



WELCOME TO THE SHARKS AQUATIC CLUB!

This team handbook has been compiled for one major purpose: to provide team members the opportunity to gain insight into the sport of competitive swimming - its benefits, expectations and rigors.

Swimming programs are founded on the belief that swimming offers an exciting and valuable experience in a person's life. These programs can appeal equally to the novice or the aspiring Olympic athlete, and their value goes far beyond that of increasing efficiency in the water. In a well-directed program, every participant can benefit from the experience of competition even if he or she never mounts the medal podium.

As your swimmer begins to learn and train, you will have many questions, most pertaining to your parental responsibilities. Many of these issues are covered here in a general context; please check with your Head Coach or Club Board Members for specific information.

Sharks Aquatic Club is a Team dedicated to the long-term development and success of our athletes, through reaching their potential at every level. The etiquette and protocols described in this handbook are meant to help further this mission.

Contents

Welcome To USA Swimming!	3
SWIM BASICS	4
- Season	4
- Training	4
- Communication.....	4
- Equipment.....	5
- For Swim Meets you need	5
SWIMMERS' RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
- In training	6
- At meets.....	7
- In general.....	7
PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES	8
- To Your Club	8
- To Your Swimmer.....	8
- Leave the Coaching to the Coach.....	9
- As a volunteer.....	9
- In general.....	9
READY FOR COMPETITION.....	10
- What is a Swim Meet?	11
- Age Groups and Time Standards.....	11
- Championship Meets.....	11
- Before The Competition.....	11
- Team Gear.....	12
- Technical suits.....	12
- Swim meet recovery.....	12
- THE RACES.....	13
- Freestyle (Free).....	13
- Backstroke (Back)	13
- Breaststroke (Breast).....	13
- Butterfly (Fly)	13
- Individual Medley (IM).....	14
- Relays.....	14
- Starts and Turns	14
- HOW TO WATCH A SWIM MEET.....	14
- The Racing Course.....	14
- The Meet.....	14
- Preliminaries and Finals	15
- BASIC OFFICIATING AT SWIM MEETS	15
YOUR SWIMMER'S COACH	16
- Swimmer Advancement.....	16
- School and Swimming.....	17
- Discipline	17
CLUB OBJECTIVES/STRUCTURE	17
- Governing Bodies	18
FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.....	18
GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS.....	19
- Useful Resources.....	21

Welcome to USA Swimming!

We would like to welcome you to the exciting world of swimming! Your child has become a member of one of the country's largest and most organized youth sports.

Sharks Aquatic Club consists of swimmers, parents, coaches, officials and board members. All work together toward motivating and challenging our young people. This allows each swimmer to realize his or her individual potential while in pursuit of excellence in competitive swimming. While training as a year-round swimmer, many skills will be acquired that will aid in the development of the whole person.

Swimmers learn:

- To make commitments
- To set realistic goals
- To deal with success and disappointments
- To be involved in social interaction
- To budget time
- Sportsmanship
- Teamwork
- Physical Conditioning
- Nutritional awareness
- Persistence
- Managing growing responsibilities in a safe environment
- Concentration
- Courage
- Discipline
- Diligence

Our swimming club provides:

- Training for all ability and experience levels
- Positive social and emotional development
- Development of sportsmanship and concept of team identity, spirit, and support
- Establishment of a healthy lifestyle
- Enhancement of self-esteem and sense of personal worth through commitment to the sport
- Participation and skill improvement in an athletic activity which can be enjoyed throughout one's entire life.

The acquisition of records, trophies and medals, though gratifying, assumes a secondary role to the above objectives. In all respects, competitive swimming is a preparation for life. The hardest worker in the pool does not always win the race; however, each swimmer will learn that in order to reach one's highest potential, focus on dedication and hard work are essential. Information and experience gained from present situations will prove immeasurably valuable in the future.

Love of water is not the only reason swimmers swim. Swimmers form innumerable friendships among fellow athletes, friendships that last lifetimes. The prospect of travel is often a motivating factor, especially when it's sometimes with the team/friends rather than always with the immediate family. Many swimmers compete in the sport simply to test themselves - to compete for the love of personal improvement.

The sport of swimming has many benefits, including the people you and your child will meet. The camaraderie among swimmers is unique, with many swimming buddies becoming lifelong friends. In addition to being around fine people, swimming provides one of the most beneficial forms of exercise for cardiovascular and overall fitness.

Swimming is also relatively injury free and can be enjoyed throughout one's entire life. Perhaps the greatest benefit of participating in an organized swim program is the life skills your child will develop. Your child will reap the benefits of swimming long after his/her participation in competitive swimming ends.

Club swimming is fun, exciting and rewarding. In the first few years, the focus is on building respect for coaches and teammates, stroke development, and learning how to swim efficiently and legally. Many children improve rapidly, and it is not unusual to see tremendous growth in these first few years. It is often difficult to avoid the tendency to push young athletes at this stage. It is important to remember that each child will develop at their own rate. Girls, who mature sooner than boys, can often start heavier aerobic training at a younger age. Swimming should be fun and relatively pressure free, especially at the younger levels. As your child progresses, continual training and competition challenges are provided to enhance their development in the sport of swimming.

A swim club and your involvement in it can help the swimmers achieve their goals. You may soon find yourself volunteering at swim meets, participating in executive decisions, or becoming involved as an official or committee member. Whatever the role, your child's experience in swimming has much to do with your positive support. Please feel free to ask questions. Whether it is coaches, officials or fellow parents, all have the same goal - to provide our children with the best possible swimming experience.

Swim Basics

Season:

The swimming year runs from September 1st to July 31st of each year. SAC will usually take a 8-10 day break after the short course season (spring break) and, although there are some high level meets that run into August, generally most of the team will take the month of August off as well.

The swim year is divided into two sections, short course season and long course season. The short course season runs from September to the end of March, with all swim meets held in a 25 yard pool. The long course season runs from April to the end of July, with swim meets held in a 50 meter pool.

Training:

Your swimmer will be placed on a group that suits his/her abilities and age and will be under the direction of a coach. You will be given a schedule of regular practice days and times at registration. It is expected your child will get to their respective practice 10-15 minutes early, so that they can be pool-side prior to the scheduled start time with all their swimming gear.

Ensure that your swimmer has warm clothing to wear home after practice. Swimmers may need a snack (carbohydrates, i.e. breads and fruits) before practice, but certainly some fluids to drink during practice, and a snack awaiting them after practice. Healthy snacks perk up a swimmer, and keep them satisfied longer than junk food, as well as help the body recover from a good workout! A full meal is preferable, but sometimes that is not possible immediately after a practice, so a snack is essential to bridge that gap.

Communication:

Communication will be primarily by email, followed by text, phone calls and in-person. Coaches will respond to any questions, comments or concerns that arise. If you have a question, or would like to talk in person, please don't hesitate to ask. Schedule changes to either practice or meets are

avoided if at all possible, but inevitably become unavoidable. Any changes to our regular weekly schedule will be communicated in person to the swimmers, by email and text, and through the website. Please maintain current contact information on your Sharks account so you can receive all communications through multiple sources. Last minutes changes do happen, and will be communicated through any email addresses and phone numbers that you enter on your Sharks account.

Please remember to inform the coach of a swimmer's absence from practice, in advance of the situation whenever possible. Older swimmers (13 & older) who have phones are expected to begin taking charge of their communication by texting a coach when they will be unable to attend practices.

Equipment:

Swimmers will need the following at each practice session:

- **BAG:** Swimmers should have a bag that can be carried out on to the pool deck. Although lockers are available at some pools, valuables are best left at home. If your swimmer uses a locker it is advised they use a lock as theft does sometimes occur in locker rooms.
- **BATHING SUIT:** All swimmers will need a training suit. Girls should have a one-piece practice suit or SAC team suit, boys should wear a jammer or brief. Have your swimmer rinse out their bathing suit in cold water, after each practice, to keep it lasting a bit longer. Chlorinated pool water is hard on bathing suit fabric. Never put the suit in the dryer as the heat will damage the lycra.
- **CAP:** A cap will keep hair out of the swimmer's eyes and will reduce water resistance. It also protects hair from chlorine damage. Team caps are available through the Head Coach, and are encouraged at practice.
- **GOGGLES:** Goggles are worn by swimmers to enhance vision and protect their eyes from the effects of the chemicals in the water. To fit a pair of goggles, press the eyepieces to the eyes without the strap. There should be momentary suction suggesting that the shape of the eyepiece fits the shape of the swimmer's eyes.
- **TEAM SUIT:** Ordered through Augusta Swim Supply portal on our Team Store. To be worn in swim meets or practice.
- **TOWEL:** Most swimmers prefer a large thick beach towel. Your swimmer may want to take two towels to meets.
- **WATER BOTTLE:** Make sure your swimmer takes a water bottle to every practice. It is easier to get into this habit at a young age, and it becomes more important as swimmers mature.
- **TRAINING EQUIPMENT:** At the beginning of each year, the coaches will advise you as to specific equipment that will be needed in your child's group (fins, snorkel, paddles etc.). Equipment, club clothing and bags can all be purchased from sports retailers or online. To ease the frustration and disappointment of losing equipment, remember label everything with permanent ink.

For Swim Meets you need:

- A chair for each adult and your swimmer - Swimmers need to stay off their feet between events. Some pools have plenty of seating, and you won't need a chair. Check meet info for details.
- Warm clothing to keep muscles warm between heats. SOCKS and SHOES take more time to put on, but are worth it.
- Team suit & Cap. It helps to have a backup cap.
- Goggles. It helps to have a backup pair (or two).
- 2 Towels.
- Electronic entertainment, a book to read, or a deck of cards.
- Small Cooler packed with Gatorade, Water, favorite fruits (grapes, oranges), some sort of protein (peanut butter sandwiches, turkey sandwiches).
- A Sharpie Pen.

- A Highlighter.

Tip: Dress COOL...in layers if needed. It gets very hot inside the pool area with a crowd of people.

Swimmers' Responsibilities

YES, as a club swimmer, you have responsibilities. No matter how old you are or how well you swim, you have certain responsibilities to yourself, to your teammates, to your parents and coaches. To understand this better, let's take a look at just what a swimming club is and why it exists in the first place.

A competitive swimming club is simply a group of individuals who have joined forces to better pursue a common interest. They work together so they can have:

1. blocks of pool time (imagine all the swimmers in your club trying to practice on their own during public swimming hours).
2. professional coaching and instruction.
3. swim meet attendance (individuals going their separate ways can't run swim meets).
4. fund-raising schemes to raise money for travel and other expenses (reducing the cost to the club members).
5. the fun of being with others with a similar interest. One thing is certain: without you and the other swimmers in the water, there would be no point in having a club at all. You are important to your club, and as in any type of club, membership brings with it certain responsibilities.

In Training:

1. Obey all pool regulations. You have a duty to do your part in keeping your club's good relations with the pool staff/provider. All it takes to spoil things for the whole club is one or two "bad apples". Do your part and see that others do theirs.
2. Do your part to be on time for workouts. Be poolside, ready to swim (goggles adjusted, swim cap on, etc.) at least five minutes prior to the start of a training session. Older swimmers should notify the coach when they will be late, or have to leave early. Younger swimmers should practice communicating with the coach by letting him/her know at practice when they will have to miss.
3. Have a great attitude. Productive training should be "serious fun", so to speak; even though at times it is physically demanding and perhaps boring, remember that you came to the pool to get better, so don't complain. Nobody likes a groaner or a slacker - not your coach and not your teammates. Attitudes are contagious - both negative and positive. Attitudes are also a choice - be someone your coaches and teammates look forward to seeing!
4. Be quiet when the coach is talking. You just might learn something; also the other swimmers have a right to hear the coach's comments and instructions. Swimming pools are noisy enough as it is. Be sociable, but not when the coach has the floor.
5. Give your best effort at every opportunity. This includes practice, meets and other team functions. Not every day will be your best day, and not every skill will come naturally, but you can always show your appreciation for the privilege of being on a swim team by trying your best.
6. Be a regular attendee. This includes all swim team functions. Improvement in swimming, like in any other sport, is very much a matter of attending workouts regularly, being on hand when the various skills are taught, and logging mileage according to a definite plan. Nothing good happens when you're not at the pool. A good benchmark for attendance percentage is 75% of your recommended attendance. Some older swimmers may need a higher percentage, but anything less can lead to a lack of progress, disinterest and quitting.
7. Know your best times. You should know your best times, both in competition and in practice. As a rule, the best swimmers not only know their own best meet times, but also those of most of their teammates and competitors.

- At Meets:

1. Communicate with your coaches - Report to your Coach upon arrival at the pool to check-in. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes prior to warm up, so you can take advantage of the warm-up period(s). Just like at practice, you should be poolside ready to swim at least 5 minutes before warm ups start. If you are entered but can't attend, notify your coach so he/she can scratch you and re-arrange any relays you were to be in. You may still be charged meet entry fees.
2. Sit with your teammates in your team area and be a part of your team. Your Coach will want to know where you are at all times.
3. Come prepared. You want to be warm and comfortable, so learn from the great swimmers and dress warmly when waiting for your events. A good track suit, sweat-shirts, deck shoes (runners), warm socks, spare towels, perhaps a robe or swim parka, spare (dry) swim suit (warm up in one then change to a dry one while waiting for your event), a swim bag, etc. are all part of every serious swimmer's swim-meet kit. **MARK ALL SUCH ITEMS WITH YOUR NAME AND CLUB NAME.** Obviously, don't leave valuables in your duffle-bag or in lockers; leave them with your parents. Wear your team uniform - cap, suit, shirt, etc., so you are identified as a member of your team. Also, you'll need healthy snacks and plenty of fluids to keep you fueled throughout the session.
4. Respect the decisions of meet officials. Any protest should come through your coach, not you or your parents.
5. When watching races, stay well back from the edge to allow room for officials. Remember that at meets you are identified with your club; help your club keep its reputation for fair play and courtesy.
6. In individual events, stay in the water until all have finished, and unless otherwise instructed by meet officials, until the next heat dives over you. Stay in your lane, in the water. It's good sportsmanship, it allows the officials to do their jobs better, and it allows the meet to run more efficiently. In relay events swimmers number 1, 2, and 3 on a team must get out of the water without delay when they have finished and **THEY MUST STAY OUT UNTIL ALL TEAMS HAVE FINISHED THE RACE**; jumping back in before all teams have finished will cause your team to be disqualified.
7. Stick to your pre/post-race routine. Your pre-race routine will change as you get older, but your post-race routine should always start with visiting your coach. As soon as you get out after a race, go see your coach and get immediate feedback about your swim. Then cool down if instructed by your coach, get your towel, see your parents, use the restroom and return to the team area.

In general:

These are aspects of yourself and personal habits that can improve your swimming, but also can improve your general well-being and life. These things can be addressed mostly out of the pool.

1. Manage your time. This comes at the top of the list because the better you are able to manage your time, the more of everything you can fit into your schedule, and the more effective and successful you will be.
2. Listen to your coach. ...not just in the pool. Your coach may tell you things that will help you outside of the pool as well. Really try to listen to understand, and apply everything your coach tells you.
3. Keep your school grades up. This comes before any athletic endeavors. In order to do both, you have to effectively manage your time. Remember, swimming can help with your school work, but doesn't come instead of your school work.

4. Look after your health. There are a number of aspects of your life that, when managed correctly, will help you be healthier, feel better and perform better at everything.
 - Get plenty of rest, and get enough sleep. It helps to think of yourself as being "in training" 24 hours a day. Most of your recovery - mental, physical and emotional - happens while you are sleeping. Not getting enough sleep means that your body and mind cannot recover sufficiently, and your workload starts to catch up with you. Your performance suffers because you gradually become more and more tired.
 - Watch what you eat. Generally speaking, there are no "magic" foods, elixirs or supplements that will somehow make you faster, but there are things to be avoided, and likewise foods to incorporate more often into your diet. Some very good information is available on the USA Swimming website (www.usaswimming.org under "tips and training", "nutrition center"). Please advise the coach if you have any special medical situations.
 - Stay hydrated. Your body doesn't work without water. It is important to bring water to every practice, but also to stay hydrated throughout each day. A good rule to follow is that if you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated. Athletes need at least 8-10 eight-ounce glasses of water per day, not including fluids consumed during practice.
5. Learn from others. Not just parents and coaches, but peers as well. Who among your peers is successful, and what are they successful at? How can you incorporate what they do well into your routine to help with your success? Pay attention when you have opportunities to watch and talk to others, and learn as much as you can.

Parents' Responsibilities

To your club:

One of the keys to continued success and development of any swim club is participation by the members. The club board that oversees the day to day operation of SAC is made up of parent volunteers. There are many opportunities for volunteers to contribute. The club cannot operate effectively without parent volunteers.

Your swimmer trains and races hard to realize his/her goals. As a parent, you achieve a sense of pride and excitement when these dreams are attained. Volunteering your time will not only serve to heighten your sense of pride and excitement, but also your swimmer's.

To Your Swimmer:

"You are becoming part of the 'parent, coach, and athlete triangle'. The parent provides emotional support (an anchor) and physical support for the athlete. The coach provides technical expertise that is unavailable anywhere else in the triangle, and to a lesser degree, motivation, in the form of vision, challenge and emotional support. The athlete brings the raw material... the eagerness to learn, to develop, and to respond." (Pgs. 10&11 -Parent, Coach and Athlete- by John Leonard)

As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. Show your interest and support by ensuring your swimmer's attendance at practices, coming to meets and being active in the Club. Parents are not participants on their child's team, but they do contribute to the success of the team. Be enthusiastic and supportive, but remember that your child is the swimmer. Swimmers will establish their goals in conjunction with their coach and make their own progress. Be careful as a parent not to impose your own standards and goals on your swimmer. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. The most important part of your swimmer's experience is that he/she learns about himself/herself while enjoying the sport.

Leave the Coaching to the Coach:

The best way to help a child achieve their goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake, but, as your swimmer progresses, mistakes will be made. The value in this for your swimmer is in learning that each mistake is a valuable learning opportunity, and that each “failure” is just another step towards success. Encourage your child's efforts and ask if they need anything. Six words go a long way - “I love to watch you swim”. That phrase, along with a few others, will GREATLY simplify your support role as a swim parent. “I can't wait for your next swim!” Or, if your swimmer asks you a technical question - “What did your coach say?” EVEN IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW THE ANSWER! “I'm not your coach, go ask your coach. Do you need a towel? How about a drink or a snack?” Separating our roles as parents and coaches will go a long way towards the positive experience we all want the swimmers to have.

Remember, many swim coaches have chosen to make a career out of coaching. As such, they are some of the only professional coaches in youth sports. To ensure your child receives the maximum benefit from their coach, all practice sessions are considered to be “closed deck”. While you may want to sit and observe, this can be a distraction to not only the coach, but also to your child. Once you drop your child off at practice, please be courteous and leave the venue until practice is over. It is also a USA Swimming regulation that every person on deck must be a registered Non-athlete member of USA Swimming that has undergone a background screen and Athlete Protection Training. If you have concerns about practice schedules, drills, exercises, or any other aspect of the coaching and instruction, feel free to make an appointment with the coach to discuss these concerns after practice. Also feel free to text or email the coaches anytime.

As a volunteer:

Each year SAC will host three or more meets. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at these meets, as these are our team's only fundraisers. Remember that being a timer gives you one of the best seats in the house! Plus, volunteering at meets gives you, and your swimmer, a sense of pride in your team! These “fundraisers” are important to our team as they help keep costs lower for our members, and we gain respect for our team by running a quality event.

Each session at a swim meet requires at least two timers per lane, as well as a head timer. The Meet Director will contact all club members to fill positions prior to your club's hosting a meet. These volunteer opportunities are usually available for sign-up on the team website.

In general:

Listed below, not necessarily in order of importance, are parents' responsibilities that have grown out of years of experience:

1. See that your youngsters get to the pool on time (EARLY) for all practices (meets and training).
2. Keep your child at home when he or she is realistically sick. You, as a parent, know the rest requirements for your children. Swimming training can be hard work, so be especially on guard with respect to rest requirements following a bout of illness. It is not a crime to miss a workout when there is a valid reason. Parents will usually know how much rest is required in order that the swimmer will not suffer relapse on returning to a full slate of workouts.
3. Notify the coach if your swimmer has any unusual medical problem.
4. Instruct your child in how to look after money and other personal belongings at swim meets or when traveling with the team. Your child can be responsible for packing and unpacking his swim bag. It is strongly recommended that all towels, bathing suits, goggles, swim-meet garments,

- etc., be marked with your swimmer's name. In general, coaches will have an idea of how the list of responsibilities for swimmers should grow over the years, and will ask your help with it.
5. If you don't like the way things are going in the club, discuss your problem privately with the coach (if it involves coaching) or with a SAC board member or the Team Liaison, but above all, don't make the problem the topic for the dinner table when swimmers are present. Remember, the swimmer may be quite content with things the way they are, and this sort of conversation may leave him/her disturbed or confused. Take your problem to a board member or coach directly. If there is a problem you will only compound it or create new ones if instead you seek to undermine the board or coach by rumor-mongering and stirring up doubt among the membership in general.
 6. Swim clubs cannot function without volunteers to serve on the board, various committees and at swim meets. Don't leave everything to be done by the same few people who did it last year. As older swimmers graduate from high school and leave for college, more parents are needed to step up and contribute to the operation of the club. It can be very rewarding and give you a sense of ownership in the club.
 7. Don't be obsessed with your child winning to the point that no comfort is given when the child has his or her bad days. It is not a punishable offense to lose a race, not get a best time or even to be disqualified; at such times, moral support and encouragement are called for, not wrath. In the final analysis, remember that the child is swimming against himself, i.e., to improve his own time. There is only one "first", but every tenth of a second of improvement makes that swimmer a "winner". Also worth noting is that swimming is not a sport of immediate gratification.
 8. Be Patient. It takes years of faithful attendance, hard work, and dedication and years of encouragement from you, the parent, for a swimmer to achieve his/her potential. Make your encouragement realistic. Encourage your child to strive for the next level up in the club, then the next level, and so on. What matters most in the short run is that a swimmer enjoys the sport, the team, the teammates, and keeps coming back. However, there will definitely be some tough times in the long run. Be Patient.
 9. Take the time to find out about the sport. It can be fun, it can be rewarding, and it can become a "family" involvement.
 10. Read # 9 again!!

Ready For Competition

Once your child has a good understanding of the competitive strokes and has been introduced to the basics of racing, it will be time for their first swim meet. The coach will determine when your swimmer is ready to compete at a meet. Remember that meets are as much a part of the learning process as practices.

Although we don't require it, we strongly encourage each swimmer to take part in every swim meet. Signing up for swim meets is accomplished by 1) logging in to our team website, 2) clicking on "Edit Commitment" beside the meet name, 3) clicking on your swimmer's name and 4) selecting "Yes" or "No" from the drop-down menu. If you have a specific instruction on days of the meet your swimmer can/cannot attend, please leave that in the "Notes" box.

Coaches will complete all entries for swimmers. We will challenge swimmers, while keeping in mind their experience and ability levels. This may mean swimmers will be signed up to swim events they don't think they can swim, or events they've never done before. The coaches will make sure each swimmer is prepared and encouraged appropriately. Beginning swimmers should consider competing in only one day of any meet.

At the beginning of the season, swimmers are given a tentative meet schedule to assist families in their time and financial planning. Meets are not included in your monthly tuition, and generally cost between \$20 and \$70, depending on the meet. Please record the swim meet schedule on your

calendar and plan your activities accordingly. Check with other families for favorite hotels and restaurants at away meets.

What is a Swim Meet?

Competition is a means of personal development. Learning about and becoming comfortable in a competitive setting, trying racing strategies, managing stress and dealing with losing and winning all contribute to the development of your child. In a competition, swimmers from the same club, or from more than one club, gather together at the pool. They do what they have been doing in practice, except they go as fast as they can while applying their racing strategies. For that reason, we treat a swim meet as another practice that we use to measure success of training sessions. It allows swimmers an opportunity to get an official time while racing the clock, and their peers.

There are different types of swim meets. Some meets are held at home, others require travel. Some are designed to let any swimmer race and others have qualifying times that the swimmer must achieve before being entered. All swim meets are governed by a set of technical rules regarding the starts, strokes, turns and finishes, to ensure competition is fair to all. These technical rules are established by USA Swimming and NC Swimming and are monitored/enforced by officials. To better understand how a swim meet works, you can familiarize yourself with the USA Swimming Rule Book (available at www.usaswimming.org, under “about”, and “Rules & Regulations”), or sign up to become an official.

Age Groups and Time Standards:

For the purposes of competition, swimmers are placed into age groups. Age groupings at some developmental meets are as follows: 8 & under; 10 & under; 11 & 12; 13 & 14; and 15 & over. At Championship Meets they are 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, 15 & over.

There are two types of time standards - motivational and qualifying. Motivational time standards are divided by the championship meet age groups above, with the exception of 15 & over being 15-18, and serve as (just as the name indicates) motivation or goal benchmarks. Qualifying times are grouped into two categories - 14 & under (generally for LSC Championships) and “Open”, which means that any age can achieve the standards. The “open” category can apply to state, sectional and national time standards.

Championship meets:

Meets we consider championship meets are generally either qualifying meets (meets for which you need certain time standards to attend like States, Sectionals, Futures, Nationals), or end of season meets that you don't need to qualify for like BRSL Champs. Championship meets occur at the end of a training cycle, so that swimmers are tapered (rested) and ready to swim fast. The concept of taper applies to our 13 & older swimmers, especially those who are training seriously on a consistent basis (at least 75% attendance). These swimmers, based on communication with their coaches, will shave, taper (rest) and wear a tech suit for agreed-upon meets during, or at the end of either short course or long course season. For our 12 & unders, practices are centered more around learning stroke and training techniques rather than serious training schedules. For our swimmers under 12, every meet is an opportunity to improve times, and we do not necessarily taper for any one particular meet. We still encourage our 12 & under swimmers to qualify for championship meets, but they do not shave, nor do they wear tech suits.

Before the competition:

The coaches will determine which swimmers are eligible for a competition based on experience level, or the qualifying times will determine the eligibility of swimmers for meets. Parents must commit or decline a swimmer's attendance on the SAC website before the entry deadline. The coaches will then complete all entries for each swimmer. Once entries are done, the information is e-mailed to the hosting club. You will be responsible for meet entry fees according to the number of events your swimmer is entered into. Entry fees are non-refundable. Meet information sheets with entry fees and event layouts, as well as other information such as psych sheets, warm up times/ assignments and parking fees (if applicable), will be available on our website. An address for each meet will be posted on the SAC website prior to the meets, and if there is a team hotel that will be listed as well.

Team Gear:

We like our swimmers to be proud of their team! One of the ways to inspire pride is to have plenty of gear available. We do ask them to have a team cap and suit for swim meets. These are important so everyone (including our coaches!) can recognize them! Besides that, a couple t-shirts will help them look sharp at swim meets, but also at practice, at school, etc. This gear can be ordered through our website, at the "Team Store" link. Suits can be ordered through the Augusta Swim Supply portal, other gear is available there too.

Technical suits:

Technical suits are racing suits that are manufactured to enhance the ability of swimmers to go fast. Before 2009, there were few restrictions on the manufacturing of these suits - the materials and methods used, and the coverage of the suits - but now the suits must be made of woven fabric and are limited in their coverage. The technology in technical suits today is basically made up of 1. "faster than skin" fabric, 2. body compression and 3. muscle stability. Technical suits are generally identified by a FINA patch on the back, and must have the patch in order to be legally used in sanctioned competition.

Beginning September 1 2019, North Carolina Swimming will prohibit the use of technical suits for all 12 & under swimmers, except at a national level meet or higher. Beginning September 1 2020, USA Swimming will enforce the same rule. This rule represents a philosophy that many coaches have had since the dawn of tech suits. This development philosophy keeps the long-term interest of each athlete at the forefront.

SAC swimmers will use these suits at the discretion and request of the coaching staff, only at specific meets identified during the creation of each seasonal plan. Technical suits are only one piece of the puzzle that needs to come together to equal fast swimming. They are significantly more expensive than regular suits, and should be a privilege earned by those who train hard and maintain a high practice attendance percentage.

Swim meet recovery:

Nutrition and rest is important in any sport, and plays a key role in athletic success. Discuss concerns regarding your swimmer's nutrition with the coach. Placing a little more emphasis on the number of carbohydrates eaten each day will help keep your child healthy and full of energy. Additionally, lean proteins will help your swimmer recover from exercise and get ready for the next workout. Swimmers should eat 4-6 times per day to balance and replenish their carbohydrate store, and keep the muscles steadily supplied with protein. Ensure your child starts off their day with a good breakfast, particularly after morning practices. A small healthy snack is important for your swimmer to eat before and after training, helps them during the work out, as well as after, when

their energy is low. Swimmers should drink water during the day and during the training session to prevent dehydration. Consumption of 8-10 glasses of water per day is necessary for athletes to keep cellular processes functioning properly.

At swim meets, swimmers should drink more water (and electrolyte drinks) than usual and eat 'smart' snacks like fruit, trail mix, granola, crackers, etc. Stay away from high fat/high sugar snacks (i.e. nuts, junk food, candy, cheeses) during a competition. You need to provide the right fuel for racing. Eating out at restaurants is often part of traveling. Educate your swimmer on the right foods to order, such as pasta, chicken, salads, etc. Even in fast food restaurants, good choices can be made. Rest is important to your child's performance as well, so ensure your child is getting to bed at a reasonable hour, which may be difficult when traveling to/from a meet, or staying in a hotel. A regular sleep schedule will help mitigate some of the negative effects of sleep loss during swim meet weekends.

THE RACES:

If you are a "swim parent", your best way to become familiar with the rules is to turn out for an "Official's Clinic". Such clinics, which are usually friendly get-togethers where you can meet the other parents in the club, will take you by easy stages through Timekeeping, Stroke & Turn Judging and other areas of swim-meet officiating.

The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Your swimmer will learn all four strokes as he/she progresses through the program. They will begin with instruction that is practiced over small distances. As their skill level increases, so will distances and endurance. Each of the strokes are combined into the following race events:

- Freestyle (Free):

The swimmer may swim any stroke he/she wishes. The usual stroke is the "front crawl". This stroke is characterized by alternate overhead motion of the arms and an alternating up and down flutter kick. The freestyle is swum over 50, 100, 200, 400(500), 800(1000), and 1500(1650, or "mile") distances.

The Freestyle portion of an Individual Medley or Medley Relay means Front Crawl, so the stroke must be swum on the breast using alternating arm motions and alternating vertical motions of the feet.

- Backstroke (Back):

The swimmer must stay on their back. The stroke is an alternating motion of the arms. At each turn the swimmer must touch the wall with some part of their body. After the turn, the swimmer pushes off the wall on their back. Swimmers must surface within 15 meters after the start of the race and after each turn. Backstroke race distances are 50, 100, and 200 meters.

- Breaststroke (Breast):

Perhaps one of the most difficult strokes to master, the breaststroke requires simultaneous movement of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pushed forward from the breast, on or under the surface of the water and brought backward in the propulsive stage of the stroke, simultaneously. The kick is a synchronous thrust of the legs called a "frog" or breaststroke kick. At each turn a simultaneous, but uneven, touch is permitted. Any competitor who, on his approach to a turn or finish allows his shoulders to leave the horizontal plane before touching the wall with his hands shall be disqualified. Breaststroke race distances are 50, 100, and 200 meters.

- Butterfly (Fly):

This is the most beautiful and physically demanding stroke. The butterfly features the simultaneous overhead stroke of the arms combined with the dolphin kick. In the dolphin kick both legs move up and down together. Swimmers must surface within 15 meters after the start and after each turn. Learning the timing is the most difficult part of this stroke. The butterfly is swum in 50, 100, and 200 meter distances.

- Individual Medley (IM):

Usually called simply "IM", the Individual Medley, as its name implies, is a medley of the four strokes already discussed, performed by an individual. The swimmer swims Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle for each quarter of the distance. Note that Freestyle in an Individual Medley (and in a Medley Relay) means Front Crawl, a stroke swam on the breast using alternating arm motions and alternating vertical motions of the feet. The strokes must be done in the order stated above and each part of the race, right up to the touching of the wall, must be done according to the rules of the separate strokes. The most common IMs are for 200 and 400 yards/meters, but for the younger age-groups, and novice swimmers in general, the 100 IM is sometimes swam in short-course pools (one length of each stroke). The order is Fly, Back, Breast, and Free.

- Relays

There are Freestyle Relays and Medley Relays. In each case, each team consists of four swimmers, each swimming one quarter of the distance continuously. (It is not permitted to have a team of just three swimmers, for example, with one swimmer swimming two legs of the race).

In a Freestyle Relay each swimmer may swim any stroke or any combination of strokes - just as in a Freestyle event. In a Medley Relay each of the four swims a different stroke. The Backstroker, who swims first, starts in the water as he would for any backstroke event. The Breaststroker swims next, starting from a dive; then the Butterflyer and finally the Freestyler. (The order is Back, Breast, Fly, Free) When one swimmer is finishing his leg of the relay, the next swimmer must remain in contact (with his toes at least) with the front edge of the starting platform until the incoming swimmer touches the end wall. The swimmer taking over may be "winding up" or in the process of diving as long as he is still touching the block when the incoming swimmer touches the wall. Relay swimmers must swim in the order the names appear on the entries (card or sheet). If any one of the team members is disqualified because of his actions in the race, the entire team is disqualified.

- Starts and Turns:

Many races are won or lost in starts and turns. In the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the Starter who visually checks that all swimmers are still. Then, once the Starter is satisfied, the race is started by electronic tone. Quick turns are essential to a good race. In all events the swimmer must touch the wall, but in the Freestyle and Backstroke the swimmer may somersault as he or she reaches the wall, touching only with the feet. In the other two competitive strokes, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands before executing the turn.

HOW TO WATCH A SWIM MEET:

- The Racing Course:

The length of a short course racing pool is 25 yards, and of a long course racing pool is 50 meters. The pool has 6, 8 or 10 lanes and the width of each lane varies, generally from seven to nine feet.

- The Meet:

Swimmers are allowed to enter a specific number of events, which varies with the meet. Generally the meet package will indicate the following: one-day, one-session = 3 individual events, plus relays; two-day, 2 session meet = 3-4 individual events per session, plus relays; three-day, 3 session meet = 8-10 individual events total, plus relays. Some variation may occur.

Officials are present at all competitions to monitor the technical rules of swimming and to ensure that the competition is fair and equitable. As part of their training, officials attend clinics, pass a written test, and work at meets before being certified.

A swimmer may be disqualified during a race. Disqualifications are meant to point out parts of the swimmer's stroke that need to be corrected. Although your swimmer may be disappointed, it is to be treated as a learning experience. The rules require that reasonable effort be made to notify the coach of the reason for disqualification. The decision of the officials is final as far as the swimmer is concerned; however, the coach may question the decision, if he/she feels it is warranted. Parents or swimmers should NOT question the decisions of officials, leave this to the coach.

- Preliminaries and Finals:

While some meets are simply "timed finals", other meets have preliminary sessions. In a "timed finals" meet, all races are swum once, and all results are final. In a "prelim/finals" competition, all swimmers compete in prelims for a spot in finals, generally reserved for the top 16-32 swimmers. Those swimmers advancing to finals will return to the pool, normally 3-5 hours later, to compete for their final results.

It is important to take note of the North Carolina Scratch Rule as announced in the preliminary session. Basically, if your swimmer has qualified to advance to the finals, they have 30 minutes after the preliminary event is scored and announced/posted to declare their intentions if they are not going to swim in the final session. Failure to show up for a finals event after being seeded in finals may result in your swimmer being disqualified from the remainder of the meet. If you have any questions about this procedure, please speak to your coach PRIOR to the meet. Qualifying for finals should be treated as a privilege, and another opportunity to gain experience and get faster.

BASIC OFFICIATING AT SWIM MEETS:

A successful swim meet in a six to ten lane pool requires at least 8 officials. While a meet can be conducted with fewer officials, they will usually have a larger task load. Swimming officials are all volunteers. They are usually parents, grandparents and/or friends of swimmers, or of former swimmers, but basically they are just people who enjoy being involved in the sport. Besides officiating at swim meets, their involvement includes taking clinics and workshops to improve their officiating skills as well as conducting clinics to help others become better officials. To become an official, you need to attend a clinic, often presented at swim meets, to learn the basics of officiating. You will then be in an apprenticeship program where a qualified official will work with you at an actual meet on the pool deck. After a few of these apprenticeship sessions, you will be evaluated and recommended by a referee prior to becoming a certified USA Swimming Official. All officials must be "non-athlete" members of USA Swimming and must undergo a background check, as well as Athlete Protection Training every two years. All registration fees and background check fees for our club's officials are paid by SAC. If you are interested in joining our team of seasoned officials, please contact the Head Coach, a Board member, or any of our officials.

- Meet Director: responsible for pre-meet, meet and post-meet organization and operations. This person is not necessarily a certified official, but should be a "non-athlete" member of USA Swimming. Required for NCS Sanction.

- Meet Referee: chief official over all others during the meet, ensures fairness and makes decisions during the session, conducts coach's meetings. Required for NCS Sanction.
- Administrative Official (A.O.): supervises results coming from an electronic timing system, runs computer operated Hy-Tek program. Required for NCS Sanction.
- Meet Marshal: monitors and ensures safe practices on deck during the meet. Generally a coach. Required for NCS Sanction.
- Meet Entry Coordinator: sometimes also the "A.O.", receives entries from all coaches attending the meet.
- Starter: starts each race with the electronic starter, making sure each start is fair.
- Deck Referee: assists the starter, supervises stroke/turn judges.
- Stroke/turn Judge: on each side of pool, watches correctness of strokes and turns, issues disqualifications to the deck referee.
- Head Timer: responsible for all Timers and watches; replaces watches that don't start with a running watch.
- Clerk of Course/Administrative Referee: manages clerk of course, positive check-in, prelim/finals scratch tables.
- Awards: usually in a separate room/at a separate table; prepares awards for swimmers. Sometimes combined with clerk of course at timed finals meets.
- Timer: takes times of swimmers in each race and records them on timers' sheet. Standards require two timers per lane for most events. Usually the electronic timing system is used as the primary record and two Parent volunteers provide positive backup to this system. There is also a "Head Timer" to oversee and assist all timekeepers.

Your Swimmer's Coach

The coach is your first level of communication in the club. Any questions or concerns should be directed to your swimmer's coach. The coach will direct you to the appropriate person if need be. The best time to talk with the coach is after practice, or by either email or text. Parents should not try to discuss matters with the coach on the pool deck during practice or competition. Coaches like to be fully engaged with swimmers during practice, since doing so will create the best environment for success. Likewise, this will enable coaches to be fully engaged when communicating with parents as well. Also remember, when parents interfere with training and competing, it causes considerable confusion as to who the swimmer should respect and listen to regarding their swimming. If there is a problem or concern that does not get resolved through your swimmer's coach, you should approach the Head Coach or a Board Member. Nothing can be done about a problem not discussed, and a problem will remain your own until it is dealt with.

Swimmer Advancement:

Swimmers advance through the program based on subjective and objective criteria, which is available from your coach. Swimmers will advance through the competitive program when they achieve specified criteria. Promotion is based on both subjective criteria (commitment to program, emotional/social readiness and performance) and objective criteria (mastery of skills), as well as the availability of room in the next level of the program. Your swimmer's coach will make a recommendation for advancement. It will be reviewed by the coaching staff and finalized by the Head Coach. When a swimmer moves to a new group, parents will be advised of the new monthly training fees, changes to fundraising commitments and the new training schedule.

Some of the major areas of consideration are, in no particular order:

- age
- experience level (number of seasons swimming year-round)
- maturity level (physically, mentally, emotionally)
- practice attendance (especially during the summer)

- swim meet participation
- skill/talent level (best times)
- improvement over the season (both with times and visible technique, although the two are generally linked)
- consistency of work ethic in practice
- perceived potential to be appropriately challenged at the next level. In other words, do the coaches think the swimmer needs the added stress of a higher group in order to continue to improve? Also, quite simply, can they keep up with a higher group without regularly over-exerting themselves?
- swimmers' input

School and Swimming:

School and swimming work together and swimmers often improve scholastically. Their swimming schedule will challenge them to be organized, which parents and coaches must help with. This requires communication between all three parties. Increases in training, social events, competitions, and academic expectations come with responsibilities. Initially, the athlete will not handle these without error, but with encouragement, and initiative delegated to your swimmer, success will be realized. Blaming missed assignments and poor grades on swimming schedules is not acceptable. Swimmers are expected to plan ahead and ensure that work is up to date, that studying for exams starts well ahead of the exam date, and that teachers know well in advance the days that will be missed because of swim meets. Swimming and school sports can work together as well. Feel free to discuss your swimmer's involvement in school sports with his/her coach.

Discipline:

A disruptive swimmer takes the coach's time away from other dedicated swimmers. Excessive misbehavior on the part of a swimmer may result in disciplinary action. The coach will warn the swimmer, who may be asked to leave the practice if he/she disregards the warning. Parents will be informed if a swimmer is asked to leave a practice. If the behavior continues, the dismissal may involve more than one practice.

Club Objectives/Structure

Every club will have its own objectives, but generally they are similar to these:

- To provide a quality swimming program of developmental training which will enable every swimmer in the Club to develop to the full extent of his or her level of interest, commitment and ability.
- To promote the amateur sport of competitive swimming through the co-operation of North Carolina Swimming and USA Swimming.
- To promote good sportsmanship, leadership and character.

Our Swim Club is a non-profit organization operated under the direction of a parent-run board. Our club program is directed by the Head Coach. The Head Coach is responsible for guiding the professional coaching staff. Administration, policy and operational activities supporting the programs are planned and carried out under the direction of the Board President and the committees.

The ongoing success of our Club depends on the teamwork, dedication and efforts of all involved. SAC is identified with our own team colors and club logo. Swimmers are usually expected to wear team clothing and colors when representing their club. This builds team spirit and makes swimmers proud of the club they are associated with. Parents are invited to participate as well.

Governing Bodies:

The Sharks Aquatics Club is a parent run and professionally coached competitive swim team swimming out of pools in both Kings Mountain and Shelby, North Carolina. The certified coaching staff strives to provide each swimmer with direction, technical adjustments, goal setting, discipline, and a positive learning experience. Our swimmers compete locally, regionally, and nationally.

Our Board and Officers, as well as our Committee Chairmen, are listed on our website. The Sharks Aquatics Club (SAC) is a not-for profit corporation. Members are parents or guardians of any member of the Sharks Aquatics Club swim team. Parents, as members of SAC, are responsible for funding the operation of the swim team. Major sources of revenue include monthly dues, profits from meets that SAC hosts, and various fundraising activities. The most significant fundraising activity in recent years has been obtaining sponsorships/contributions from businesses and families for the swim meets that we host. As members, with the responsibility of funding team operations, each family is expected to 1) adhere to established policies regarding payment of dues and fees, 2) volunteer time in support of team activities and meets (ex: timing, hospitality, sales, office operations, officiating, etc), 3) solicit sponsorships /contributions for meets that SAC hosts, and 4) offer other support that may from time to time be needed by SAC.

Financial Responsibilities

The annual registration fee charged by SAC includes membership with USA Swimming, membership with North Carolina Swimming, and insurance that covers your swimmer at both practice and meets. The SAC Board of Directors will establish the annual registration fee amount based upon the cost of items covered with the registration. Annual registrations occur in August or September. Swimmers are not eligible to swim in meets without these memberships, and are only covered during practice for a limited time until they are registered. Also, please note that meet entry fees are separate and not included in SAC membership.

Family Discounts - All monthly dues are “per swimmer”. A discount is given if there is more than one swimmer per family. There is a 5% discount per month for families with multiple swimmers. This is for dues only.

Billing is handled electronically through our website with automatic drafting from your credit card, debit card, or checking account. For obvious reasons, please do not give monthly payments to coaches. Billing questions should be directed to the Treasurers. Contact information available on our website.

Leaving SAC - Through the registration process, you committed to SAC through July 31st. However, we recognize that circumstances arise that may require you to leave SAC. If this occurs, you must notify the Head coach and the team treasurer in writing, giving at least a 30 day notice. Email is the best way to handle this notification. Dues will be assessed through the month in which the 30 day notice expires. There will be no prorating of dues for partial months. (Example: If you give notice to the head coach/team treasurer on December 15th that you are leaving SAC, dues will be assessed through January as the 30 day notice would expire on January 14th). In making a decision to leave SAC, it is strongly encouraged that you speak with your swimmer’s coach and the head coach regarding the circumstances.

Financial Hardships and Medical Circumstances - You are encouraged to speak with the Head Coach, Treasurers, or President if there are extreme financial hardships or medical circumstances that may prevent your swimmer from swimming for an extended period of time. Limited financial assistance may be available and awarded each year. In the event of such extreme circumstances, the Board will consider making exceptions to the above policies. This will be done on a case by case basis. With participation from everyone, SAC will remain financially sound.

Fundraising - Shark's main fundraisers at this point are the swim meets we host. We ask that all families chip in to volunteer at the swim meets. Your time helps us run the meets successfully, which in turn help raise money for the team, and provide a quality experience for our team as well as other teams from around the region. We currently host one short course meet (Jan 5th 2019 at KM), and two long course meets (June 8-9 2019 and July 5-7 2019, both at Shelby Aquatic Center at City Park).

Glossary of Swimming Terms

Age Group Swimming: nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, and 15 and over ("Open"). Age group swimming as a description is commonly used to refer to 14 & under ages.

"A" time: Third USA Swimming motivational time standard.

Billeting: accommodation for swimmers away from home. Swimmers stay at the home of another swim family when they travel to a meet or to train in another city.

Block: the starting platform for the beginning of a race.

"B" time: First USA Swimming motivational time standard.

Chaperone: a swim parent who accompanies the team from the point of departure to point of return, on out of town swim meets or training sessions. USA Swimming requires that any chaperone must be a member of USA Swimming and successfully pass a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check and Athlete Protection Training (APT).

Consolation Final: in a meet with finals, after the top heat of swimmers (depends on number of racing lanes) has been selected for the Final, the next heat will race in the Consolation Final or the "B" Final. Sometimes the "B" final is referred to as a "Bonus" heat, and there will be a "C", or "Consolation" final. At some championship meets, there will even be a "D" final.

Cut: slang for a qualifying time. It refers to a time standard required for a swimmer to attend a particular meet or event.

Deck Entry: when the number of athletes in a Heat is less than the number of lanes in the pool, a coach may request to enter a swimmer in the Event at the meet. The swimmer is referred to as a "Deck Entry".

Disqualified or "DQ": occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind as determined by an official.

Distance events: refers to events over 400 meters.

Double A: AA time. Fourth USA Swimming motivational time standard.

Double B: BB time. Second USA Swimming motivational time standard.

Drill: an exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke used in training to improve technique.

Dry Land Training: training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance. Dry land training usually includes stretching, calisthenics, running and/or weight training.

Event: specific races which an athlete may enter. Each group of athletes that race against each other is referred to as a Heat. Generally the number of Heats within an Event can be calculated by dividing the number of swim lanes into the number of athletes, plus one more for any remainder.

False Start: when a swimmer is moving at the start of the race, before the electric tone sounds (cause for disqualification).

FINA: Federation Internationale de Natation, or International Swimming Federation, is the world governing body for swimming.

Final: the championship of any event in which the top heat of swimmers (depending on the number of lanes in the pool) from the preliminaries compete. These are generally held in the evening and will determine awards and team points.

Flags: Backstroke flags are placed 5 yards/meters from each end of the pool. They enable swimmers to execute a turn more efficiently by indicating the closeness of the approaching wall. From the flags, experienced swimmers know how many strokes it takes them to get to the wall and thus when to turn.

Goal: a specific time, strategy or tactical achievement a swimmer sets and strives for.

Individual Medley (IM): an event in which the swimmer swims all four strokes in the following order: fly, back, breast, free.

Heat: Each group of athletes that compete within an Event make up a Heat.

Long Course: refers to the pool length and the season. The Long Course season usually runs from March to August and competitions are held in a 50 meter pool.

Meet Fees: a meet fee applies to each event at a swim meet (usually between \$3 and \$6). There may also be a general fee or surcharge for each swimmer entered in the meet. All fees are outlined on meet information sheets.

Middle Distance: refers to events of 200 to 400 meters in length.

Negative Split: swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.

Official: A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned meet. They include Stroke and Turn Judges, Administrative Officials, Starters and Referees. They can be identified by blue slacks or shorts and a white polo shirt. All officials are certified by USA Swimming and undergo criminal background checks, as well as recurrent Athlete Protection Training.

Pace Clock: large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice (may also be digital).

Preliminaries (Prelims): in these races swimmers are trying to qualify for the championship and consolation finals in an event.

Quad A: AAAA time: Fastest USA Swimming motivational time standard.

Racing Suit: the team suit worn at swim meets. These are sized to fit snugly so they do not gap or sag during the race. Check with your coach for proper sizing.

Relay: event in which four swimmers compete together as a team.

Sanction: clubs must receive a permit from North Carolina Swimming by meeting certain criteria in order to host a swim meet.

Scratch: to withdraw a swimmer from an event in a competition.

Seeding: the heat and lane position given to a swimmer based on their entry time.

Senior Swimming: there are no age categories in Senior Competitions, but generally thought of as 15 & older. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning and develop a pool of talented athletes for National and International Competition.

Shaving: when a swimmer shaves off all the body hair to reduce drag and increase sensitivity to the water. Usually done during taper, on the night before or morning of a major competition.

Short Course: refers to the pool length and season. The short course season runs from September to March and competitions are held in a 25 yard pool.

Split: is a swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are used to determine if a swimmer is on pace. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times. In a relay, a split would be the time for each of the four swimmers; each swimmer would have his/her own split.

Sprint: refers to the shorter events (50 and 100 yards/meters). It also refers, in training, to swimming as fast as possible for a short distance.

Stop watches: accurate watches (usually electronic) are used to time swimmers during a competition. When automatic timing equipment is used, stop watches serve as a backup.

Streamline: the position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as tight (with arms overhead and locked together) and long as it can be.

Taper: the final preparation phase before competition. Characterized by a reduction in the yardage swum in practice and the intensity of the training sessions. Also described as “rest”.

Time Standards: each provincial regulatory board establishes time standards used to determine a swimmer’s relative performance. These determine which meets each swimmer is eligible to attend.

Time Trial: a “time only” swim that is not part of a regular meet. A swimmer is racing to achieve a certain qualifying time. It cannot be used to establish records. Time trials cost extra, and must be paid for separately in cash.

Touch Pad: a large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

Triple A: AAA time: Fifth USA Swimming motivational time standard.

Warm Down: is a low intensity swim used by a swimmer after the race or main practice set. A warm down rids the body of excess lactic acid and gradually reduces heart and respiration rates.

Warm Up: is preparatory swimming used by a swimmer prior to a race or main practice to get muscles loose and warm. A warm up gradually increases heart and respiration rates and may include some short sprints.

Useful resources -

- Apps
 1. OnDeck - keep track of swimmer’s times and attendance. Use the same login as our SAC website.
 2. Meet Mobile - follow meet results
 3. Deck Pass - great app for swimmers to keep track of their times, follow important swimming news, follow friends, get awards from coaches, etc. Use your login from the USA Swimming website.

- Websites
 - A. www.SharksAquaticClub.com - our team website for team info (schedules, news etc.), ordering team gear, signing up for meets/volunteering.
 - B. www.swimnc.com - North Carolina Swimming website - find meet info, time standards, info on camps and athlete rankings, etc.
 - C. www.usaswimming.org - USA Swimming website, find great educational info, keep track of swimmer times
 - D. www.swimswam.com - swimming news of all kinds