

**2013 Handbook**

**Mission Statement ...**

*"To introduce children to the benefits of competitive swimming and encourage our swimmers to reach their highest level of potential in and out of the water while demonstrating leadership and sportsmanship skills.”*

Overview

**Welcome**
Welcome to the Rockford Riptide Swim Team. This information will help answer some questions and ease you into competitive swimming.

**Our Coaches**
The majority of our coaches are, or have been, competitive swimmers themselves. They have years of experience and are now passing along their knowledge, along with teaching the latest techniques, to your swimmer.
**Our Swimmers**
Our swimmers are the most important part of our club. Along with support from their families and instruction from the coaches, our swimmers progress, build great relationships, and have fun while developing great swimming skills.

**Our Families**
Your swimmer depends on you to get to practices on time, drive to meets, be supportive, and volunteer your time to help the coaches or swimmers during the meets.  Family volunteers are needed to make the club successful, as swim meets are major fundraisers for the club.

**Health**
In order to work hard at practice, swimmers need a good night’s sleep.  They also need a balanced diet that will provide vitamins and nutrients for hard-working bodies.  Swimmers will learn about good nutrition from the coaches. There is also nutrition information on the USA Swimming website (www.usaswimming.org)

**Talk to Us**
Our coaches are not only committed to the success of each swimmer and the team, they are committed to building relationships with the swimmers and their families.  If you have a question, concern, feedback, or suggestion, communicate with the coaches, our team administrator, or a board member. Contact information and best method for communication is available on the Riptide website.

**Getting Information**
We do our best to keep you informed of the practice and meet schedules. The Riptide website and emails are the best source for pertinent information.  If your swimmer misses a practice, make sure they ask the coaches if any announcements have been missed.

**Practice Cancellation Policy**

In the event of a cancellation, a notice will be posted to the website and an e-mail as soon as we are notified by RPS. According to Rockford Community Services policy, when school is closed and evening activities are canceled, Riptide does not have practice. However, on occasion the athletic department may hold evening activities at the school but this does not reflect or affect Riptide practice availability.As we encourage safety at all times, please make your decision on whether to attend based on your individual family circumstances.

Riptide Competitive Swimming

In order to be part of Rockford Riptide, swimmers must meet minimum criteria. Evaluations of new swimmers are conducted by Riptide coaches prior to each session. Skills needed include, but are not limited to, ability to swim unassisted for the duration of an average practice, basic demonstration of the competitive strokes, ability to focus and perform in a group setting and follow the guidelines of the Riptide Code of Conduct.

Junior Riptide is a separate group administered by Rockford Riptide, existing as a bridge between community swim lessons and our competitive swim club. (See separate Jr. Riptide Handbook)

**West Michigan Swim League (WMSL)**
In the summer and winter Riptide is part of the West Michigan Swim League, competing against other local team.  There are usually three to four dual “team” meets (2 teams) scheduled on Thursdays during the summer season and Saturdays during the winter season.  There are no WMSL meets during the spring or fall seasons.

At the end of summer and winter sessions, all WMSL teams compete in three conference meets:  12 & under "A" Conference, 12 & under "B" Conference, and "13 & Over" Conference.  All participants in at least one team meet will qualify to swim in a conference meet based on their age and event times they have achieved.

Please refer to [www.riptide.org](http://www.riptide.org) (under “Meets” section) for qualifying time standards.

**United States Swimming (USA) / Michigan Swimming**
USA Swimming is the national organization for amateur swimming in the United States, made up of nearly 2,800 teams across the country.  It is mandatory for all Riptide members to be USA Swimming / Michigan Swimming members.  The annual membership fee (set by Michigan Swimming, currently $59) is paid in addition to Riptide session fees.  Riptide members are given a USA Swimming membership card with their personal ID number.

Each season, our coaches select "ABC" formatted USA swim meets held throughout Michigan.  These meets allow Riptide swimmers to participate without time standards.  Swimmers are placed into time categories - "A", "B" or "C", and ranked against others of the same age and ability levels.  Summer meets are held in "long-course meters" (LCM - 50 meter pools), and winter meets are held in "short-course yards" (SCY - 25 yard pools). There is occasionally a time standard USA meet offered also and swimmers must have the time qualifications for that meet in order to swim.

Please refer to the USA long-course and short-course time standards found on our website under the meets section ([www.riptide.org](http://www.riptide.org)).

At the end of the summer season, Riptide swimmers who have achieved “Q1” times (state qualifying) will compete at the Michigan State LCM Championship. Those swimmers who have achieved "AAA" times (zone) may represent Michigan at the Zone Championship Meet, competing against swimmers from 5 – 10 states within our Central States Zone.

At the end of the winter season, there are three championship meet opportunities.  Riptide swimmers who do not have "Q1" (state) or "Q2" (JO) times may compete in the District meet.  Swimmers who have achieved "Q2" times may compete at the Michigan Junior Olympics meet and those who have achieved "Q1" (state qualifying times) may compete at the Michigan State Championships. Swimmers may participate in any and all of these meets for which they have qualified. Any qualifications made at a lower meet allows entrance into the higher meet (ie, a state qualification time made at JO allows the swimmer to then swim that event at state also)

If a swimmer gets disqualified in his or her race that time does not count towards a time standard cut.

Getting Information

Communication is critical.  There are three main resources where you will find information:

**Website -** [www.riptide.org](http://www.riptide.org/)
This is the best source for club information with the most up-to-date calendar, announcements, contact and meet information. To access protected information on the website, such as board meeting minutes, click register on the home page and create a user id and password. After being authorized, you will be able to login and see the parents’ page of the site. If you have any questions, please contact Suelyn Ritsema at sritsema@riptide.org.

**Bins**
Riptide maintains a box that has a file with each family’s last name.  The bins are located outside the High School locker room entrances.  *Meet ribbons and awards are placed in these bins.*

**Head Coaches**
Mike Cutler and Erin Tramper are happy to speak to you about your swimmer.  The most effective way to reach them is by email: coachmcutler@riptide.org or mailto:coachetramper@riptide.org. Please arrange a time to speak with either of them if you need more than a few minutes.

Additionally, e-mail blasts are sent with updates and information that needs to be delivered quickly.  To ensure you receive updates, please email your address to Suelyn at sritsema@riptide.org if you have not previously done so.

Coaches Philosophy

Our Riptide coaches want to stress the following:

1. ***We work with every swimmer on the team****.* It is our intent to work with all Riptide swimmers equally.  We stress the importance of all swimmers participating and having fun.
2. ***We stress the importance of life skills****.* It is important to recognize that there is more to life than swimming. Good grades, responsibilities, team concepts, and community are all important.
3. ***We work on basic skills and teach good fitness habits****.* We help swimmers realize the importance of good stroke execution.  We stress the importance of good fitness practices like warm-ups and conditioning exercises.  We teach swimmers about diet, rest, and an equal balance of involvement in sports, school and other activities.
4. ***We provide a challenging environment for swimming****.* We encourage the swimmers to motivate themselves in various ways and then create the atmosphere for them to choose their level of practice participation by their actions and abilities.
5. ***We teach fair play****.* We stress:
Respect for yourself
Respect for your teammates
Respect for the other team
Respect for the coaches
Respect for the rules and the officials who enforce them
6. ***We work with your swimmer to help them set individual goals****.* It is important to set goals to measure skill and improvement.  It also creates a sense of accomplishment when your swimmer proudly tells you about finishing a hard workout, beating their best time, or managing to keep good grades while participating in swimming.
7. ***We keep winning in perspective****.* There is more to life than winning events.  Learning great swimming skills, becoming fit, learning to be a leader, and dealing with the emotions of a great win or disappointing loss are equally important.  Every swim, whether good or bad, should teach a lesson.  Taking the time to acknowledge others and reflect is important.
8. ***We encourage physical fitness as a lifetime goal****.* Swimming can be fun and a great cardio exercise your swimmer can enjoy for life.
9. ***We work with the whole person****.*  We strive to emphasize fun, health, and overall personal development.

Practice Group Descriptions

Rockford Riptide is divided into seven practice groups.  Attendance is highly encouraged at each practice as skills from each practice build upon each other.  The coaching staff does placement into each group at the beginning of each season and makes adjustments as necessary. Challenge nights are used to track the swimmers progress and see if they are in the appropriate group, or are ready to move up to the next one.

**Tidal Waves**

Minimum requirements:

* Elementary aged swimmers
* Swimmers have completed the top level endurance and technique set for Junior Riptide
* Attendance goal of 75% or higher for practices, participation in at least one dual meet (if available)
* BASE 100 free time of at least 2:15

What is needed to move up to the next group (final approval at coach’s discretion):

* Achieving the following endurance set: 5 X 100 IM at 2:00, 6 X 100 Free at 1:45
1. **Tsunamis**

Minimum Requirements:

* Elementary aged swimmers
* Swimmers have completed the top level endurance and technique set for Tidal Wave group
* Attendance goal of 80% or higher for practices, participation in most dual meets, and participation in USA meets (if available)
* BASE 100 free time of at least 2:00

What is needed to move up to the next group (final approval at coach’s discretion):

* Achieving the following endurance set: 5 X 200 IM at 3:30, 8 X 100 Free at 1:30
	+ 1. **Rapids**

Minimum requirements:

* Elementary aged swimmers
* Attendance goal of 85% or higher for practices, participation in all dual meets, and participation in USA meets (if available)
* Swimmers have completed the top level endurance and technique set for Tsunami group
* BASE 100 free time of at least 1:45

What is needed to move up to the next group (final approval at coach’s discretion):

* Achieving the following endurance set: 5 X 200 IM at 3:20, 8 X 100 Free at 1:30

**Blue**

Minimum Requirements:

* Middle school/high school aged swimmers
* Attendance of 75% or higher for practices, participation in some dual meets
* Swimmers in this group are have completed the top level endurance and technique set for Junior Riptide Group
* BASE 100 Free time of at least 2:00
1. What is needed to move up to the next group (final approval at coach’s discretion):
* Achieving the following endurance set: 5 X 100 IM at 1:55, 6 X 100 Free at 1:40

**White**

Minimum Requirements:

* Middle school/high school aged swimmers
* Attendance of 80% or higher for practices, participation in all dual meets, and participation in USA meets (if available, subject to HS/MS rules)
* Swimmers have completed the top level endurance and technique set for Blue group
* BASE 100 free time of at least 1:45

What is needed to move up to the next group (final approval at coach’s discretion):

* Achieving the following endurance set: 5 X 200 IM at 3:20, 8 X 100 Free at 1:30

**Orange**

Minimum Requirements:

* Middle school/high school aged swimmers
* Expectation of attendance of 85% or higher for practices, participation in all dual meets and participation in USA meets (if available, subject to HS/MS rules)
* Swimmers in this group are have completed the top level endurance and technique set for White group
* BASE 100 free time of at least 1:30

What is needed to move up to the next group (final approval at coach’s discretion):

* Achieving the following endurance set: 5 X 200 IM at 2:50, 10 X 100 Free at 1:20

**Black**

Minimum Requirements:

* Middle school/high school/college aged swimmers
* Attendance goal of 90% or higher for practices, participation in all dual meets and participation in USA meets (if available, subject to HS/MS rules)
* Swimmers in this group are have completed the top level endurance and technique set for Orange group
* This is an invitation group extended *by a Head Coach*
* BASE 100 free time of at least 1:20 or faster

Working on the following endurance set:

* 5 X 200 IM at 2:40 or faster, 10 X 100 Free at 1:10 or faster

Practices

Practice is for developing and fine-tuning competitive swimming skills. Swimmers need to be on deck, on time, and ready to warm up. The more practices a swimmer attends, the quicker they will improve.  It takes consistent hard work to achieve personal and team goals.

Swimmers are placed in training groups according to age, experience and skills. The coaches spend appropriate time with all groups, to ensure every member improves. Each swimmer needs to show good behavior and sportsmanship, adhering to the Riptide Code of Conduct.  The staff will take disciplinary action with any swimmer causing problems, including suspension or expulsion from the team if warranted.

**What to Bring to Practice**

* Swimsuit
* Swim cap
* Two pair of goggles (in case one breaks)
* Towel
* Water bottle with appropriate beverage such as water, Gatorade, Propel
* Lock for your locker
* A great attitude

Meets

Part of the fun of belonging to Rockford Riptide is watching your swimmer proudly show off skills at swim meets.  Swimmers work hard during practices - meets are the fun part.  There are many events that swimmers can compete in during a meet, including:

*To sign up your swimmer for the WMSL Team meets:*

1. Check the Riptide website meet page for information on the upcoming team meets.
2. You will need only to register your attendance.  Coaches assign events for WMSL meets.
3. Click the entry link under the meet info section of the website.
4. Log in with User Name and Password. Click on Swimmer name (very important if more than one swimmer in family). Click on the meet name, click the register button. Once the Register button has changed to a red Unregister your swimmer is entered in the meet. You may log back in and click Unregister to be removed from the meet up until the entry due date.
5. If for some reason you cannot attend after signing up, please let the coach know as soon as possible.  This impacts our team entries and affects other team members, especially relays.

*To sign your swimmer up for invitational meets (USA meets):*

1. Check the Riptide website meet page for the meet information packet. This packet will include location, event lists, meet fees and other information.
2. Encourage your swimmer to try both favorite and new events.  If you are not sure, ask the coach for input on which events your swimmer should try.
3. Click the entry link under the meet info section of the website.
4. Log in with User Name and Password. Click on Swimmer name (very important if more than one swimmer in family). Click on the meet name, click the register button. Once the Register button has changed to a red Unregister your swimmer is entered in the meet. Click on Add and fill in the event number and event name (not swimmer name) and click submit. Do this for all events.
5. You may log back in and click Unregister to be removed from the meet, or adjust entries, up until the entry due date.

The Head Coaches will take all entries immediately at the due date, process them and submit a team entry to the host swim club.  Please register online or send in entries by the due date posted by Riptide – **NOT the hosting team’s entry due date**. Failure to do so may make your swimmer ineligible for entry with the club's electronic submission to a meet. An entry list is posted on the Riptide website soon after entries close. Be sure to check this list! Once entries are sent to the host team we cannot make changes to them.

Meet entry fee amounts can be obtained from the meet information packet or on the website’s meet page, generally within 48 hours after the Riptide meet entry deadline, and are due by the date listed on the website.  Please make checks payable to "Rockford Riptide" and deposit in black meet fee box near the information bins, mail to PO Box 382, Rockford MI 49341, or request an email invoice from the Team Administrator.  It is important that payment is made on time. Once entries are submitted to the host club, any cancellations do not create a refund to the club or to the swimmer.

At USA Swimming meets, you may be allowed to "deck enter" events at the meet.  There is no guarantee that the preferred event will be available as it depends on the meet timeline and open available lanes in that event. The deck entry fee is higher and needs to be paid to the host club upon entry. Contact Coach Erin if you are interested in Deck Entering and she will provide more information on the process.

**Relays are a team entry decided by the coaches.** Swimmers will not incur a cost of being a relay member during the course of the regular meet season.**Swimmers on a relay in a championship meet pay for their entry.** Relays are subject to change for many reasons, but must be turned in with individual entries.

**What to Bring to a Meet**:

* Two swimsuits – a competition swimsuit, plus an extra
* Two swim caps (in case one breaks)
* Two pair of goggles (in case one breaks)
* Two towels – one to sit on / one to warm up with
* Water bottle with appropriate beverage such as water, Gatorade, Propel
* Lock for your locker
* Deck shoes / sandals
* Warm clothes to wear between events (t-shirt, sweatshirt, warm-ups)
* Healthy snacks - no junk food
* Permanent marker - to write event and number on swimmer’s hand before the meet.

**Meet Day To-Do's**
Specific Coach contact info will be sent out prior to each meet. Contact the coach as soon as possible if you cannot attend a meet you signed up for or if you are running late.  The team has relays and entries that will be affected if a swimmer is not there.

1. Be on time for the meet.  Arrive 15 minutes before warm up begins and be sure to check-in (if applicable).
2. Get your events numbers - you are responsible for knowing what events you are going to swim.  This can be done at check-in.
3. Check-in with your coach (or assigned check-in person) - let him / her know that you are there.
4. You are responsible for your personal items - store them properly and safely.
5. A coach will provide you with warm-up instructions.  Everyone will warm-up accordingly as a team.
6. A team meeting will be held shortly after warm-up and prior to the meet.  Coaches will cover last minute changes and the team will do a cheer.
7. Event marshalling generally begins before the National Anthem.  Swimmers should all be gathered together so the coach knows where they are.
8. All swimmers should remain on deck during all meets - sitting in the stands with parents or friends is not allowed.
9. Team cheering for all swimmers is strongly encouraged.
10. Coaches will make their best efforts to talk to swimmers prior to their races.  Swimmers should be prepared and behind the blocks prior to each race.
11. Post race, each swimmer should see the coach for critique / assessment.  Every swim, good or bad, is a learning experience.
12. After an event, coach will send the swimmer to warm-down, if available, or provide other instruction.  Each swimmer should warm-down for body recovery.
13. At WMSL team meets, swimmers must stay until the meet is complete. Swimmers may leave USA meets after their events are finished and upon notifying a coach.

**Sportsmanship** **and Code of Conduct**

Rockford Riptide prides itself of the sportsmanship and great conduct of our swimmers.  We expect:

1. Swimmers will support their team and teammates, which means sitting together and not leaving the deck without the coach’s approval.
2. Swimmers are to wear the team cap or other appropriate swim cap.
3. Swimmers should be open to swimming a variety of events that fit the needs of the team.
4. Scratches from an event are with the coaches’ approval.
5. All swimmers to be on deck 15 minutes prior to warm-ups and following meet procedure guidelines.
6. Parents are to support their swimmers from the stands.  Parents are not allowed on deck during the meet unless they are volunteering during the meet.
7. Parents are expected to respect the coaches and staff and foster the same attitude in their children.
8. Parents and swimmers will be expected to sign a more detailed Code of Conduct at the start of the season.

Health and Nutrition

Some common complaints to note:

* **Red Eyes:** Chemicals in the pool can make your swimmers eyes red and sensitive to light. Wearing goggles greatly reduces this problem and improves vision in the water.
* **Swimmers Ear**: Swimmers may complain about a sore ear, which may be swimmers ear - an outer skin infection of the ear canal that can be quite painful.  There are over-the-counter remedies. If pain persists, please see your physician.
* **Cough:** During the season, swimmers may experience a hacky cough during the later part of practice, generally due to exertion and chloramine vapors.  As the swimmers sweat in the pool, the ammonia in sweat reacts with the chlorine.  This is generally not a problem and goes away shortly after practice.  If not, then allergy, cold, sinus or respiratory issues may be to blame.
* **Muscle Pains:** A bit of mild muscle pain is good, but there is also bad pain.  Shoulder injury prevention is discussed with the swimmers throughout the season.  If you have questions or your swimmer is experiencing joint pains or prolonged muscle pains, let a coach know.

**Nutrition**
Swimming is among the best aerobic exercises around.  Because competitive swimming draws from the body’s reserves for fuel, it’s always best to fuel your swimmers with healthy, nutritious foods.  Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Balance within the food groups is also critical. Please encourage your swimmer to eat healthy products daily.

A good multi-vitamin will help with any deficiencies in your swimmers’ diet.

Family Participation

**Family participation is required at meets as it takes 200 - 250 volunteers to run each USA swim meet and about 50 volunteers for each home WMSL swim meet.**

**USA / Riptide Meets:**
These are specific USA / Rockford Riptide home meets that garner a profit. These meets are critical to the club and benefit ALL of our swimmers. Profits are used to fund club operations and reduce seasonal fees.  Equipment purchases, coaches training, and social events are also made possible with the profits from these meets.

Since each family benefits from these meets, each family is required to work at least one session per meet. There are four sessions to choose from at each meet. In addition to supporting your swimmer and the club, each volunteering family earns a voucher to use towards the next swim season.  Currently, the vouchers are $10 for each session worked. This insures a first-rate meet, which is critical during the bidding for, and awarding of, such meets. If we do not run an efficient meet within the designated amount of time, we are financially penalized and may not get future meets.

If you need to know more about volunteer opportunities, contact our Volunteer Coordinator Kristen Gamm (Kristen\_gamm@hotmail.com) She will help you find the right position for the time you have available.  Descriptions of the volunteer roles are available on the Riptide website. *NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED.*
Volunteer positions include:

Meet Director / Co-Director Program / Publicity

Awards Announcer
Technology Clerk of Course Hospitality

Cashier / Admissions  Colorado Timing System

Concessions  Timers

**Riptide Home WMSL Meets:**

Home WMSL swim meets also require family participation. Vouchers are not available to families for these meets since they do not generate revenue for our club. However, we still require help in running them.

Riptide Policies

Riptide has a number of policies in place through the direction of USA Swimming in order to protect team members. The Travel, Bullying, and Electronic communication policies are posted on the Registration page of the Riptide website and should be reviewed by all swimmers/parents. The Code of Conduct is also posted there.

Riptide Sanctioned Fundraisers

The club is always looking for ways to raise money that would benefit the team to help lower costs and improve our club.  We have two guidelines that govern how money is raised for the team as a whole:

1. All Riptide fundraisers must have pre-authorization / support by Riptide Parent Board.
2. Parent volunteers (the group that will handle the specifics of the fundraiser and see the fundraiser from start to finish) should be established prior to seeking authorization from the board.

The fundraiser must have the potential of benefiting the entire team. The Riptide Parent Board will cannot support any outside fundraising efforts for specific individual swimmers.

Talk to Us

See the Riptide contacts page on the website for roles and contact information.