

# Swim Torrance

## Members Handbook 2022-2023



## COMPETITIVE SWIMMING 101

### **Governing Organizations**

USA Swimming is the national governing body for the sport of swimming. All participants on the Swim Torrance year-round competitive team and in the auxiliary programs must be members of this organization. Membership, which is renewed in the fall of each year, provides limited, co-benefit accident and liability insurance for swimmers participating in supervised workouts and swim meets. Visit [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org) for more information including rules, national motivational time standards, and many other resources for parents and swimmers. As registered members of USA Swimming, our coaching staff holds many certifications including Athlete Protection Training, Safety Training for Swim Coaches, and more.

Southern California Swimming (SCS) is a member of USA Swimming and is the Local Swim Committee (LSC) that governs our geographic area. Its responsibilities include processing memberships, scheduling competitions, training/certification of officials, athlete recognition programs, and more. Visit <http://www.socalswim.org/> for more information.

### **Geographic Structure**

USA Swimming divides the country into four zones: Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern. Swim Torrance, as part of SCS competes in the Western Zone. Within SCS, since our LSC is so large, our team is part of the Pacific Committee, which is 1 of 6 geo-committees.

### **Seasonal Structure (Short vs. Long Course)**

Swimming is a year-round sport that is divided into two seasons, with championship-level meets held at the end of each season.

The short course season lasts from the end of August through March. All practices and meets are typically conducted in 25-yard pools. The United States is the only country that competes in 25-yard pools. High school and collegiate competition are conducted in the 25-yard format and is considered a winter sport.

The long course season lasts from March through early August. Most swim meets are conducted in 50-meter pools. Our practices are held in a combination of 25-yard and 50-meter pools. All international competition takes place in either 25-meter or 50-meter pools. The Olympics are always held in a 50-meter pool.

### **Time Standards**

SCS follows the National Motivational Time Standards set forth by USA Swimming. The purpose is to identify a national average for each gender and age group. Those time standards can be found [here](#). Be sure to look at either the Long Course Meter standards or Short Course Yards standards. These time standards also help determine some meets/events your swimmer may participate in.

Unless a swimmer has previously competed in a USA Swimming meet, s/he will be entered with NT (No Time) in the event. If the swimmer has competed in a USA Swimming meet with

another team, please turn in his/her best times to one of the Swim Torrance coaches so the times can be entered in our database.

## **GUARDIAN ROLE AT SWIM TORRANCE**

### **Guardian Support for Your Athlete**

Your role is to provide love, recognition, and enthusiasm while making sure your swimmer regularly attends practices and meets. Praise their effort, and reinforce that swimming should be fun.

Avoid comparing the skill, courage, determination, attitude, performance, or improvement of your child(ren) to other swimmers. Kids mature physiologically and psychologically at different ages; the weakest swimmer in a practice group this year could be leading practices in the future. Most athletes will go through challenging phases that require patience and perseverance. Trust your coaches and support your swimmer with a positive attitude and lots of encouragement.

Guardians are not allowed on the pool deck during practices. There are designated viewing areas at our training facilities.

Please do not interrupt the coaches during practice times. If you need to communicate with a coach, emails, phone calls or text messages are generally the best methods. Keep in mind their office hours when communicating.

### **Guardian Support for the Team**

Be a G.R.E.A.T. Swim Torrance guardian!

**G - Get Involved.** Volunteer to do more than just be a timer at meets. If you're not sure what you might want to do, go to our website and read the role descriptions or contact a board member, and they'll get you headed in the right direction!

**R - Read the Emails.** Emails will come from coaches, the treasurer/billing director, Board Members, the webmaster, and others. They wouldn't email if it wasn't important.

**E - Educate Yourself.** Ask questions. Make friends with other guardians. Use online resources: Swim Torrance's website: <http://www.swimtorrance.com>  
Southern California Swimming: <http://www.socalswim.org/>  
USA Swimming: <http://usaswimming.org/>

**A - Attend meetings and ask questions.** Board meetings, parent meetings, volunteer committee meetings, guardian gatherings, swimmer gatherings, etc.

**T - Think fun and be positive!** Your child will enjoy the sport so much more if it is fun! Yes, they will lose their goggles three times in the first two months, and yes, there will be moments when they are frustrated or tired, but remember they're kids. When you have fun, they do too.

Joining an organization can be awesome, but it can be a bit overwhelming too! Do you have questions about Swim Torrance or are you new to the area and would like to talk with a Swim Torrance veteran? Please don't hesitate to reach out by emailing our Board of Directors. If we don't have the answer, we'll send you in the right direction.

### **Meet Squad & Volunteering**

Swim Torrance hosts and participates in a number of competitions throughout the year to provide our athletes' opportunities to hone their skills. Meet Squad is Swim Torrance's name for all of the volunteer work that goes into making these events successful. Every Swim Torrance family should pitch in, but unfortunately, not everyone does. Required volunteer hour minimums help spread the workload and are detailed on the Volunteer tab on our Team Unify page. Also remember that volunteering shows your athlete that you care about their sport.

There are lots of other ways to support the team besides working at team-hosted meets. Volunteers are always needed for a variety of functions including securing sponsorships, team events, serving on a committee, and more. If you're interested in helping or have a business that might be able to provide services or sponsorship, please send an email to one or all of our Board of Directors to let us know.

### **Communication**

Communication is the key to a successful experience in the Swim Torrance program. You will receive weekly emails from your coaches that are your primary source of information. Please read them carefully. To stay fully informed and engaged, we encourage you to check our website frequently at [SwimTorrance.com](http://SwimTorrance.com) and interact with us on social media. Swim Torrance has an active presence on TikTok (@SwimTorrance), Instagram (@SwimTorranceSoCal) and Facebook. We also have a Team Feed on our website/On Deck app.

When you have a specific question or concern regarding your swimmer, directly contact to your swimmer's lead coach. Most questions are answered quickly at this level.

If you need additional help, please consult the respective Division Lead, then the Head Coach. If you feel that your question has not been answered satisfactorily, please consult the Board of Directors. Board roles and email addresses are available on Team Unify.

## **SWIM TORRANCE GROUP PLACEMENT PHILOSOPHY**

Swim Torrance coaches work toward a common goal of continuity and developmental progression. Each season, swimmers are evaluated for the best placement within our team structure, whether that is already within the program or at tryouts.

Each swimmer may be assigned to a different group as they rise in academic grade level and/or evolve. Swimmers may also move to a different level within their division (i.e. from Shark 2 to Shark 1) or transition to another division (i.e. Shark 1 to Age Group 2), which is generally driven by grade level in school.

Group placement and transitions are based on many factors, including a fair bit of coaching instinct. Swim Torrance coaches are guided by a team-wide philosophy that drives our decisions, and we hope that communicating these ideas will allow for a better understanding of group placement decision-making.

Some of the most important factors driving group placement is a swimmer's commitment (practice attendance, meet participation, prioritization of the sport), maturity (chronological age, physiological age, and emotional development), training ability and technique. Racing times are not a primary factor, although they are taken into consideration because times translate to meet qualification and training needs. Finding the appropriate group for each swimmer is the goal, and our top priority is to place every swimmer in a group that will allow them to develop and shine while continuing to progress at Swim Torrance. The coaches want swimmers to focus on the process of what they are doing every day in practice and to be immersed in an environment that will help them succeed in all areas of their swimming.

## **PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS**

### **Practice Schedules**

Seasonal [practice schedules](#) are available on Team Unify under the Team Resources tab. Coaches will send weekly emails to families in each practice group, which will detail any updates or changes. If you have questions, please contact your athlete's lead coach.

### **Practice Behavior**

Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at practices and during competition. Teamwork is an important part of the T.O.R.C.H. values. Swimmers are expected to follow the directions of the coaching staff, be respectful at all times, and may only leave practice with the coach's permission. Each coach or practice group will have its own procedures and practice etiquette that athletes will be expected to follow.

Abusive language, lying, stealing, and vandalism will not be tolerated.

### **Auxiliary Programs**

Splash Club Lessons: The focus of our lessons program is to provide an intro to swimming for the surrounding community of children ages 5-12. Kids will learn skill sets of swimming, like water comfort and water safety. They will also develop their four strokes in a safe and positive pool environment with our certified instructors. This program has multiple sessions throughout the year and guardians will receive feedback weekly about their child(ren).

Junior Guard (JG) Prep: This is not a learn-to-swim program. This program is designed by a Junior Guard instructor and will prepare participants for the Los Angeles County JG pool swim test, as well as teach the skills needed on the beach. Swimmers will be conditioned to complete a 100-yard Freestyle (4 lengths) through consistent repetition and creative kick/drill sets. During the course, we will be tracking each athlete's progress with timed swims while continuing to give feedback.

Splash Club Endurance: This program is a step above our lessons program, as it is for swimmers who are already capable of all four racing strokes, but need more technique to become race-legal. Swimmers are also working toward building endurance so they can begin to complete sets in a practice-like environment. This group is for swimmers who are 6-14 years-old, and is led by certified instructors. There are multiple sessions throughout the year and guardians will receive feedback at the end of each of their sessions. It is possible for swimmers in this group to be invited to participate in mock meets throughout the year.

#### Level 1-3:

Level 1 is for swimmers in 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> grade who already know how to swim all four racing strokes and need some extra instruction and conditioning. Swimmers will receive instruction that will prepare them for competitive swimming. There will be at least one mock-meet per season to showcase improvements. Guardians and swimmers will receive a mid-season evaluation regarding their progress.

Level 2 is for swimmers in 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade who already know how to swim all four racing strokes legally. This group provides space and time for swimmers to continue building their skills and/or continue participating in the sport of swimming while providing a more flexible schedule to accommodate families' activities scheduled outside of our program. Swimmers are able to participate in scheduled meets as designated on Team Unify. Guardians and swimmers will receive a mid-season evaluation regarding their progress.

Level 3 is for kids in high school who already know how to swim and would like some extra instruction and conditioning. This group provides space and time for swimmers to continue building their skills and/or continue participating in the sport of swimming while providing a more flexible schedule to accommodate families' activities scheduled outside of our program. Swimmers are able to participate in scheduled meets as designated on Team Unify. Guardians and swimmers are encouraged to speak with the lead coach regarding their progress throughout the season.

#### **Competitive Team**

In all competitive team groups, athletes have practice and meet attendance requirements. If swimmers cannot maintain these standards, they may be removed from the group. Auxiliary program groups have more flexible schedules that may better accommodate families' personal schedules or needs.

#### Shark 1 & 2: FUNdamentals

The Shark division's focus is to establish a strong foundation of skills and techniques in a fun environment that encourages continued participation in the sport. Athletes and parents are introduced to competitive meets with a family-friendly atmosphere. Swimmers may have opportunities to qualify for local or regional/JO level competitions.

#### Age Group 1 & 2: Learn to practice

In the Age Group division, Swim Torrance athletes will build on the fundamental skills and techniques taught in the Shark Division. They will progress to an advanced level of learning that

requires implementing specific skills in practice sets. Establishing good habits in a practice setting translates to better performances at meets, as well as long term development in the sport of swimming. Age Group Division athletes will be led towards IMX events (the IMX program established by USA Swimming to promote and reward versatility in age group swimming) as they compete at the local level, regional/JO level, and possibly sectional level.

#### PreSenior 1 & 2: Practice to compete

In the PreSenior groups, Swim Torrance athletes' focus broadens substantially. Swimmers learn about the effect their decisions and behavior outside of the pool has on their performance in the pool. Athletes continue to build on good practice habits with progressive skills, drills, and a variety of techniques, working to challenge themselves and prepare for the senior level. PreSenior swimmers compete at the local, state, regional, and possibly national level. Competing at the highest level meet they are qualified for starts to become a priority to give them a glimpse of their future swimming experiences.

#### Senior 2: Compete to excel

These athletes continue to learn and be taught progressively, with the emphasis being placed on taking ownership of their individual goals and the path to achievement. Swimmers will be introduced to collegiate opportunities, mentored through goal-setting and encouraged to be positive role models for the younger swimmers. Practice attendance is 6/7 per week, and attendance to all meets is required unless otherwise indicated by Senior Lead Coach.

#### Senior 1: Highest level of commitment

These athletes are dedicated to Swim Torrance, invested in the process, and respectful of the outcome. This group is designed for the most dedicated and highest performing athletes in the Senior Division. The training program, season plan, and meet schedule are designed for athletes to compete and perform their best at national competitions. Athlete attendance to all practices and meets is required.

## **COMPETING FOR SWIM TORRANCE**

### **Swim Torrance's Competition Philosophy**

In preparing for your swimmer's meets, the following are some basic fundamentals of competition that Swim Torrance coaches stress.

1. Each swimmer should compete with him or herself. It is more beneficial to improve one's technique and/or time than to win a ribbon or medal.
2. In addition to earning best times, the coaches praise swimmers for working on technique and/or racing strategies. Swimmers may not improve their time when trying something new (i.e. flip turns, underwater dolphin kicks, etc.), but if a swimmer continues the skill or technique, the time will improve more in the long run.
3. Swimmers are taught to set realistic goals, and as they get older, they are taught to relate performance in practice to their goal times.

4. The coaching staff encourages swimmers to compete in every event they are eligible for. This helps to promote versatility since swimmers are continuously switching best events as they grow, mature, and change body shapes and sizes.

5. Sportsmanship is a MUST at Swim Torrance. We expect all swimmers, parents, and coaches to respect the officials, competitors, and the facilities we use. We also want swimmers to encourage and support their teammates.

6. SUCCESS = Improving one's own, best self.

### **Swim Meet Procedures**

1. Arrive at the pool 30 minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time, and locate the Swim Torrance team area where all team members sit. The meet warm-up time will be listed in the Meet Update provided by Coach Brian, as well as within the event listing on Team Unify.

2. Warm-ups are always conducted by the Swim Torrance coaching staff. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Prior to warm-up, swimmers must check-in for their events if check-in is required. Check-in is run by the meet host team in a designated area.

3. All Swim Torrance swimmers are required to wear the Swim Torrance team suit and red team cap during both warm-ups and actual competition. Swimmers also must wear the correct t-shirts designated per day of meets and team outerwear like parkas, hoodies, and jackets. This not only promotes team unity and pride, but also is about representing the program together.

4. Each swimmer is responsible for knowing which events s/he is swimming and for being on time to swim his/her event. It is customary to write event numbers, heat and lane assignments on a swimmer's hand, arm, or leg with a permanent marker. You can get that information by viewing a heat sheet after the admin has posted it.

5. The swimmer should check-in with a coach before each race to discuss strategy and get technical reminders. Coaches can't watch swimmers when they don't know their heat and lane, so swimmers also need to check-in to let the coaches know when and where they will be racing.

6. At the conclusion of each race, swimmers should warm down first, if possible, and then see their coach. The coach discusses the race with each swimmer individually and gives constructive feedback concerning splits, stroke technique, and race strategy.

7. According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed in the immediate competition venue unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet should be referred to the Swim Torrance coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

8. In between races, swimmers are asked to rest and keep their muscles warm. All energy should be stored up and used in competition. Stay hydrated and eat light, nutritious snacks as needed.



9. It is very important that parents and/or swimmers check with the coaching staff prior to leaving the swim meet, making certain that their swimmer has not been placed on a relay.

### **What to Bring to Meets**

1. Black team swimsuit
2. Two red team swim caps
3. Two pairs of goggles
4. Swim Torrance team apparel
5. Two towels (minimum)
6. Quiet games, books, or music (with headphones)
7. Food—nutritious snacks
8. Water bottle
9. In the warmer months, sunscreen/sunblock, and hat for protection from the sun
10. In the colder months, a parka, blanket, beanie, and gloves

Be sure to put your swimmer's name on all belongings and equipment. Please do not hesitate to ask any veteran parent on the team for help or for information.

### **Competition Apparel**

Swimmers are expected to wear the assigned Swim Torrance t-shirt for each session of a swim meet. All other Swim Torrance apparel is optional but encouraged.

### Typical Swim Torrance T-Shirt Schedule for Meets\*

Thursday – White Meet Shirt

Friday – Red Meet Shirt

Saturday – Registration Shirt

Sunday – Black Meet Shirt

\*The order could change, so please see the Meet Info and Meet Update before the meet.

### **Competition Suit Policy**

All Swim Torrance swimmers are required to wear the black Arena Swim Torrance team suit and Red Swim Torrance cap during meets attended by Swim Torrance. Please refer to the Swim Torrance Competition Suit Policy in the **Team Philosophies** section of Team Unify for more details.

The only exception is if a swimmer is qualified for Sectionals or a higher-level meet. They are allowed to wear the white team cap they have earned. Sectional swimmers should also be wearing the black team suit during regular in-season meets and during warm-up at championship-level meets before changing into their tech suit.

### **Swim Torrance Policies**

All Swim Torrance members must adhere to the following policies and waivers, available at our Team Unify site in the **By-laws and Policies** section. Note that you must be logged in to your account to access these documents:

- Swim Torrance Code of Conduct and Travel Policies
- Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy
- Swim Torrance Safe Sport Policy and Bullying Action Plan
- Swim Torrance Swimwear Policy
- Swim Torrance Medical Waiver

There are various more policies, codes, and waivers to adhere to on the Safe Sport page of our website. Violations of team policies posted on Team Unify may result in having a disciplinary record on file, suspension, or termination of membership at Swim Torrance. These policies and releases have been created to ensure the safety of Swim Torrance members and staff and promote the betterment of Swim Torrance as an organization.

