a wealth of knowledge and supportive peers. Look for carpools, ask questions, share advice, etc. It behooves you to take advantage of such wonderful resources. Please avoid unproductive gossip and rumors. Show respect for your fellow parents.

Patience in the Learning Process

Learning takes time and, when you think about it, swimming is a pretty complex sport. Kids enter an entirely different realm, with new laws of physics, whenever they hop into the water. For new swimmers, it takes time to learn how their bodies move and to gain a sense of balance and control. You can do things in the water that you can only dream about doing on land, which is one reason why swimming is such an attractive sport, so kids need time to explore and have fun in this new environment.

Also, understand that kids need to internalize knowledge as their own before they can apply it and accept it into habit. This is what practice is all about--kids will just do what the coach tells them to do until, at some point, the right brain connections click together and, all of a sudden, they're doing the same skill not because it's "what coach says" but because their brain is telling them it's the right thing to do. This is sometimes a very quick process and other times a much longer process, depending upon the learner and the complexity of the skill.

Different kids learn different skills at different rates and in different ways. This requires patience and understanding from coaches, parents and also teammates. If your swimmer is feeling discouraged due to a perception that other kids are excelling at a faster rate, try to get him/her to understand the truth about the individual learning process--how it is not fair to judge your own success by how well others do--and encourage him/her to talk with the coach about those feelings. Improvement can be relative to the person doing the assessment. Oftentimes, the coach can notice progress in areas that swimmers or parents tend to overlook.

Motivation: How should we motivate kids?

We should find ways to allow them to motivate themselves. Passion is by far the best motivator. No matter what emotion is feeding it, motivation that stems from a passion within is a powerful driving force. We want kids to be passionate about things, and internal motivation is what pounds in the hearts of passionate people. Your swimmer has chosen to swim for his/her own reason, so let it be that way, and if s/he feels like exploring other sports and hobbies, let it be that way, too. It is perfectly acceptable to be involved in more than one sport, assuming it is not too stressful and schoolwork does not suffer.

Nutrition

As a note to parents about diet fads that are constantly sweeping the country; it is recommended that an athlete's diet should be about 60-65% carbohydrates. Growing, active kids need carbohydrates, as they are an essential source of energy, not to mention the only supply of energy for the brain. Effects of an inadequate supply of carbohydrates include lack of energy, muscle fatigue and breakdown, lack of concentration and an inability to work at high intensities. Kids need carbs! Numerous articles on nutrition can be found on the USA swimming website as well as on the CWAC website under "News".

Volunteering

USA Swimming is a non-profit organization made up of very dedicated volunteers. Interested parents donate their time, energy and expertise at every level from local swimming clubs to the national Board of Directors. Your role as a volunteer is very important to our sport. You can be actively involved in your swimmer's swimming program and you can also be instrumental in strengthening swimming in the United States. With a positive attitude and a willingness to lend a hand, you will also have a great impact on your swimmer's athletic environment and love of swimming.

Be a Role Model

Children learn behavior from many different people, including coaches, teachers and peers, but the people they learn the most from are their parents! You'll have many opportunities as your child participates in sports to model good behavior and attitude. For example if you tell your child that he must respect others, your message will be lost unless you also model respect for others. And don't forget, nonverbal messages, like a look of disgust or disappointment, often speak louder than words. Here are some other tips to keep in mind as you sit at swim meets:

- **Model good sportsmanship.** Being a "good sport" is much easier said than done. You can model good sportsmanship by encouraging and supporting all swimmers, controlling your emotions when upset or frustrated and abiding by coaches' and officials' decisions even if you disagree.
- **Model team spirit and loyalty.** Cheer for your team and have only positive things to say about the team and coach.
- **Let go of your own ego.** Put your child's development and desires ahead of your own. Examine your motives for your child's participation.
- **Have fun.** If you are having fun and enjoying the swimming experience, it is more likely that your child will do the same. If you complain and don't enjoy yourself, your child will pattern that behavior also.
- **Help the team as a volunteer.** Your role as a volunteer is crucial to our sport. You can be actively involved in your child's activity, meet new people, have fun, and be instrumental in strengthening swimming in the U.S. Ask the coach or the volunteer coordinator for your team what you can do to help. No experience is necessary for most jobs. Don't wait to be asked, be a volunteer!

Wolfpack Volunteer Guidelines

All Chicago Wolfpack families are required to work a designated number of hours/ sessions at swim meets each season. The following is a list of guidelines on the work session requirements for non-CWAC hosted meets.

WORKING A MEET GIVES YOU AS PARENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED IN THE SPORT YOUR CHILDREN ARE PARTICIPATING IN. WE NEED YOU, THEY NEED YOU AND IT'S FUN!

1. Wolfpack families are asked to work a total of **TWO (2) hours** during each swim season for any meets CWAC attends. In addition to the TWO hours all families are required to work **TWO (2) sessions for Wolfpack hosted meets**.
2. Families whose oldest swimmer is eight (8) years of age or younger as of the first day of the meet must work one (1) work session per hosted home meet.
3. Families who are unable to work meets, can arrange with Head Coach to contribute in other ways (donations of goods, monetary gifts, or supplies) for hosted swim meets in place of required hours / sessions.
4. The Head Coach will determine the number of workers needed for each meet based on host team requirements or by jobs needed for home meets. Once the number of jobs is determined the job sign-up will be posted to the website on the meet webpage. All job openings will be numbered. Once the needed number of workers is reached for a particular job, or session, no more workers can sign up for that job at that time.
5. Please avoid signing up another person or family via your account for a job position. Hours will be tracked through the family log-ins and each family is responsible for their own hours. Contact Samantha Stephens if you need assistance.
6. You will receive a reminder email 48 hours in advance of your job time. If an emergency occurs, please contact Samantha Stephens immediately to assist with finding a replacement.
7. It is critical that all workers report on time. Please contact the event coordinator before the Friday of the meet if you have any questions on report times.
8. Job Descriptions for meet roles are listed below. It is important for all WOLFPACK HOSTED MEETS that workers sign in with the head volunteer when they arrive.
9. For swim meets the WOLFPACK IS ATTENDING you must work the entire time slot to receive credit. For swim meets the WOLFPACK IS HOSTING you must work the entire session to receive credit. *If you must leave the meet early, please do what you can to find a replacement for your job before leaving. If no replacement can be found inform the head volunteer.*
10. **Failing to complete the required number of hours/sessions each season can result in a charge of \$150.** Charges are posted to member accounts for the final payment each season.

We need you as a volunteer, not your money! If all of our families work their required number of hours/sessions we will attend and host more efficient meets. Without your commitment to work, our meets suffer. Emergencies and extenuating circumstances will be handled individually. Any questions about these guidelines should be addressed to Samantha Stephens (cwacswimming@gmail.com)

Volunteer Agreement – Quick View

1. I have read the Wolfpack Family Volunteer Guidelines
2. I understand as a family we must volunteer for...
 - a. 2 volunteer hours at meets not hosted by CWAC
 - b. 2 sessions for each meet hosted by CWAC
3. I understand that there is a \$50 no-show fee for jobs signed up for that I do not attend
4. I understand that if our family does not meet the volunteer requirements each season a \$150 fee will be accessed to our account

Volunteer Agreement – Frequently Asked Questions

HOW MANY HOURS/ SESSIONS IS MY FAMILY REQUIRED TO WORK?

- Attended meets = 2 hours total in one season
- Hosted meets = 8 hours total or 2 sessions in one season

WHAT IS A SESSION?

- A session is usually not more than 4 hours long dividing the day into AM and PM by age groups.
- If both parents each work a job in the same session you receive credit for working two sessions or a total of those hours combined.

CAN I CHOOSE MY WORK SESSION?

- YES....Most parents choose to work the session their child is swimming in. There are a variety of jobs available that allow you to still see your swimmer swim: Timing, Concessions, Officiating, Admissions, Clerk of Course, Computer Room, Announcing, etc.

HOW MANY MEETS ARE THERE?

- The Wolfpack will **host** 1 – 2 meets during each season
- The Wolfpack will **attend** 5 – 6 meets during each season.
Not all meets will require volunteer assistance

AM I REQUIRED TO WORK A **HOME** MEET THAT MY SWIMMER IS NOT PARTICIPATING IN?

- Yes. Working at home meets is considered part of your parent requirement as a member of the Wolfpack and we need everyone's help.

WHY DO FAMILIES WITH MULTIPLE SWIMMERS WORK THE SAME NUMBER OF SESSIONS AS THOSE WITH ONLY ONE?

- Since Work Sessions are met mostly by parents it most fair to have an equal amount per family.

WHY ARE THOSE FAMILIES WITH NO SWIMMERS OVER 8 YEARS OLD ONLY REQUIRED TO WORK ONE SESSION PER MEET?

- Those families are typically new to swimming and it gives them time to get acclimated. Also, these younger swimmers usually need more help from their parents than older swimmers.

WHAT HAPPENS IF OUR FAMILY CAN'T WORK AT MEETS?

- A friend or other family member may volunteer to cover the hours in place of the swimmer's parents
- Make a monetary donation of \$50 or more to help purchase goods for hosted meets
- Make a donation of good or supplies need for a hosted meet

WHO CAN WORK?

- Anyone meeting the age requirements for specific jobs may work a session. Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, Brothers and Sisters, even the babysitter. As long as they are capable of doing the job.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

If you have questions or special needs please contact Samantha Stephens at cwacswimming@gmail.com

Hosted Meets – Job Descriptions

Admissions: Four volunteers will sit at both sides of the pool entrance to collect admission and heat sheet fees. Wristbands or stamps will be given to each paid spectator. There will also be a volunteer sign-in sheet and name tags for each volunteer at the admissions table.

Admission Marshal: Ensures that all spectators entering and exiting the swim meet through designated door ways. They also ensure that the spectators at the meet have paid at the admission table prior to entering.

Announcer: The announcer is responsible for announcing the events and possibly participants in each heat depending on the meet. Top finishers will also be announced after the events are closed.

Awards: At a meet where awards are given, 2 or 3 volunteers will be responsible for placing stickers on medals and/or ribbons to be given out to the swimmers. Posting results and giving out heat winner prizes are also part of this. The runner for the session will bring you result sheets as they become available.

Bull Pen: The 8 & Under Bull Pen crew will get the younger swimmers staged and then lead them to the blocks for their race. It is a great job for someone that likes to interact with the young swimmers, but also keeps you on your toes.

Computer & Timing Operator: The computer operator will run the Meet Manager software. Entering DQ's, verifying swimmer times with timer sheets, entering relay names, printing results, and clearing up any discrepancies are some of the duties. This job requires some training. This person will work closely with the Admin Official during meets.

Concessions: Several people are needed to make our concessions sale successful. Volunteers are needed to help prepare, serve, and take money for food and drink items available at our home meets.

Deck Marshals: From warm-ups until the end of the session, the meet marshal ensures that swimmers, coaches, and spectators follow certain standards of safe behavior. Along with this they ensure only swimmers and coaches are on deck.

Head Volunteer: Is in charge of ensuring all volunteers have reported for duty and have been directed to their job lead for instructions.

Hospitality: Provides food and drinks for coaches and officials throughout the meet. Also provides snacks and drinks to volunteers helping on deck.

Job Lead: The Job Lead is assigned by the Head Volunteer and will work closely with her / him to ensure they know what is expected of their area and who will be volunteering with them.

Official: We need registered USA officials to make meets sanctioned. This can range from a meet ref, admin ref, starter or stroke and turn. Officials play an integral role in the success of a meet. If

you are interested in becoming an official please reach out to the team's lead official or check out <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1506&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

Runner: Two runners will work each session. Runners are responsible for collecting lane timer sheets from each lane at the completion of each event. The sheets are taken upstairs, along with any DQ slips from the designated official, and given to the computer operator to be entered into the timing system.

Timers: Be part of the action! For our home meets 2 timers per lane are required. Each timer will operate a stopwatch and the electronic back-up button (plunger). One timer will record both stopwatch times on pre-printed sheets for your lane that is picked up after each event by a runner. Additional timers are needed to act as a Head timer and back up timer. The head timer is in charge of the clipboards and stopwatches for each lane and to handle any timing issues. The back-up timer will start 2 extra watches for each race. If an individual lane timer watch fails to start, they can raise their hand and take one of the extra watches from the back-up timer. Before each timing session, a timer's meeting will be held. The head official will go over your duties and answer any questions you may have. "First-time" timers will be paired with an experienced timer. No training is necessary.

Ten Commandments for Swimming Parents

By Rose Snyder, USA Swimming

I. 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 your child based on what you think s/he should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is that every person can strive to do his or her personal best.

II. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what. There is only one question to ask your child: "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

III. Thou shalt not coach your child. You have taken your child to professional coaches. Do not undermine the coaches by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support and love your child no matter what. The coaches are 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 developing.

IV. 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 coaches.

V. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears. A first swimming meet, 500 free or 200 IM can be a stressful situation for your child. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell at or belittle him/her. Just assure your child that the coaches would not have suggested the event if s/he was not ready to compete in it.

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

VII. Respect thy child's coach. The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child. It will only serve to hurt your child's swimming.

VIII. Thou shalt not jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer at the other team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long time by the teammates they leave behind. Often times, swimmers who switch teams never perform better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

IX. Thy child shalt have goals besides winning. Giving an honest effort, regardless of the outcome, 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 am very proud of that swim."

X. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian. There are over 225,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the U.S. Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about 1 in 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he coaches. Chances are, s/he was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that s/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.

Playing Favorites

By John Leonard, Executive Director of the American Swimming Coaches Association

One day, a few years ago, a club board member accused me of “having favorites” on our club team. Several other parent board members nodded their heads in agreement. The implication was that this was a terrible sin. When I was a younger coach, I thought it was terrible also. And he was right. I did have favorites. My favorites were those athletes who most fervently did what I asked of them. Those that did, I gave more attention to. I talked to them more. I spent more time teaching them. I also expected more of them.

The implication that he was making was that my favorites got better than the others because they were my favorites and that was somehow unfair. He mistook cause for effect.

The fact is that the athletes who came to me ready to learn, ready to listen, ready to act on what they learned and try it my way, even if it was more challenging and more difficult than they imagined, were ready to get more out of our program. And they were my favorites.

As a coach, I have only one thing to offer to an athlete. That is, my attention. Which means that I attend to their needs. The reward for good behavior should be attention in attending to their needs. The consequence of inattention, lack of effort, unwillingness or un readiness to learn, or just plain offensive or disruptive behavior is my inattention to that athlete.

How could it be other than this? If you have three children and you spend all of your time and energy working with the one that is badly behaved, what does that tell your other two children? It tells them that in order to capture your attention, they should behave badly. What we reward is what we get.

As a coach, I want athletes who are eager to learn, eager to experiment in order to improve and eager to work hard. I want athletes who come to me to help develop their skills, both mentally and physically. I want athletes who are willing to accept what I have to offer. Otherwise, why have they come to me? I am going to reward that athlete with my attention. In doing so, I encourage others to become like the athlete above. If I spent my time with the unwilling, the slothful and the disruptive, I would only be encouraging that kind of behavior.

The link I want to forge is between attention and excellence. Excellence in the sense of achieving all that is possible and desired. My way of forging that is to provide my attention to those who “attend” to me. This does, of course, result in increased performance for those that do so. I am a professional coach, and when I pay attention to a person, that person is going to improve. Over time, this makes it appear that my “favorites” are the better swimmers. Not so at all. The better swimmers are those that pay attention and thus become by favorites.

What Dad didn’t realize is that you must have favorites if anyone is to develop in a positive fashion. The coach’s job is to reward those who exhibit positive development behaviors. Those are my “favorites” and they should be.

Swimming Terminology

Below are some common terms that are used in the sport of swimming. Some terms are relative to both and include official terms and slang terms commonly used in the sport.

Age Group Swimming - the program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and 15-18. Local meets include an 8 and under and 9-10 age group. In the state of Illinois, age group swimmers are all swimmers age 14 and under. Swimmers age 15 and over compete on the senior or open level.

Anaerobic Interval Training - Consists of repeated rounds of super high-intensity activity separated by long periods of rest.

Anaerobic Training - Training that improves the efficiency of your body's energy producing systems that do not require oxygen and can increase your muscular strength and tolerance for acid-base imbalances (such as the production of lactic acid) during high intensity effort.

ASCA - The American Swimming Coaches Association (<http://www.swimmingcoach.org>) is the professional organization for coaches in the United States. ASCA certifies coaches, offers educational opportunities, assists coaches in a number of areas and is a strong political organization in United States Swimming. To be an ASCA member coaches must sign a code of ethics, continually work on their education and provide service to the swimming committee.

Backstroke / Back - One of the four competitive strokes. The swimmer must stay on his or her back, except during the turns. Swimmers must finish the race on their backs.

Breaststroke / Breast - One of the four competitive strokes. Swimmers must touch the wall with both hands at the same time before executing a turn. After the start and turns, swimmers are allowed to take one underwater pull and one underwater kick before surfacing.

Bulkhead - A wall constructed to divide a pool. For instance, many 50 meter pools have moveable bulkheads that allow the pool to be used for a 50 meter competition or a 25 yard/meter competition. By moving the bulkhead, the length of the pool can be changed.

Butterfly / Fly - One of the four competitive strokes. The butterfly features the simultaneous overhead stroke of the arms combined with the dolphin kick. The dolphin kick features both legs moving up and down together. Swimmers must touch the wall with both hands at the same time before executing a turn.

Cap - A latex or silicone swim cap used during a race and/or workout to reduce the water resistance from a swimmers' hair. A cap also helps protect a swimmers' hair from the effects of chlorine in the water and helps identify the team for which s/he is competing.

Circle Swimming - Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane. Circle swimming is used during practices and meet

warm-up.

Clerk of Course - At certain meets, the area where swimmers are organized before each event.

College Swimming - Many colleges and universities throughout the country have swimming & diving teams. Athletes have four years of eligibility in which they may compete. Collegiate athletics is sanctioned by the NCAA. (<http://www.ncaa.org>)

Code of Conduct - An agreement signed by a swimmer and parent, stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

Technical (Tech) Suit - A racing suit used only for big competitions. This suit is often a smaller size than the practice suit to reduce water resistance. These suits are often expensive and need to be treated with great care to sustain longer usage.

Cut - Slang for qualifying time which is a time standard necessary to compete in a particular meet or event. For example, "Did you make the cut in the 100 free?" is translated as: "Did you achieve the Regional qualifying time in the 100 freestyle?"

Deck Seeding - Swimmers will be given lane assignments just prior to the event. Check-in will be held early in the meet to determine who is present so that full heats will be swum with no empty lanes. Swimmers must check-in for these events. An announcement is usually made over the public address system notifying swimmers of check-in procedures.

Declared False Start (DFS) - during a swim meet a swimmer can withdrawal from a race with the permission of a coach. The coach will approach the deck ref to declare a false start for the swimmer prior to the start of the event. The swimmer will not be penalized for a "no-show" swim, but it will still count in their overall number of swims.

Distance Events - Term used to refer to the following freestyle events: 800 meters, 1500 meters, 1000 yards, and 1650 yards.

DQ, Disqualified, and Disqualification - This occurs when a swimmer commits an infraction of some kind (e.g. freestyle kick in butterfly). A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards nor can the time be used as an official time.

Drag Suit - A second, loose fitting swimsuit worn by swimmers to add a certain amount of weight and resistance to the flow of the water around the swimmer usually done during practice. The concept is similar to a batter swinging two or three bats (or using bat weights) while on deck in a baseball game. These suits are usually loose fitting and many swimmers train wearing several suits for the purpose of creating drag.

Drill - An exercise involving a portion of a stroke, used to improve technique.

Dry Land Training - Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance. This often includes lifting weights, running, plyo-metrics and medicine balls.

False Start - Occurs when a swimmer leaves the starting block, or is moving on the starting block,

before the starter officially starts the race. In USA Swimming and High School Swimming, one false start results in an automatic disqualification from the race.

FINA (Federation Internationale de Natation de Amateur) - The international governing body of competitive swimming, diving, water polo, and synchronized swimming. (<http://www.fina.org>)

Final - The championship final of an event in which the fastest swimmers from the preliminaries compete.

Fins - Flippers that are worn on the feet and used for stroke technique and speed assisted training.

Flags - (Backstroke flags) Located 5 yards (in 25 yard pools) or 5 meters (in 25 and 50 meter pools) from the ends of the pool. The flags enable backstroke swimmers to execute a turn more efficiently by being able to practice how many strokes from the flags to the wall it is for turns and finishes.

Freestyle / Free - One of the four competitive strokes. The alternate overhand motion of the arms and a flutter kick characterizes this stroke.

Freestyle Relay - Consists of four freestylers, each swimming one-quarter of the total distance of the event.

Goal - A specific time achievement for which a swimmer strives. It can be short term or long term.

Goggles - Eyewear worn by swimmers in the pool to enhance vision and to protect swimmers' eyes from the effects of chlorine in the water.

Gutter - The area at the edges of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is recirculated through the filtration system. Deep gutters catch surface waves and don't allow them to wash back into the pool and effect the race.

Heat Sheet - Listing of all swimmers in a meet by event, heat and lane assignments.

High School Swimming - The swimming program run through the athlete's high school. In Illinois the IHSA (<http://www.ihsa.org>) is the governing body for high school swimming. In Illinois, if an athlete is competing for his/her high school, s/he must practice with his/her high school's team during that season. In Illinois the girls' season is in the fall (Aug-Nov) and the boys' season is in the winter (Dec-Feb).

Hypoxic Training (breath control) - Training with a decreased concentration of oxygen that causes the constriction of blood vessels, which, in turn, help muscles work more efficiently with what oxygen is available. This should not be practiced without a coach present.

IM - Slang for "Individual Medley," which is an event the swimmer uses all four competitive strokes in this order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

Interval Training - Consists of repeated rounds of moderate- to high- intensity activity separated by brief rest periods.

Kick Board - A device, usually made of plastic or styrofoam, used to isolate the kick portion of a stroke.

Lactate Acid - In the absence of oxygen, as with anaerobic training, a body will breakdown muscle sugar (glycogen) using a process that produces an acidic by-product waste called lactate acid. Muscles may start to burn or ache as lactate acid accumulates and the body cannot keep up with removing it from muscle stores. This process occurs during races and intense practices. Warming down is the way to remove lactate acid from the muscles allowing your body to recover.

Lane Lines - The dividers used to delineate the individual lanes in the pool. These are made of individual finned disks strung on a cable, which rotate on the cable when hit by a wave. The rotating disks dissipate surface tension waves in a competitive pool.

Lap Counter - A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. This term also refers to the person who counts the laps. This person is stationed at the opposite end of the pool from the starting end and they dip the display numbers in for the swimmer as they approach. This is done so the swimmer in the water can concentrate on the race and not have to worry about losing count.

Long Course - A pool 50 meters in length. World records may be set in long course and short course competition. The main long course season in the United States is during the summer months. The Olympic Games, as well as all major international competitions, are conducted in long course.

LSC (Local Swimming Committee) - Governing body for swimming at the local level. There are 59 LSC's in the United States. In Illinois, the LSC is Illinois Swimming, Inc. (www.ilswim.org)

Medley Relay - Relay in which all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly and the final swimmer, freestyle.

Meet - Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmer tests himself/herself against the clock to see how s/he is improving.

Middle Distance - Term used to refer to events of 200 yards/meters, 400 meters, and 500 yards.

Negative Split - Swimming the second half of a race faster than the first half.

NISCA (National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association) The national association that most high school coaches are members of. (<http://www.nisca.net>)

Official - A judge on the deck of the pool at sanctioned competition who enforces the rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and referees.

Pace Clock - A clock used during practice to check pace, maintain intervals and time rest periods.

Paddles - A piece of training equipment used in practice that is worn on the hands and helps to increase shoulder and arm strength and improve technique.

Prelims - Short for "preliminary." Those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship finals and consolation finals in the events at a swim meet.

Pull Buoy - Usually made of styrofoam, this device is placed between the legs to restrict their use and helps swimmers to isolate the use of their arms. The pull buoy is used to strengthen the arms and is sometimes used for stroke work.

Relay - An event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Relay Exchange - The exchange between the swimmer in the water and the next swimmer on the relay team. An ideal exchange will simultaneously have the finishing swimmer's hand on the touch pad and the starting swimmer's toes just touching the starting block with the rest of the starting swimmer's body extended over the water.

Relay Split - The time for one of the four individuals in a relay race. Each swimmer in a relay will have a 'relay split' and the four times combined will be the relay time. The lead swimmers time can count as an official time as long as the whole swim is legally preformed.

Scratch - To withdraw from an event or competition.

Shave - Prior to a major competition, a swimmer will shave his/her entire body. The removal of hair and the top layer of skin provides less resistance between the swimmer's body and the water. This also heightens the swimmer's sensations in the water.

Short Course - A pool 25 yards/meters long. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in 25 yard pools. NCAA swimming competitions use the 25 yard format but conducts its national championship meet every four years in the 25 meter format. Most of the world swims short course meters (using 25 meter pools) in the winter. The fastest times swum in a 25 yard pool may only gain US Open and American Record status. World records are recorded for short course and long course meters only.

Split - A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 yards/meters and are used to determine whether or not a swimmer is on pace. Splits are very useful in planning future race strategy.

Sprint - Describes the shorter events (50 and 100 yards/meters). In practice, this refers to swimming as fast as possible for a short distance.

Starting Block - The starting platform used by swimmers at the start of each race and for relays.

Streamline - The position used by swimmers under water when starting or pushing off the walls after a turn. A streamlined body position is used to reduce water resistance.

Taper - Reducing training volume and intensity to allow the swimmer's body and mind a break from the rigors of intense training. This coupled with quality rest allow the swimmer's body time to repair itself and to restore its energy reserves to prepare for competition. Studies have found tapering to produce a marked increase in muscle strength.

Team Uniform - A team uniform is usually made up of one or more of the following: swim suit, cap, T-shirt, sweat suit, jacket, and parka. Each team has a uniform, which is usually a requirement and unique to each team.

Time Trial - A time-only swim that is not a part of a regular meet. Swimmers usually compete in a time trial or attend a time trial meet in order to attempt to achieve qualifying times for a championship meet.

Touch Pad - A large sensitive board at the end of the lane where a swimmer's finish is registered and sent electronically to the timing system to register the swimmer's official time for that race.

Unattached - The status a swimmer receives when s/he changes from one USA Swimming club to another. Swimmers must be "unattached" for 120 days from their last competition with one club before they can compete for their new club. During this time they may swim for a club in individual events but may not score or swim on relays for their new team.

USA Swimming - The national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States. (<http://www.usaswimming.org>)

USA Swimming Number - A number assigned to a swimmer upon joining USA Swimming. The membership card with this number may be required at any given competition.

Warm Down - Easy swimming or calisthenics used by swimmers after a race or anaerobic practice set to rid the muscles of lactic acid and gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

Warm Up - Easy swimming or calisthenics used by swimmers prior to a race or practice to get the muscles loose and warm. Warm up gradually increases heart rate and respiration and helps prevent injuries.