

# Table of contents

<b>Section A—Introduction and Team Philosophy</b>	3
Introduction...Welcome to STAR swimming	3
Why Swim?	3
Physical development	3
Intellectual Competence	3
STAR philosophy and objectives	4
Long term objectives	5
Short term objectives	5
STAR swimming history	5
<b>Section B—Coaching staff and structure</b>	7
Coaches responsibilities	7
Team levels	8
Changing practice groups	9
<b>Section C—Swimmer responsibilities of</b>	10
Attitudes	10
Swimmer responsibilities	10
Swimmer behavior	10
Rules for practicing	11
Code of conduct	11
<b>Section D—Parents section</b>	12
Golden Triangle—Parent/Swimmer/Coach relationship	12
Support of the program	13
Parent guidelines	13
What the coach wants from the parent	14
Problems with a coach?	15
The ten commandments for parents of athletes	16
Parent responsibilities	17

<b>Section E—Competition</b>	18
Philosophy of competition	18
Competitive strokes	18
Meet schedule	19
Swim meet information and hints	19
Where to get team apparel, ect.	19
For parents from parents	19
What to bring to meets	20
Behavior at meets	21
Relay policy	22
Meet entry procedures	23
Swim meet responsibilities	23
Out-of-town meets	24
Receiving awards in public	26
<b>Section F—Swimmer Motivational program</b>	27
Swimmer Banquet	27
ASCA Motivational times list	27
Niagara Time Standards	27
Goal setting	28
<b>Section G—Nutrition</b>	29
Quick tips	29
Eating colorful foods	30
Fluids- water vs sports drinks	31
<b>Section H — Extras</b>	33
Glossary of swimming terms	33
7 Traits of Successful Clubs	38

## **SECTION A – INTRODUCTION AND TEAM PHILOSOPHY**

### **INTRODUCTION...WELCOME TO STAR SWIMMING!**

STAR Swimming is a non-profit competitive swim program located in Hamburg and downtown Buffalo. We offer a comprehensive swim program ranging from Learn-to-Swim through competitive swimming. This manual will help familiarize you with all facets of the STAR program, and competitive swimming in general. As you look through the following pages, you will be introduced to our philosophy, policies, and to basic information concerning your day-to-day participation in STAR Swimming. It is our hope that this manual will help you better understand and enjoy the inner workings of our TEAM and the world of amateur swimming.

### **WHY SWIM**

The USA Swimming age group swimming program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health, by teaching healthy fitness habits.

#### **Physical Development:**

Many physicians and pediatricians consider swimming the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth. Why do doctors like it so much?

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age Group swimming teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills.
- Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.
- Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.
- Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's Swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's.

#### **Intellectual Competence:**

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally, their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self-image.

## **TEAM PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES**

Star Swimming is founded on the belief that age-group competitive swimming offers an exciting and worthwhile experience in a young person's life. Swimming can be learned and enjoyed by those with little or no ability to those of Olympic potential. A full-time professional coach directs the program and coaches the athletes in it. Just as people with medical needs seek, and heed, the advice of their doctor, it is expected that all STAR families will follow the lead of their professional coach.

The Board of Directors is committed to maintaining a competitive swim environment, which is safe, educational, and enjoyable. Participants can select from several levels of competitive swimming that best meets their individual abilities. Registration fees will be kept as low as possible so that those desiring to swim will have the opportunity to do so. And finally, the environment will be one, which provides a wholesome stimulus to the mental, physical, social and emotional growth of all swimmers.

STAR Swimming is an Olympic Developmental age group swim team. STAR is based on the idea that each and every swimmer will reach his or her full potential. From the beginning competitive swimmer who can barely swim one length of the pool, to the college swimmer, the philosophy is the same.

The emphasis at one end of the continuum is upon improving stroke mechanics, developing and understanding the rules, and upon making participation enjoyable. Swimmers, moving toward the other end of the continuum will experience a continuing emphasis on stroke refinement, introduction to race strategies, increasingly tougher competition, and longer practices. Stated simply, swimmers will face progressively stiffer challenges and also have greater opportunities to reach their full potential as an age group swimmer.

Individually and collectively, the most important goal of STAR swimmers should be personal improvement. The pursuit of this goal is worthy of considerable effort on the part of every swimmer and it is a goal achievable by every swimmer. No athlete deserves higher praise than the one who can truthfully say, "I have tried my hardest and done my best." Parents are cautioned against overemphasizing the importance of their child's performances in swimming and against making sweeping extrapolations about his/her athletic ability on the basis of performance at an early stage in their development.

For the age-group parent, patience and encouragement are the key words at STAR Swimming. There is the possibility that there are other clubs in the area that may have youngsters that seem to be swimming faster at a younger age, but as our youngsters begin to reach the ages of 12 and beyond, we feel our philosophy becomes evident. The youngster should be encouraged by the parents to fulfill his/her potential. The Olympic oriented program of which all the swimmers are a part enhances the future of our swimmer's careers.

The overriding reason for our success is, we "do it right before we do it fast." We strive to develop efficient stroke mechanics and strong starts and turns before we increase the amount of yardage swum in practice. Increased work will be available to swimmers once they become proficient in all four strokes and are physically mature enough. Our age group program is structured to develop and establish strong, solid fundamentals. Our senior program is designed to make the most of this strong background and give swimmers the opportunity to compete and succeed in higher levels of competition.

STAR Swimming strives to instill in young swimmers an understanding of and appreciation for such concepts as high self-esteem, personal accountability, self-motivation, goal setting, and goal achievement in training and in competition. It is our belief that the process of achieving is as significant as the achievement itself.

At each level of the STAR program, swimmers are instructed to reach for the stars. Excellence in this sense represents the achievement of that level at which you know that you have done the most to become the best you are capable of becoming. This philosophy is consistent throughout the program; and every swimmer, novice to national level, is encouraged to:

### ***STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE***

Long-term Objectives:

1. Personal and Physical Development:
  - a. To provide an opportunity for young people in the area to engage in a wholesome, healthy, lifesaving, lifetime sport, and recreational activity.
  - b. To promote physical fitness and to encourage proper conditioning and health habits.
  - c. To provide opportunities for healthy social, emotional, and educational development, and to encourage peer and family participation.
  - d. To foster the development of high self-esteem and to help cultivate positive self-image.
2. Competitive Development:
  - a. To create an environment in which the desire for self-improvement and goal achievement motivates the swimmer to fully develop their natural abilities and to help others do the same.
  - b. To provide opportunities to learn the values of hard work, dedication, self-discipline, and perseverance.
  - c. To promote the ideals of honesty, integrity, good sportsmanship, and loyalty.
  - d. To provide quality instruction, training, and competition at all levels.

Short-term Objectives:

1. To provide a graduated competitive swimming program based on age and ability in conjunction with the national age group program sponsored by United States Swimming.
2. To offer a program that will provide children in the community the necessary background for competitive swimming.

## **STAR HISTORY**

The history of STAR is the story of the rise of a small local swim club into a nationally ranked swimming power. In 1961, a group of parents from the Lake Shore area of Hamburg started a local swim club called the Lake Shore Swim Club. As a charter member of the Niagara Swim League, Lake Shore won numerous league titles and became a dominant force locally.

As the team steadily progressed toward its goal of national prominence. The club started to attract swimmers from throughout the Southtowns. Recognizing the broad appeal of the program, the name of the club was changed in 1981 to the Southtowns Aquatic Racers (STAR). In 1996, the Board of Directors changed its name to STAR Swimming. Today, STAR has swimmers from all over Buffalo, Jamestown, as well as Canada.

STAR is a member of the Niagara Local Swimming committee (LSC) of USA Swimming, which encompasses the Western half of New York State, including Rochester, Syracuse and Binghamton areas. The Niagara LSC is one of 59 LSC's in the country which comprise USA Swimming, the national governing body of amateur swimming.

STAR has been the Niagara LSC overall short course (YARDS) champion for 29 of the past 33 years and has won the long course (meters) championship 29 of the past 33 years. In addition to its local and regional prowess, STAR has gained a national reputation. STAR swimmers have qualified for the Olympic Trials, World Championship Trials, National Championships, National Coaches Swimming Association Championships, Junior National championships, USA Speedo Sectional Championships, Olympic Festival teams, Zone all-star teams, and various other major competitions.

STAR swimmers have had an unparalleled success among local swim teams. Many swimmers have continued their swimming career in college. Of these swimmers many have received athletic scholarships. Many other swimmers have elected to attend non-scholarship institutions, typically an Ivy League School.

The age group program has played a large part in STAR's success. The age group program is a highly developed, vertically integrated program. Much of STAR's talent is a product of its learn-to-swim and developmental (red team) programs. Many current nationally ranked swimmers started out as non-competitive swimmers. STAR is especially proud of its learn-to-swim and developmental programs, and the coaches who run them. The strength of the club has always been the quality and expertise of its staff.

**The Mission of STAR Swimming is:** To empower swimmers to become champions, both in and out of the water--Dreams, Dedication and Excellence throughout a lifetime.

## **SECTION B – Coaching Staff and Team Structure**

Nothing has a greater influence on the quality of children’s sports than the excellence of the coach. The STAR Swimming staff consists of seven professionally trained coaches. They, as members of the American Swim Coaches Association, have access to the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport in the United States. Certified coaches in USA Swimming programs possess training and experience in the physiology and psychology of adolescent development. Our coaching staff provides the assurances that the time your children spend in swimming will be quality time.

### **Coaches Responsibilities**

The coaches’ job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The staff is dedicated to providing a program for youngsters that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself—“to be the best you can be.” Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing youngsters in the practice groups. This is based on the age and ability of each individual. When it is in the best interest of the swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach with the approval of the child’s parents.
2. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the STAR swimming coaching staff. Each group practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets STAR swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also makes decisions concerning which events a swimmer is entered in. A swimmer can change their events on their own using the website platform.
4. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmers’ performance. (It is the parent’s responsibility to offer love and understanding regardless of the youngster’s performance).
5. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff (see relay policy).

The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the STAR Swimming program. It is the swimmers and parents’ responsibility to make the most of this excellent opportunity that the program provides for success in USA Swimming.

# TEAM LEVELS

**Tadpole:** (Ages 4-12) – The Tadpole program is our basic Learn to swim program. Each class is 30 minutes long and offers multiple sessions throughout the year.

**Novice Team:** The Novice program is geared for ages 5 and above. Swimmers are taught by the Red team coach. Each class is 40 minutes. This program asks for these swimmers to be able to swim at least 2 widths of the pool. In this program, there is not an instructor in the pool as this group caters to swimmers who are comfortable already in the water. The goal is for the child to be ready to enter the beginning competitive Program (RED TEAM) by the end of the session.

**Red Team:** (Ages 6-12) - This is our STROKE INSTRUCTIONAL program. These are the swimmers that are just coming out of our swim lesson program. Red swimmers are those that know all 4 strokes. There is a major emphasis on stroke technique, turns, starts, and fun. Swimmers should be able to swim 25 yards of freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly and a legal 100 IM. These swimmers should also know how to do a competitive flip turn. STAR offers three, 60 minute practices each week from September through July. Approximately eight swim meets are offered throughout the year as this is the beginning to competitive swimming.

**Blue Team:** (Ages 7-12) - This group of swimmers knows all 4 strokes fairly well. Each swimmer must be able to demonstrate the ability to handle regular practice routines. Emphasis is on drills, stroke technique, turns, starts, interval training, and fun. Most Blue swimmers train three or four 1.5 hour practices each week. Swimmers in this group are encouraged to attend more swim meets and learn to have fun in a competitive environment.

**Senior Prep Team:** (Ages 11-17) - This group of swimmers is where refinement of turns, starts and stroke technique are continually taught. Now there is an introduction on pace, race strategies and endurance training which is practiced daily. Senior prep swimmers are dedicated towards achieving goals at the local and Regional levels. Most senior prep swimmers train two hours per day (four or five days per week) and attend several swim meets each year.

**Senior Team:** (Ages 13 and over) - At the Head Coach's discretion, swimmers are invited to join the Senior Team where the athletes are training at a very high level. The physiological, psychological, and biomechanical areas of swimming are taught. Senior Team members are dedicated towards achieving goals at the local, Regional and National levels. Senior swimmers train five or six days per week and attend several swim meets each year. Consistent video-taping is done to help make each swimmer as proficient as possible.

## CHANGING PRACTICE GROUPS

Swimmers are moved from one group to another when the coaching staff feels such a move is warranted. Paramount in the consideration of such a move is the swimmer's physical and mental ability to handle the increased workload.

Any questions about moving from one practice group to another should be directed to the coaching staff.

The movement of a swimmer to the next practice group is usually filled with many questions. In moving a swimmer, the individual needs of that athlete are a key consideration. The coaches will discuss the situation to be sure all areas of consideration are taken into account. The main topics of discussion are:

1. *Competition Level* – Contrary to popular belief, this is the least important category to consider. It can happen that a swimmer in a lower level group can beat a swimmer in a higher level group in meets!
2. *Social Age* – Can the swimmer relate to their future peers in the next group? Will they socially be accepted? This is an important factor, yet usually not the overriding factor in determining a group move.
3. *Attitude* – Attitude plays a prime factor in the movement of a swimmer to the next group. Can they handle increased stress with a positive attitude? Can they handle adversity or are they devastated by minor setbacks? Does the swimmer enjoy practice? If not, is giving them more of it appropriate?
4. *Attendance* – The swimmers ability and/or desire to handle the amount of dedication needed to be in the next group level is of prime importance. The swimmer must show this dedication for a period of time before they are allowed to move up.
5. *Ability to Train* – The swimmer must demonstrate they will be able to handle the additional training load of the next group before they are moved. This is important for the swimmers self-image.

## SECTION C – SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES

### ATTITUDES:

Personal improvement is the ultimate victory. The order of finish is always secondary to the swimmers time, stroke technique, starts, turns, etc. Place measures the competition, time measures the individual performance.

- \* Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect. Hard work produces results.
- \* Swim meets are fun!! They provide swimmers an opportunity to set new standards of excellence.
- \* Good swims are the result of improved stroke techniques, good mental and physical preparation, hard work. Bad swims do occur. Move on to the next swim, **do not dwell on the negative.**
- \* Parents support; coach's critique. Swimmers accept that role from their coaches. When parents try to assume the role of critic, swimmers become confused as to who is who.
- \* There is no such thing as "I can't...", but instead it should be "I will try."
- \* There is no "I" in "TEAM." Team conformity and unity are strongly emphasized.

### SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES:

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases so does his/her responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be Senior Swimming bound. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her parents, and most importantly to themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for a 100% effort each time they come to the pool.

Swimmers should bring water bottles to each practice.

In addition, swimmers are responsible for their behavior at practice, at swim meets, other TEAM functions, as well as before and after practice and traveling to and from meets. Older swimmers are expected to be positive role models for those younger than they are.

### SWIMMER BEHAVIOR:

At practices – All should be courteous and respectful to other swimmers, coaches, parents, and the facilities.

At meets – All rules regarding behavior in locker rooms apply for meets. Swimmers are responsible for getting to the starting blocks on time (unless a clerk of course is established). It is your responsibility to pay attention to what is going on at the meet and to report to the proper place at the proper time. Every swimmer is to report directly to the coach immediately following each event that they swim. Parents are asked to please cooperate and reinforce this procedure. Swimmers should plan ahead and bring along books, games, or some other form of quiet activity to keep them occupied during the meet.

## **RULES FOR PRACTICING:**

1. Be on the deck and ready to begin practice on time (We recommend 15 minutes early so the swimmer can interact with other teammates. For the Senior swimmer, this is when they are supposed to be stretching).
2. Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach's permission.
3. Parents should pick up swimmers from the pool promptly after practice.
4. Parents are welcome to watch practice from the stands, but must refrain from coaching, timing, or otherwise participating at the practice.
5. A parent needing to communicate with their child during a practice should do so through the coach.
6. If a swimmer misses practice for an extended period of time, the swimmer's coach should be notified.
7. Take care of the facility and treat it the way you would want someone to treat your home.
8. The use of inappropriate or profane language in all facilities or at team functions will not be tolerated.
9. Improper drug use of any controlled or illegal substances by any swimmer will be dealt with by temporary or permanent suspension.

Any color or style suit is acceptable for practice. Swimmers are encouraged not to wear their team suit in practice – it will last much longer if only worn in meets. Swimmers are expected to treat all equipment with respect.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

STAR Swimming is fortunate to have use of the facilities of Erie Community College and the Frontier School District. To maintain this situation, we must enforce strict rules of discipline to prevent damage to these facilities and others using these facilities.

Swimmers are expected to show responsible behavior at practice and meets, before and after practice, and when going to meets. The behavior of each member strongly affects how others view STAR. Negative or abusive behaviors will not be tolerated.

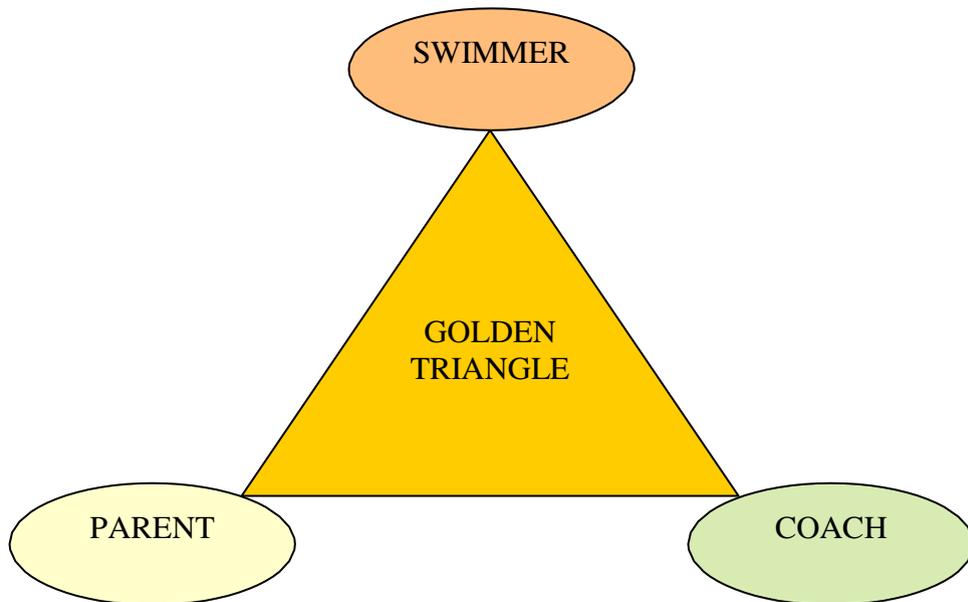
For STAR, it is crucial that the practice environment remain positive and that practice sessions operate in a smooth, efficient manner. To this end, inappropriate behavior by swimmers must not be allowed. Inappropriate behavior would include, but not limited to the following:

1. Speaking when coaches are speaking.
2. Disobeying the request or instructions of any coach or adult.
3. Failing to respect others private property.
4. Behaving in any way that could potentially reflect negatively on STARSwimming.
5. Swearing and any behaviors which are dangerous or offensive to others.
6. Any swimmer who is known to use alcohol, drugs or tobacco products is subject to suspension from the team. \*This offense will result in the swimmer being suspended from the team for at least 2 weeks (but may be lengthened at the discretion of the Head Coach (subject to Board approval).

All STAR members, whether parents or swimmers, continue to protect and improve the excellent reputation the club has throughout the community and state.

## SECTION D – PARENTS SECTION

### PARENT – SWIMMER – COACH RELATIONSHIP



To have a successful program there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your child makes depends to a great extent on this GOLDEN triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join STAR.

## **SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM**

Swimmers progress at varying rates. Sometimes improvement in performance will be rapid and at other times performance may plateau. Such is the nature of sport and life.

During these plateaus there is a tendency to think there must be a shortcut to success or to believe there must be a better way to train: to blame the coach or program. “The grass looks greener on the other side of the fence.” There is an old saying among swimming coaches – “If a swimmer swims slow, its poor coaching; if a swimmer swims fast, its heredity.” – This is not always true!

Consistency of performance followed by improvement, followed by consistency of performance is a natural pattern of progression. During time of consistent performance the swimmer will need considerable support, positive input, and confidence building. For parents or friends to express doubt in the program or coach can be ruinous to the swimmer. In order for a swimmer to get the most from being a part of the team, the program and coaches must be supported totally. To do less is to weaken the program and the individual swimmer by undermining the swimmer’s confidence in the program or the coach. Successful swimmers place their improvement and success in the hands of the experienced coaches and therefore, must have confidence in them.

## **PARENT GUIDELINES**

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have produced, and the model you have been for them.

- a. Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills. The slower learner obviously takes more time to learn and this requires more patience on the part of the parents and coaches, who must remember that their ultimate swimming potential may be as great as or greater than that of the faster learner.
- b. When an athlete first comes out for the team and starts practicing, it is possible for them to worsen rather than improve. In the case of team members in the Blue, Senior Prep, and Senior programs, this is likely due to the emphasis placed on stroke technique in these groups. It takes a great deal of the swimmer’s attention to master these skills. These new sets of habits are the basis for later improvement. As training proceeds in the program additional stress is placed upon the muscles. The muscles will at first break down under the demand of additional work and this can explain the initial lack of improvement. As the need for improvement is realized, the muscles will gradually strengthen and the athlete’s performance will improve.
- c. Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmer’s career. Plateaus can be both in competition and in training. A plateau signifies the swimmer has mastered low-order skills, but they are not yet sufficiently automatic to leave the attention free to attack newer, higher-order skills. It is important to explain to the athlete that plateaus can occur in all fields of physical training. The more successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance and approach their potential.
- d. Swimmers under 10 are most inconsistent. This can be frustrating for the parent, coach, and swimmer alike! We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.
- e. Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop some competitive spirit. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional stress. The small disappointments

they must learn to handle as youngsters prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to experience as adults

- f. It is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is a parent's job to supply the unconditional love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the athletes feel good about themselves.
- g. Parent's attitudes and models often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parent's desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your child to practices and meets, fund-raising projects, meetings, etc. – do not look at these as chores.
- h. If you have any questions about your child's training or TEAM policies, contact the coaching staff. Criticizing the coach in front of the athlete(s) undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.
- i. No parent should behave in such a way to bring discredit to the child, STAR Swimming, or to competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to and handled by the coach.
- j. Be sure your athlete swims because they want to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus to all successful swimmers.
- k. The communication between coach and swimmers is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice. It is imperative that the coach have the swimmer's full attention at all times. It is for this reason that we ask parents not to actively participate in the coaching in any manner.

In general, it is best for parents to refrain from making stroke corrections or from trying to coach the swimmer. When parents offer their opinions as to how the athlete should swim, it causes considerable, and often times, confusion as to who the swimmer should listen to. If you differ with something, please confer with the coach.

#### **WHAT COACHES WANT FROM PARENTS:**

1. No-interference from parents on technical matters.
2. Support of the program and coach decisions.
3. Separate the swim from the swimmer – the process superseded the result.
4. Increase the self-image of the swimmer with achievable goals and intrinsic motivation.
5. Dietary assistance at home and fast food meals.
6. Participate in accepted communication procedures with questions after practice.
7. Administrative support at swim meets.
8. Swimmer punctuality – Tardiness sometimes puts the child in a difficult situation.
9. Attend parent meetings.
10. Verbal support in the community. Sell the positives of STAR Swimming.
11. Discuss problems 1:1; provide an answer and have a discussion end point.
12. Philosophical cooperation means the family does not outgrow the team.

## **PROBLEMS WITH THE COACH?.....**

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but in fact, this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach:

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy a good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or a training group that can range in size from 10-200 members. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensates for occasional short-term inconvenience.
3. If your child swims for an assistant coach, follow the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask the head coach to join the dialogue as a third party.
4. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

## 10 Commandments for Swimming Parents

**I. Thou shall not impose thy ambitions on thy child.** Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes and don't push him based on what you think he should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do his personal best and benefit from the process of competitive swimming.

**II. Thou shall be supportive no matter what.** There is only one question to ask your child after a practice or a competition - "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

**III. Thou shall not coach thy child.** You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offers professional coaching. Do not undermine the professional coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to provide love and support. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. Never pay your child for a performance. This will only serve to confuse your child concerning the reasons to strive for excellence and weaken the swimmer/coach bond.

**IV. Thou shall only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.** You should be encouraging and never criticize your child or the coach. Both of them know when mistakes have been made. Remember "yelling at" is not the same as "cheering for".

**V. Thou shall acknowledge thy child's fears.** New experiences can be stressful situations. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event or meet if your child was not ready. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming experience.

**VI. Thou shall not criticize the officials.** Please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can in purely voluntary positions.

**VII. Honor thy child's coach.** The bond between coach and swimmer is special. It contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child.

**VIII. Thou shall be loyal and supportive of thy team** It is not wise for parents to take swimmers and to jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer in another team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team find that it can be a difficult emotional experience. Often swimmers who do switch teams don't do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

**IX. Thy child shall have goals besides winning.** Most successful swimmers have learned to focus on the process and not the outcome. Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. Does this make me a failure? No, in fact I am very proud of that swim." What a tremendous outlook to carry on through life.

**X. Thou shall not expect thy child to become an Olympian.** There are 250,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about .0002%.

## **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

As a parent/guardian, your swimmers depend on you for love, support, and acceptance. Help your swimmer fulfill their commitment by:

- \* Making sure they are on time and prepared for practice and meets.
- \* Monitoring their diet and rest patterns. Help to ensure that they get adequate sleep and a well-balanced diet.
- \* Being supportive of your swimmer. Do all you can to help your child learn and grow. They all work hard and seek your positive reinforcement every time they swim.
- \* Communicate with the swimmers and coaches. Contact the coach before and after practice or meets with questions or concerns. The coaches are busy during practice and meets coaching your children.
- \* Become an active Support team Member. Become an official, serve as a member on the Board of Directors, and help other parent volunteers or committee members. Be involved....Most club volunteer activities require no previous experience and take very little time.

At all times, emphasis should be placed on personal improvement in time, technique, and attitude. The significance of material rewards should be down played in favor of personal best times, personal goal setting, and the notion that “swimming is everything.”

All swimmers should be encouraged to swim all events available to them at the swim meets. Longer and/or more difficult events will become easier every time they are attempted. Parents should never designate your child as a certain type of swimmer (i.e., backstroker or sprinter). Development of any stroke and/or distance can occur at any time during a swimmers career. They should never be stereotyped as to perceived limitations upon their abilities!

# **SECTION E – COMPETITION**

## **PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION**

STAR Swimming engages in a multi-level competitive program with United States Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy towards competition.

1. We emphasize competition within oneself. Winning ribbons or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has a poor swim in comparison to past performances, they are encouraged to do better. Individual improvement is of primary concern.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance to improved performance. Respect for officials and competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behavior praised by the STAR Coaching Staff. We want our swimmers to shake hands after each race. This DOES go noticed!
3. A swimmer is praised for improving their time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.
4. Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging goals for meets, and to relate those goals to practice and to direct their training towards these goals.
5. Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all events, distances, and strokes. This promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore their potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming.

## **COMPETITIVE STROKES**

The four competitive strokes are (1) freestyle, (2) backstroke, (3) breaststroke, and (4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age-group of swimmer. In addition, there is a combination of strokes swum by one swimmer called the individual medley (butterfly – backstroke – breaststroke – freestyle). Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle (medley relay).

## MEET SCHEDULE

Each season's meet schedule is posted on the STAR Swimming website at [www.starswimming.org](http://www.starswimming.org). The meet schedule can be found on the home page on the bottom under EVENTS. Coaches view meets as tests (like school) to see what has been learned, and which lessons need to be reinforced. Swim meets are emphasized, but are optional! If a swimmer cannot compete at a team meet, it is the responsibility of that family to remove their own entry using the website platform. Each meet has a deadline or the family will be responsible for any and all meet entry fees for their child(ren). You can always contact the Head Coach for help in this area if needed.

1. On average, we want all team members to compete every three to five weeks. The meet schedule is set with this in mind. In some cases, meets of similar classifications are scheduled as close as two weeks apart or as far as one month apart. This happens when the meets available to us offer no other choice.
2. The coaching staff reserves the right to make final decisions concerning which meets swimmers may attend. The coach must OK any exceptions to this schedule.

## SWIM MEET INFORMATION AND HINTS

**Team Uniform:** In order to promote TEAM UNITY and for everyone to know who the STAR swimmers are, swimmers must wear, when competing, the STAR TEAM Uniform. This includes: STAR swim cap, and STAR swim suit (SPEEDO is our team sponsor.) We also wish our swimmers to purchase team warm-ups as well as any other team apparel. The more we look like a team the better we will swim!

## WHERE TO GET TEAM APPAREL

**Star Apparel:** Mrs. Kruglov is in charge of this area and she can be reached at almost every practice downtown at ECC. Her email is [elkrglv@hotmail.com](mailto:elkrglv@hotmail.com)

**Swim Caps:** Once again, Mrs. Kruglov handles team caps. The coaches recommend each swimmer always having 2 caps in case one is lost or breaks. They cost \$5, which is due at purchase.

**Swim Suits:** The Deep End is our sponsor and they can be found on our website under the PARTNERS section of the website on the left side of the page. STAR swimming is a sponsored team by SPEEDO so at all meets; you must have the team suit.

## FOR PARENTS FROM PARENTS

Good meet behavior is primarily the responsibility of the swimmer and their parents. Swimmers should not be left at a meet unsupervised. The coaches are busy coaching and thus have little time to act as disciplinarians out of the pool area. Please help by looking after your swimmer.

At some meets, it is necessary for visiting teams to provide timers. This is the responsibility of all parents who have children participating in these meets. To make it less time consuming for all, we "rotate" timers by having parent's time a certain length of time. Without providing these timers, the team will not be able to participate.

Parents not working are NOT permitted on the deck at swim meets. This is an insurance issue and one that USA swimming takes very seriously. If you need to talk to a coach, send word with your swimmers. Meet officials are volunteers. So the best thing you can do to ensure that the officials are good is become an official. STAR Swimming usually leads the way in the Niagara LSC with having the most officials as well as some of the best in the USA. Mrs. Blake is in charge of all STAR's officials. She can be reached through the Head Coach. Since the coach cannot be aware of everything that is going on at a meet, problems may arise that need to be brought to the attention of the officials. If you have a question or complaint, consult with the coach and if necessary, the coach will bring the matter to the attention of the proper official.

No one can tell how long a swim meet will last. Meet length depends upon how many swimmers attend, the number and type of events, and how smoothly the meet runs. Most morning sessions are over around noon, and afternoon sessions finish around 4 or 5 pm.

### **WHAT TO BRING TO MEETS**

- STAR swim suit
- Quiet games or books
- STAR swim caps (2)
- Log Book - to record times
- Goggles (two preferably)
- Food - a nutritious snack and juice
- Two towels (or more)
- Money for heat sheets (\$4-8)
- Baby or talcum powder to "dust" the inside of swim cap. It helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on. Pack the swim bags the night before (goggles, hat, suit, maybe an extra suit, warm-ups, towel, and a dry change of clothing).
- Make sure that everything you take is marked with your child's name.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes before warm-ups start. Locate where the swimmer is to put his/her belongings. Have the swimmer inform the coach that he/she has arrived. Notify the coach, a day in advance, if your child will be arriving late. Become familiar with the facility.
- Buy a meet program. This helps you keep track of when swimmers are to compete.
- Find where race information and official meet results are posted.

## **BEHAVIOR AT MEETS**

Whenever a STAR swimmer wears any item of the TEAM uniform, he/she should remember that their actions and words reflect on the TEAM they represents, and behave accordingly. Let your actions reflect the pride you have in STAR Swimming.

All questions swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, on officiating calls, or the conduct of the meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through proper channels.

As a matter of pride, leave the rest area and the pool in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of each session of a meet.

**Swimmers are never to "scratch" or "deck enter" an event without first consulting a coach.** There is a reason that the coach entered you in that event. If it becomes a necessity to do this, again please consult with the coach first.

In a meet with prelims and finals, it is expected that any swimmer qualifying to swim in the finals will do so. This is vital to the success of the STAR Swimming program. **Finals are where STAR swims its best and the only places in a prelim/Final meet that a person can score points for the team.**

All rules regarding behavior in locker rooms apply for swim meets. At no time are cell phones allowed to be turned on in the locker rooms or behind the starting blocks.

Swimmers are responsible for getting to the clerk of course (if present) or to their assigned starting block on time. It's your responsibility to pay attention at the meet and to report to the proper place at the proper time.

Every swimmer is to report directly to the coaches immediately following each event that they swim. Parents are asked to please cooperate and reinforce this procedure. This is when the coach can give constructive thoughts to the swimmer's race right away so they retain it for next time they swim.

## **RELAY POLICY**

STAR places a great emphasis upon the importance of relays. We strongly urge all swimmers and families to take pride in these relays. Relays truly show the overall quality and depth of a TEAM. Many teams don't have the numbers to make up relays in a specific age group. A team may have one or two "good" swimmers in an age group, but they don't make up a relay. It takes four swimmers to make up a relay and consequently each is as important as the other towards the success of that relay. This is also a great opportunity for swimmers to "unite" on a relay. Friendships are born from relays. They're essential to the overall ability of our swimmers and STAR Swimming! If you know your swimmer(s) will be unable to participate on a relay, you must notify Coach Phil Aronica via email. Otherwise, all swimmers will be put onto relays (numbers permitting). By notifying Coach Phil Aronica, we will not add that swimmer to "potential" relay participants. Thus, you will not be billed for this relay.

At all times, after completing your last individual event, you are to ask the coach if you are needed for a relay.

It is very important for swimmers to arrive at warm-ups on time. Relays are normally decided during warm-ups after the coaches see who is in attendance.

The building of a relay team is the responsibility of the coaches. There are many variables to be considered: 1) attitude of the swimmer; 2) their best time; 3) their time at that meet; 4) ability to perform under pressure; 5) how the swimmer is swimming on that day. Even with these variables being considered, it is often difficult to select the top four people to a relay.

Except, due to swimmer attitudes, their ability to perform under pressure, or disciplinary reasons, the "A" relay will consist of the four fastest swimmers in that age group. The next four will comprise the "B" relay, etc. Exceptions to this may arise if a particular swimmer is in need of a certain cut off time, is late arriving to meet, or due to a coaching decision. In addition, situations may occur when the coaches decide to split relays in order to create even teams. This is the prerogative of the coaching staff. Swimmers assigned to relays will be assessed 1/4 of that relay fee. Swimmers must inform the coaches, at the meet, if they will be unable to participate on a relay. Swimmers being assigned to relays, who do not show up for that relay, will be assessed the entire relay fee to their escrow account. If special reasons arise, as to not being able to participate on a relay, a decision concerning fee assessment will be made by the coach and escrow chair for STAR Swimming.

For STAR swimmers competing at National level meets, Coach Phil Aronica emphasizes that swimmers need to be at practice at least 85% of the time to be entered on an "A" relay.

## MEET ENTRY PROCEDURES

A schedule of anticipated STAR team meets is located on the website under EVENTS at the bottom of the home page. Your swimmer is automatically entered in those meets that are for his group or the ones that he qualifies for. It is then your responsibility to remove your swimmer BEFORE the deadline. If you do nothing, then you are responsible for the payment of those entries whether you swim at the meet or not.

The deadline for all meets are an absolute deadline as we will send the host team a check and our entries early enough so we are not "CLOSED" out of a meet due to a large amount of entries from all the different teams attending.

If something comes up and you are unable to attend a meet, notify Head Coach Phil Aronica immediately. You will still be responsible for all your child's meet fees, but at least the coaches will know what is going on. Meet fees consist of Individual events/relay (fees vary), and swimmer surcharge.

For most meets the Individual fee ranges between \$2-3, and relays \$8-10(1/4 for your swimmer).

You are given a specific deadline for entering meets. As mentioned earlier, meets can "close" out and therefore our swimmers not able to compete. This is why we need for the deadline to be strictly enforced.

There are no refunds for meets, which a swimmer has entered, but fails to attend. Please check the website often to see your entries.

## SWIM MEET RESPONSIBILITIES

**Important:** If a swimmer is unable to attend a meet because of illness or an emergency situation, particularly if relays are to be swum, the coaching staff must be notified by telephone or in writing (preferred). If you are unable to contact a coach, contact another swimmer participating in the meet so that the message can be relayed to the coach(es).

These procedures will assist swimmers and parents in expediting their time at a meet:

- ❖ The week of the meet, check the meet information sheets, which are on the website under the Team Events. Events entered will be shown along with location of meet, times of warm-ups and start.
- ❖ Set goals for each event. Each race is an opportunity to achieve one of these goals.
- ❖ Arrive, on deck, ten minutes before the appointed warm-up.
- ❖ A member of the STAR coaching staff conducts warm-ups. Members are required to warm-up with the team. It is important that swimmers and parents alike understand that a good warm-up is an essential part to a successful performance.
- ❖ It is customary for STAR Swimming to have a "TEAM area" at meets and sit together as a group. This helps promote TEAM unity and TEAM spirit.
- ❖ All swimmers are required to wear the TEAM suit & cap in competition. They are also required to wear a STAR SWIMMING shirt, sweatshirt, warm-up, etc.

- ❖ In between races, swimmers are expected to rest and stay warm. All energy is to be stored up and used in competition. If swimmers must eat, a light, healthy snack is preferred.
- ❖ Before leaving the meet, swimmers must inform the coach, making sure that they are not on a relay, and if there are any changes for the following days warm-up times. If a swimmer must leave early, notify a coach as soon as possible so other swimmers may be informed as to whether they too will be needed for a relay. Also, before leaving the meet, check with a coach to see if there are any changes in the next day's schedule.

## **OUT-OF-TOWN MEETS**

The team should seek out-of-town swimming competition for the following reasons:

1. Opportunities to race other people.
2. A higher quality of competition, because you are as good as your competition.
3. Experience in trials, finals meets, to prepare for championship meets.
4. Conditions conducive to exceptional performances.

When attending out-of-town meets, swimmers should travel with and stay with an adult. No one should drive to a meet or have lodging at a meet without adult supervision. Parents may assume responsibility for other swimmers as long as prior arrangements are made.

The team may travel by van, bus, or plane as a team with coaches and/or parents acting as chaperones. When traveling with the team, the following procedures and rules should apply. These may or may not fit your situation.

- ✓ Anyone who, in the opinion of the coach attending the trip, acts in a manner that would interfere with the objectives of the trip will be subject to immediate return home (at the swimmer's expense) and may have restriction from attending further out-of-town meets.
- ✓ Punctuality is essential. We will usually have meals as a team; go to warm-ups as a group, etc. We usually run on a very tight schedule. Do not inconvenience the team by not being punctual.
- ✓ No boys allowed in girl's rooms - no girls allowed in boy's rooms.
- ✓ You must have a partner to leave your room, and partners must stay together. Always tell someone where you are going.
- ✓ Swimmers must have coach's permission to leave the hotel grounds.
- ✓ If the coach is not available to give permission, a chaperone must be asked for this permission.

- ✓ "No Touch Rule" - No swimmer will interact with another swimmer in a manner which they would not be willing to use with any teammate - of either sex. In other words, swim meets are not to be construed as "Date Night at the Pool." Any outward show of romantic affection is deemed inappropriate.
- ✓ A curfew will be set for each night. All lights, TV's, radios, etc., must be off at a curfew and swimmers must be quiet and must make a serious effort to go to sleep.
- ✓ If the team attends special functions, travels by air, etc., appropriate attire is required. Check with the coach if you are not sure what to wear. Impoliteness and boisterous behavior is inappropriate.
- ✓ Restaurant Behavior:
  - Be polite to the waiter/waitress.
  - A gratuity (tip) should be added to your food bill (15% is recommended).
  - Use responsible table manners.
- ✓ Hotel Behavior:
  - Any damages or thievery incurred by a motel will be at the expense of the swimmer(s), and further disciplinary action will be taken.
  - Any "loud" behavior will be confined to each swimmer's room and not at inappropriate times (i.e., between trials and finals, after curfew, etc.).
  - Under no circumstances should loud or boisterous behavior be tolerated in hallways or other public areas of a hotel.
  - All phones in hotel rooms will be turned off.
- ✓ No drinking of alcoholic beverages and the use of tobacco products will be tolerated. The strictest of punishments will be imposed for this infraction. Anyone found or suspected to be in the presence of others (regardless of team affiliation) partaking in the above activities will be subject to the same punishments.
- ✓ When a swimmer travels with the team, he/she is expected to stay with the team at all times, unless the swimmer has the written consent of a parent or guardian, and will be supervised by a responsible adult.

The preceding rules are meant to give the swimmer, chaperone, and parent at an out-of-town meet some general guidelines of expected behavior. Anyone, who conducts himself/herself in a manner not covered by the rules, but in the opinion of the coach, is considered inappropriate for the best interest of the individual or the team will also be subject to disciplinary action.

## **RECEIVING AWARDS IN PUBLIC**

Whenever there's a system of presenting awards at meet, swimmers should be prompt and cooperate fully at the presentation. They should wear their STAR warm-ups, shirt, etc. when accepting awards. Swimmers are not to wear caps, hats, etc. unless it is a STAR swim item. It's also customary for STAR swimmers to be polite and thankful for any award received. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers. If photos are being taken, the swimmer should remain until the shooting is complete, cooperating with the photographer. Don't ham it up!

## **SECTION F -- SWIMMER MOTIVATIONAL PROGRAM**

### **SWIMMER BANQUET**

At the end of the short course season, STAR Swimming honors our swimmers at the Spring Banquet. This banquet is for all swimmers and parents on our roster who finish the season on our Red, Blue, Senior Prep, and Senior Teams.

The award period for swimmers to earn the below incentives run from May of the preceding year – April of the current year. Swimmers will be awarded the highest award they achieved during the short course season or long course season spring banquet in April usually.

ALL swimmers are recognized individually by their coaches at the awards banquet and receive a participation gift regardless of their ability.

### **USA AGE GROUP MOTIVATIONAL TIMES LIST**

*Motivational Times are for Motivation:* Motivational Times are the basis for teaching our swimmers how to set goals in relation to all swimmers in the USA swimming community. STAR's goal is to get as many of our swimmers to the "A" level and beyond. Dedication, Desire, and Determination, and commitment are needed to achieve these goals and most of our swimmers do reach these! The chart for these times can be found on the STAR website under the SWIMMERS tab. There is a chart for YARDS and METERS.

### **NIAGARA TIME STANDARDS**

Niagara Swimming has 74 swim teams associated with it. Niagara Swimming offers championships in February/March and in July. You can find the time standards for this meet on the STAR website. If you have any questions, please see you coach and they can explain them to you.

## GOAL SETTING

Setting goals is one of the most important parts in attaining success. By establishing goals and committing to them, you will aim for something very special: a commitment to "being the best you can be." How many times have you set a goal to get an "A" time, but when your coach asks you what the "A" time is, you have no idea. Goal setting can be one of the greatest tools in motivation; however, goals must be S M A R T! Which mean: Specific, Meaningful, Affirmed, Realistic, and Trackable.

**Specific** means just that. Goals should be stated with a concrete time to be achieved as well as when you plan on attaining that time, i.e. achieve a 1:06.54 in the 100 fly by March 1, 2017.

**Meaningful** means setting goals that are personal and purposeful to you. The goals you set must be your own, not your mom's or your dad's or your coach's, but yours.

**Affirmed** means confirming your goals by firmly planting them in your heart and soul. Write your goals out and place them on the refrigerator, in your locker, on the ceiling at home, or anywhere else you will see them daily. Convince yourself that **YOU CAN ACHIEVE THEM!**

**Realistic** means setting goals that are achievable by you within the time frame you and your coach have established. It is great to have high expectations, but goals must be attained or you will not experience success, and swimming will not be fun anymore. Your coach can help you set challenging, but realistic goals.

**Trackable means** being able to chart your progress on the way to your success or yearly goal. Setting short-term goals helps establish a means of monitoring your achievement. You are not only able to gauge your improvement, but you will experience success along the way. This feeling of accomplishment will help motivate you in obtaining your ultimate goal.

What are your goals for the season? It is not too early to start planning now! Affirm it, visualize it, do it!!!

## SECTION I--NUTRITION!!!!

One of the building blocks of quality training is good nutrition. Every swimmer and parent needs to be aware of the following two points:

**1. Food does NOT make a swimmer swim fast.**

That's right. Food does not make him swim fast. What *does* make him swim fast? Training. Training makes him swim fast.

**2. QUALITY training makes him swim fast.**

A vital part of quality training is good nutrition!

### Quick Tips

**What should my child eat before practice? At meets? What are some hydration tips?**

The best pre-practice, or pre-meet meal should contain primarily carbohydrates. Carbohydrate-rich foods like pasta, breads and cereal are easily digested and absorbed. Rule of thumb: 0.5 - 2.0 grams of carbohydrate per pound of body weight one to four hours prior to exercise.

### Meals that provide 100 grams of carbohydrates

- 1 bagel with peanut butter and 2/3 cup of raisins
- 1 cup of low-fat yogurt, 1 banana and 1 cup of orange juice
- 1 turkey sandwich with 1 cup of applesauce
- 2 cups of spaghetti with meat sauce and 1 piece of garlic bread
- 8 oz. of skim milk, 1 apple, 1 orange, 2 slices of bread and 3 pancakes
- 1 serving of GatorLode and 1 bagel

### Fluid Replacement Tips

- Keep a fluid bottle by the side of the pool when working out and drink between repeats and sets.
- Choose sports drinks like Gatorade that taste good, stimulate fluid absorption in the body maintain proper fluid balance in the body, and provide energy to working muscles.
- Avoid carbonated drinks, which can cause stomach bloating and may reduce fluid intake.
- Avoid caffeine-filled beverages. They are diuretics and contribute to fluid loss.
- Check the color of your urine. Dark-colored urine may indicate you are dehydrated and need to drink fluids.

## Eating Colorful Foods: Anti-oxidants vs free radicals

What are the first three foods that come to mind when we say “carbohydrate?”

1. Pasta
2. Rice
3. Bread

Each of these is excellent. But what do they have in common? They’re all white!

One of the most overlooked sources of carbohydrate is fruit. Yes, FRUIT. Fresh, canned, frozen, dried or juiced. No matter how you look at it, fruit is an excellent source of carbohydrate. Not only does fruit provide carbohydrate in the form of natural sugars (versus refined sugar), the bright colors of fruits indicate that they are also excellent sources of vitamins and minerals, including a sub-group called **anti-oxidants**.

You might recall that exercise is the stimulus that leads to training adaptations. And that adaptations to training occur **ONLY** if you give the body the right kinds of fuels during periods of rest.

Well, one of the side effects of exercise is the generation of “*free radicals*.” Free radicals are molecules that can actually cause damage to muscle tissue above and beyond the damage caused by exercise. The damage caused by exercise is normal. It serves as part of the stimulus for training adaptation to take place. But damage caused by free radicals is **NOT** a desired part of the training process. Damage caused by free radicals (aka “scavengers”) circulating in the bloodstream after workout can continue well into the recovery period. This is when the body is supposed to be adapting!

Anti-oxidants “absorb” free radicals, neutralizing their effect in the body before their damage to muscle tissue can amount to much. A diet consistently rich in fruits (and other colorful foods, such as VEGETABLES) is apt to keep the body consistently supplied with anti-oxidants, which will assist the body in keeping free radical formation to a minimum. This is a good reason to eat lots of colorful foods during the recovery time between workouts.

Colorful foods include, but are not limited to: **Apples, Strawberries, Blueberries, Bananas, Oranges, Kiwi, Watermelon, Raspberries, Grapes, Mango, Papaya, Apricots, Red peppers, Broccoli, Corn, Squash, Carrots, Peas, Green beans, Tomatoes**

Colorful foods **DO NOT** include: Skittles, Jelly Beans, M&Ms, and Fruit Loops!

## Fluids-Water vs Sports Drink

There are 2 reasons to drink fluids: (1) to stay hydrated, and (2) to provide the body with fuel.

**During Workout** - Regardless of age or length of workout, all swimmers need fluids during practice to stay hydrated. This is easily accomplished with a couple of sips from the water bottle every 15-20 minutes. As swimmers progress, workouts get longer and tougher. It's well established that exercise beyond 90 minutes benefits from a supplemental fuel source. The sports drink can provide it. But we still have hydration to think about. Drinks that are too strong, or "concentrated," can provide the fuel but also inhibit fluid absorption and often lead to cramping.

Years of research tells us that drinks that are 6-8% carbohydrate by weight provide the perfect balance. Enough carbohydrate to provide a fuel source during long exercise, but not so much that will inhibit fluid absorption. A couple of sips every 15-20 minutes keeps the body fueled, helps prevent unnecessary tissue breakdown, and maintains hydration. Today, only Gatorade and Powerade meet the 6-8% criteria. Most other drinks are too strong to be effective *during* workout.

**After Workout** – Water is an excellent choice to replenish fluids after practice. It's always wise to drink at least one cup. But after a *tough* workout, replenishing fuel stores is equally important. Competitive swimmers need a little over 1 gram of carbohydrate for every kilogram they weigh (lbs/2.2) each hour after workout. And they need it **within the first hour**. A power bar is great at this time!

Often, a sports drink that is easily digested and quickly absorbed, such as Gatorade or PowerAde can provide a convenient way to get some of this fuel within the first 20 minutes. Chocolate milk is an excellent source to help the body recover after practice..

**ABSOLUTELY NEVER DRINK ENERGY DRINKS!!!!**

## **\*\*Remember...**

1. Carbohydrate is the primary fuel source during tough workouts. Protein is used as a fuel source during exercise only when carbohydrate and fat are not present in sufficient quantities. This can happen during long/tough workouts when the body uses much of its stored carbohydrate, and it must find an additional source. If an additional carbohydrate source (ex. Gatorade, PowerAde) is not supplied, the body taps into *stored* protein, a.k.a. your muscles. This is why we drink carbohydrate-electrolyte solutions during workout...to **spare muscle protein**. And this is also why it is important to replace carbohydrate stores lost during a workout...so you start the next workout with a full tank of gas!

2. Following exercise, the body is very sensitive to the hormone *insulin*. Insulin is that hormone that rises every time blood sugar rises. In other words, every time a swimmer eats carbohydrate, which causes blood sugar to rise, insulin goes up. Well, its insulin's job to remove sugar from the bloodstream, and it does so by facilitating its storage as **glycogen**. Glycogen, the storage form for carbohydrate, is what the body taps into for fuel when exercise is very intense. This can happen quite a bit during a tough workout, which is why it's important to see that glycogen is replenished before the next practice.

**During the Day** – Staying hydrated during the day is just as critical as hydrating during and after workouts. Most swimmers can do this by incorporating a variety of fluids into their daily diet. Water, fruit juice, milk, soups, etc, etc. Water is always an excellent choice, but other drinks, including sports drinks (defined as 6-8% carbohydrate by weight) are okay too. Just remember that variety is the key to a healthy diet. If you use a sports drink during and after practice, it may be better to drink water and juice during the day to stay hydrated. Juices are often healthier than sports drinks in that their sugars are natural. Always keep in mind that juices and sports drinks contribute to total caloric intake.

## **SECTION L - EXTRAS**

### **Glossary of swimming terms**

- Age-Group Meet.* All USA registered swimmers, 18 years of age and under, who meet qualifying standards for a specific event(s), are eligible to participate in their age category. Age on the first day of competition shall govern the entire meet.
- Alternate Swimmer.* In a Prelim/Final meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalists are designated as alternates. The faster of the two being first alternate and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on a moment's notice.
- Bonus Heat.* The heat held during the finals session of a prelim/final meet that is slower than the swimmers participating in the finals or consolation heats.
- Check-In.* The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as "positive check-in." The swimmer must mark their name (or circle their name and/or event) on a list posted by the meet host.
- Circle Seeding.* Method of seeding swimmers when participating in a prelim/final event. The fastest 18-24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with fastest swimmers in the inside lanes.
- Clerk of Course.* An area at the meet where swimmers report before their event to be arranged into heats and lanes. Most often occurs for 8 & Unders, and distance events.
- Consolation Finals.* After the fastest 6 or 8 swimmers, the next 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on number of pool lanes) in a prelim/final meet who, after the prelim swim, qualify to return to the finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held.
- Deck Entries.* Accepting entries into swimming events on a first come basis at the meet.
- Deck Seeding.* A procedure of assigning swimmers to proper lanes and eats immediately before each event at the clerk of course on deck. (see "psyche sheet")
- Disqualified* A swimmer performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification (dq) is shown in the meet results.
- Finals.* Session of the meet where qualifying rounds (preliminaries) were held to determine the finalists. (6-24 depending on the meet). The finalists compete to determine the official order of finish.
- Format.* The order of events and type of swim meet being conducted.

<i>Free Relay.</i>	An event comprised of four swimmers, each swimming freestyle for a certain distance.
<i>Heats.</i>	A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers time swam, after all heats of the event are completed.
<i>Heat Sheet.</i>	A listing of all swimmers by event number, heat, and lane assignment in the meet. These are available during the meet.
<i>High Point.</i>	An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meets. All meets do not offer high point awards; check the pre-meet information. Most meets only designate high points in a certain classification (i.e. "A", "B", ).
<i>Individual Medley.</i>	An individual event offered to swimmers in which a swimmer swims a certain distance of each stroke. The order of strokes is: butterfly to backstroke to breaststroke to freestyle.
<i>Interval.</i>	A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice or meets.
<i>Jump.</i>	An illegal start done by the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th member of a relay. The swimmer on the block breaks contact with the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.
<i>Lap.</i>	One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.
<i>Lap Counter.</i>	The large numbered cards (or person turning cards) used during the freestyle events sixteen lengths and longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.
<i>Late Entries.</i>	Meet entries from a club or individual that are received by the meet host after the entry deadline. These entries are usually not accepted and are returned to sender.
<i>Length.</i>	The extent of the competitive course from end to end. See Lap.
<i>Long Course.</i>	The type of competitive pool which measures 50 meters. The standard size for summer meets, National Championships, and international meets.
<i>Marshal.</i>	The adult(s) (official) who monitors the pool deck at a swim meet.
<i>Medley Relay.</i>	An event comprised of four swimmers, each swimming a different stroke. The order of the swimmers/strokes is: backstroke to breaststroke to butterfly to freestyle.

<i>Niagara Swimming</i>	The name of the Local Swimming Committee (LSC) for which STAR Swimming is a member. Charged by United States Swimming to govern competitive swimming in the area.
<i>Non-conforming Time.</i>	A short course time submitted to qualify for a long course meet, or vice versa.
<i>NT.</i>	No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.
<i>Pace Clock.</i>	The large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups or swim practice.
<i>Positive Check In.</i>	The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck seeded or pre-seeded meet. The swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.
<i>Prelims.</i>	In certain meets, the qualifying rounds held to determine the finalists at night.
<i>Prelims/Finals.</i>	Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats (prelims) are usually held in the morning or early afternoon session. The fastest 6 or 8 (Championship Heat) swimmers, and the next fastest 6 to 8 swimmers (Consolation Heat), and the third fastest 6 to 8 swimmers (Bonus Heat) return in the evening to compete in the Finals. A swimmer who has qualified in the Bonus or Consolation Finals may not place in the Championship Finals even if their finals time would place them so. The converse also applies.
<i>Proof of Time.</i>	A requirement at some meets to make certain that all swimmers have met the time standards for that meet. Niagara Swimming imposes a \$25 penalty to swimmers for each event, which they do not make the qualifying time, and cannot show "proof" of having achieved that time.
<i>Psych Sheet.</i>	A ranking, by seeding times of all swimmers entered in each race of a meet, sometimes used at meets in place of heat sheets.
<i>Qualifying Time.</i>	Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of a swimmer.
<i>Ready Room.</i>	A room pool side for the swimmers to relax before they compete in finals.
<i>Referee.</i>	The USA official who has authority over all other officials at the meet. They make all final decisions and see to efficient running of the meet.
<i>Registered</i>	Enrolled and paid as a member of USA Swimming and the LSC.
<i>Seed Times.</i>	The time a swimmer uses to enter a meet. This time determines one's position and lane in that particular event.

<i>Short Course.</i>	The type of pools which measures 25 yards or 25 meters. Meets of this type are normally swum during the school season.
<i>Splits.</i>	A per lap time that coaches often record for teaching the concept of pacing.
<i>Stand-Up.</i>	The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.
<i>Starter.</i>	USA official at a meet responsible for starting each heat and calling the next to the block.
<i>Step-Down.</i>	The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.
<i>Stroke Judge.</i>	The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmer race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified.
<i>Swim-Off.</i>	In prelims/finals type competition, a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise ties stand.
<i>Taper.</i>	A change in the training routine to start preparing the swimmers for a "big" meet.
<i>Time Standards.</i>	Certain qualifying times which have been set up by USA Swimming or Niagara Swimming for all events in all levels of meets to insure that all competitors are of reasonable the same ability in their respective events and meets.
<i>Timed Finals.</i>	Competition in which only heats are swum and final placing is determined by times achieved in those heats.
<i>Top 10.</i>	A list of times compiled by the Niagara LSC or USA Swimming that recognizes the top swimmers in each age group, stroke, and distance.
<i>Unattached.</i>	An athlete member who competes, but does not represent a club or team (abbreviation, UN). When transferring from clubs, 120 days must go by from that swimmers last competition as a member of their former club before they may swim as a member of their new club.
<i>Touch Pad.</i>	The part of the electric timing system that rest in the water at the end of each lane. Swimmer's times are recorded when the pad is touched.
<i>Unofficial Time.</i>	The time displayed on a read out board or read over the intercom by the announcer immediately after the race. After the time has been checked, it becomes the official time.

*USA Number.*

The personal registration number of each athlete member in USA Swimming..

*Warm-Down.*

The loosening up of a swimmer after they have competed in a race or practice.

*Warm-Up.*

The practice and loosening session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum or is done every day in practice.

## The 7 Traits of Successful Clubs

USA Swimming hosts a National Coaches Summit to bring together the top National level coaches and discuss issues looming in the future of swimmers at the National and Olympic levels. We want to do the same for age group coaches. The first thing we did was compile a list of clubs in USA Swimming that have a history of taking kids from the day they walk in the door to the day they become National swimmers.

We were from all different parts of the country, from all different economic groups. At the start of the Summit, each coach had to get up and give a little talk about “What makes my team special.” In the process of telling what was special about each of our programs, we also discovered that everyone was saying the same things in different ways. We finally narrowed down seven traits that all of these really excellent age group programs possess.



The seven traits are listed below in no particular order. I can tell you from personal experience and from the hard road that coaches travel to learn about this sport that there may be more traits, but there are no clubs in the country that have less.

1. **Consistent coach leadership.** I have often used the analogy of the limousine. The limousine is the club, the passengers are the board and membership, and the chauffeur is the coach. The goal is to get the limousine to a destination. The passengers set that destination and then acquire a chauffeur to get them there. The passengers then go about their own business of preparing for the next duties when the destination is reached. The chauffeur takes care of the immediate task at hand of getting the limo to its destination on time, safely, and without losing too many passengers. Conflict happens when the chauffeur starts getting side tracked because he doesn't want to go to the destination he was hired to go to. Or when the passengers all start redefining the route to the destination even though the chauffeur knows the best way. Such it is with swim teams. The limo that gets to the most destinations is the one that has hired the correct chauffeur, doesn't have to stop often to change drivers, and doesn't mandate changes in routes very often.
2. **Consistent Head Age Group Coaches.** There's not a lot of flip-flopping around. The direction of the age group program is being set consistently by one coach who passes well prepared swimmers on to a head coach who has a consistent direction for the entire Program.
3. **System Wide Goals.** All the teams had system wide goals. Goals were not something just being set up for the senior kids. Goals went down as far as the youngest kids. There were yearly, seasonal, monthly, even daily goals present in one form or another.
4. **Common Teaching Language.** There's a common teaching language that is introduced to the swimmers in the age group (the entry level group), and that language is then expanded on and enriched on all the way up to the senior Program.
5. **Supportive Parent and Administrative Layer.** There is a supportive and administrative layer. This administrative layer, in successful clubs, is directed at the long term success of the program.
6. **Stable Pool Situation.** The teams all had a permanent home, either owned or leased. They all had some sort of back up pool plan as well.
7. **Maintain a Standard of Excellence.** Each one of these groups wants to be the best that they can be from novice to national. They are not interested in being one of the gang.