



# **Parent/Swimmer Handbook**

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# **Black Hill Gold Swimming**

## **Introduction:**

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to explain to new members just what Black Hills Gold Swimming is all about and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers year after year. It should be read by all families so that they become familiar with important facts and rules of the club. The handbook is not an all inclusive guide to swimming for the Black Hills Gold Team. If you cannot find what you are looking for please ask a board member or a coach.

## **Black Hills Gold Mission Statement**

The Black Hills Gold Swim team provides swimmers of all ages, through training and guidance in a safe and supportive environment, the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to become world-class citizens and world class athletes.

## **Coaches Philosophy**

Black Hills Gold Swimming is in existence to aid in the health, welfare and happiness of its young people. We believe that swimming is one of the very best ways to develop a healthy body and mind. Positive reinforcement, along with individual goal setting is used to develop a love of the sport, as well as to build confidence and strong self-esteem in our swimmers. Our interest is in building lifetime swimmers, with a focus on competitive swimming. We aim to maintain a program with enough flexibility to allow swimmers the opportunity to experience success in many areas of their lives, and we support the activities and desires of our swimmers to be contributing members of their schools and community. We believe this allows for both competitive success and mental and physical strength.

## **Coaches' Goals**

- To provide a positive experience for swimmers of all abilities.
- To provide access to a healthy lifestyle that can be followed for the swimmers lifetime.
- To provide positive instruction and improvement of all strokes.
- To provide an opportunity to see and work towards accomplishing short and long term goals.
- To provide every swimmer with competitive experience at some level.

## **Why Black Hills Gold Swim Team?**

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes, including self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to deal with defeat, while becoming healthy and physically fit. Swimmers learn about focusing and goal-setting. Swimming shows that persistence pays off - hard work = improvement in skill and speed. Swimming, maybe more than other sports has a great sense of fairness. One of the best aspects of swimming is that it's nearly impossible to cheat. It's also a team sport made up of individual swims, so while there is a large support group each swimmer is responsible for their own success. When competing there can't be any hogging of the ball or "showboating." The clock tells us the winner, and then you have to get out of the pool immediately for the next heat of swimmers. There is not much time to bask in your own glory because it's time to cheer for your team mate. Being on a team helps children to build character, self control and courage; team building provides creative outlets and fun. When at practice or a meet it is easy to see that the swimmers on this team really care about each other, there is a strong sense of camaraderie - they support each other. Not only that, but whether they are winning or losing they demonstrate great sportsmanship to their competitors from other teams. Their accomplishment and friendships contribute to a stronger self image.

Swimming is about much more than just competing. It is a lifelong sport (participants in masters swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's), a vital skill for so many recreational sports and its great exercise. Even if competing is not a goal of the swimmers, swimming is an excellent cross training sport. It is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth because it uses all the body's major muscle groups, enhances flexibility by exercising all of the major joints through a full range of motion, and requires combinations of complex movement of all

parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace and fluidity of movement. It is perhaps the most injury-free off all children's sports.

Swimming is for everyone! Swimming is a good fitness choice for just about everyone, especially those who have physical limitations or who find other forms of exercise painful. It is a good, whole-body exercise that is low impact for people with arthritis, musculoskeletal, or weight limitations.

Many athletes use water to rehabilitate after injury or to cross-train. People with arthritis or other disabilities use water to improve fitness and range of motion and to relieve pain and stiffness.

Swimming is also desirable for people with exercise-induced asthma. Research has shown that swimming has been proven to be an effective non-pharmacological intervention for asthma symptoms in children and adolescents. Unlike other sports, swimming is unlikely to provoke asthma attacks. In addition, swimming promotes normal physical and psychological development, such as increasing lung volume, developing good breathing techniques and improving general fitness.

### **Eligibility**

Children between the ages of 5 and 18 who can successfully get themselves from one side of the pool to the other are welcome to join the swim team. Joining the swim team is different than taking swimming lessons and those who join are expected to have some swimming skills. It is the coach's discretion to determine if potential swimmers have the necessary skills to be eligible to join the team. Swimmers who do not quite meet the above criteria, may be referred to lessons in order to ready them for next year's season. Swimmers may join during the first month of each season.

### **Swim Season**

The swim year is divided into two seasons. The winter or "short course" season runs from late September – February. Competition is held in a 25-yard pool. The summer or "long course" season runs from early May – July. Meets are generally held in a 50 meter (Olympic size) pool. Summer meets are often held outdoors.

### **Practice Groups**

Learn to swim: Swim Lessons are our "pre-swim team" level. They are intended for children 3-9 years of age, with limited or no swimming experience. Lessons are 45 minutes in length and are provided three times each week for 2 weeks. A child need not be able to swim to enter this group but should be comfortable in the water and in a group setting without a parent. Beginning lessons will focus on floating, breathing, bobbing, front and back float, and body awareness in the water while those ready to advance will also learn flutter kick, breaststroke kick, freestyle, elementary and competition backstroke in addition to streamline body position and the confidence and competency to swim independently for the length of the pool. Lessons are scheduled by Level 1,2,3,or 4. The instructor to student ratio is never more than 4:1. Swimmers will need a tight-fitting suit, swim cap (or long hair secured away from face), and goggles to participate.

Golden Nuggets: This is our beginner group where swimmers learn to work on all their strokes but mainly focus on free and backstroke. Nuggets are typically between the ages of 4 and 8. This group does not focus on the training aspects of swimming, but instead focuses on good swimming stroke development, along with swimming for enjoyment. Building endurance is important for these swimmers. Practices will involve a lot of kicking sets and there will be many days when they are just encouraged to swim without the coaches working on their stroke. The reason for this is that until they are physically strong enough to swim they cannot make the necessary changes to their strokes and no amount of instruction will benefit them, they just simply must gain enough strength to propel

through the water. Although swimmers in this group are encouraged to compete (when a coach notes they are ready), it is not a necessity. Recommendation: 2-3 practices a week

Age Group 1 : This squad is for swimmers with some experience in the water between the ages of 6-12. This group focuses on swimming for the enjoyment of sport, competition, and recreation. Swimmers in this group focus on their basic skills while starting to work on the training aspects of swimming and how to execute all four strokes correctly and legally. Swimmers will become familiar with swimming equipment, learn swimming terms, learn all 4 swimming strokes, turns, racing starts, and basic clock management. Swimmers are encouraged to begin competing in our home meets (2 per season). Recommendation: 2-4 times a week.

Age Group 2: The Age Group II squad is for swimmers that have a few seasons of swimming under their belt and are ages 9-12, however older swimmers may remain in this group if their main focus is cross training or simply staying in shape. This group knows all of their starts, strokes and turns and will learn to start testing their limits during practice while still focusing on good swimming skills including starts, turns, and drills. Clock management, stroke technique, aerobic conditioning, and pacing during longer swim set and races, in addition to appropriate goal setting is expected. Swimmers in this training squad are encouraged to attend practice on a more regular basis and begin competing at more meets per season (3-4) plus their highest qualified championship meet, in addition to being available for any relays in an attended meet. Recommendation: 3-4 times a week.

Sr. Prep: Senior Prep is for ages 11 –15 who are ready to advance their training or older swimmers just not yet ready to commit to the Sr. group. This group will continue to fine tune stroke technique, turns and starts as well as develop an understanding of basic training principles and racing strategies. Swimmers will begin learning the technical aspects of swimming. This groups works on developing endurance and stroke techniques in addition to goal setting and practice/meet performance evaluation. Swimmers must have an attitude that demonstrates a commitment level necessary to attain higher levels of training. Regular competition is expected (4 + meets a year), plus their highest qualified championship meet, in addition to being available for any relays in an attended meet. Recommendation: 4-5 times a week, working with both age group 2 and sr. swimmers.

Sr. Swimmers: Swimmers in this squad are ages 13-19 and learn to refine their skills and endurance; however, training becomes a large emphasis within this group. Stroke mechanics, challenging aerobic & anaerobic training sets, goal setting, and race strategy emphasized. Swimmers in this group will test the limits of their bodies with sets that focus on a variety of threshold training techniques (both aerobic and anaerobic), sprint training, and meet preparation. Swimmers in this group are also expected to learn how to self-manage and self-regulate during a workout and be self-motivated to complete the workout even without a coach hovering over them. Goal setting and practice/meet evaluation plays a key role in the swimmers advancement. Swimmers are expected to attend 80% of practices (Nov – Feb), and complete all practice requirements including dryland and written journals. They must attend 4 or more meets per season, (and be available for any relays in an attended meet), plus their highest qualified state championship meet while striving towards zones, sectionals and other higher level meets. In addition to swimming, these swimmers are expected to be role models for the rest of the team with a positive attitude, strong work ethic, structured time management, and encouragement and support of the team both in the pool, at school, and in the community. Those swimmers who desire to letter must meet Sr. Swimmers requirements, be in 7th – 12th grade and maintain a GPA of 3.0.

### **An explanation on Training Groups:**

There are several factors to consider when determining a swimmers training level. The first to look at is the level of commitment of the swimmer. Do they make the recommended weekly attendance? When they are at practice do they work hard on a consistent basis? Do they try to excel in the group they are in or are they simply going through the motions? Can they handle all the work at their current training level? Do they need more work on their stroke technique? When the practices get to be challenging are they sitting out, fixing their goggles or going to the restroom to get out of working hard? Everyone's 100% is different. On our team we do not necessarily focus on specific swim times, what we

care about is effort and attitude. Faster swimmers are not given priority over slower swimmers. We are a performance AND developmental driven team, with equal emphasis given to both. Workouts are designed to be challenging, but at no time will swimmers be expected to swim a set that is above their skill and speed level. Adaptations of workouts will be made as necessary. Most sets in a workout are often modified for certain strokes and individuals. Completing an entire set as written is the goal for the fastest swimmers probably swimming freestyle. Target times are adjusted for all swimmers whose best times are not as fast, or for those swimming a choice stroke. But, there is a big difference in completing a modified workout and not trying to complete a full workout. If a swimmer is trying their hardest and improving from their best times, that is all we can ask. Swimmers should be placed in the appropriate training groups based on what they can handle not where their friends are. Sometimes when swimmers are in groups different than their friends they become much more focused on working hard, developing their skills, and becoming great leaders. Within each practice group there are also lane assignments. Lane assignments may change frequently depending on the focus of the practice and the swimmers in attendance.

Moving up a group does not always benefit a swimmer if they are not physically or mentally ready, or if they do not have the desire to increase their training. Parents desire for their child to move to another group is not always in the best interest of the swimmer. We would rather have a swimmer stay where they are continuing to improve their strokes and times than to push them into training where they are frustrated and miserable. Generally, swimmers can tell us when they are about ready for a move by thinking about how they practice. It may not seem like it at the time but a swimmer that stays in the lower group until THEY are ready to move benefit more than those being pushed by coaches or parents...but, in other cases some swimmers just need a gently push and encouragement. It really is very individual. There is no undesired group on our team, coaches are not disappointed or using groups as a punishment or to shame the swimmers. We are a small team and for the most part all practice together. The definitions are simply a way stay organized, and for the swimmers, parents and coaches to be on the same page as to what the expectations and goals are for each swimmer. Our goal is to have our swimmers loving the sport for a lifetime so they should be placed in the group where they feel comfortable and continue to enjoy practices. Ages are a guideline, but every child is an individual with different long term goals for the sport and should advance as they are physically, emotionally, and mentally ready. We do expect a lot from our top training groups. Swimmers need to be committed, mentally tough, have competitive maturity, independent, self-reliant, and be coachable.

If there are any questions about these groups, or swimmers or parents are disappointed in their placement coaches are always available for an explanation and conversation.

### **Practice Times**

Practices are generally held in the afternoon during the school year and in the morning during the summer season. A preview of the season calendar including meets is available on our website [www.bhgoldswimming.com](http://www.bhgoldswimming.com). Please check the website's calendar the last week of each month for the following months final schedule, as changes may occur as the season progresses.

### **Lateness To Practice**

Swimmers who constantly arrive on deck 10-15 minutes late, not only miss the necessary warm up, but also disrupts the practice. Coaches understand that periodic lateness, due to traffic problems, school schedules, etc., is going to happen. We also understand that school commitments may result in tardiness to swim practice. However, tardiness caused by swimmers fooling around in the locker rooms, taking unnecessary time getting suited-up, and not getting on deck in a timely manner is a major problem and shows disrespect to the coaches and other swimmers. To help the coaches understand the appropriate cause for tardiness, we ask parents to write a short note to, or speak directly to, the coach stating that the tardiness was unavoidable. Without a note, coaches will have to assume that the tardiness is the swimmer's fault and that the parents are unaware of the situation. Those who are continually late may not be allowed to swim. Parents will be notified if such a problem persists.

## **Dryland**

When you think of swim training, most people assume that all of the training sessions occur in the water. However, to be a good swimmer, you must possess technical skill, muscular balance, core strength and flexibility. Therefore, in addition to training in the water, swimmers should participate in non-swimming workouts as a way to stay competitive.

The Black Hills Gold Swim Team incorporates non-swimming exercises into many of our swimming sets. "Wet land" activities are done on the pool deck and may include push-ups, sit-ups, abdominal work, lunges, wall-sits, stretching, etc. All levels of swimmers will participate in these activities. In addition, older swimmers may swim with water bricks, pull buckets, or swim with clothing on to provide resistance in the water.

There are several reasons these activities are important to swimming. For example, muscles are constantly being challenged with new activities- if the same exercises are done over and over, swimming lap after lap for example, then eventually muscles will just get used to the routine and will not see any improvements. Developing the right muscle tone is one of the best competitive advantages. The purpose of these activities are to develop overall fitness, develop coordination (motor skills) and flexibility. Activities are geared toward explosiveness for more power in the water as well as overall strength building to maximize a swimmer's speed. These skills carry directly over into swimming skills in addition to serving swimmers well in terms of overall health long after they have finished swimming.

Another reason these activities are included is to make our training sessions more interesting. There are only so many laps of the swimming pool that swimmers can do before they get bored. If they are doing the same thing over and over they will more than likely not be motivated for the entire session. In this case, we find that we are losing our competitive edge instead of improving it.

The final reason non-swimming activities are incorporated into workouts is to offer the swimmers some time to interact with one another. Swimming is very much a solitary sport. Even though there may be 6 swimmers in the same lane there is often not much interaction between them during swim sets. Setting up workouts with alternate exercises between sets gives swimmers a chance to work together and grow as a team.

## **Attendance**

In the past there have been issues of swimmers not coming to practice when their parents assumed they were there. The coaches have no way of knowing, until swimmers come out of the locker room, who was dropped off at the Young Center for practice. Attendance is taken each day and will be posted on TeamUnify on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to check the attendance of their swimmer. Black Hills Gold Swimming, and it's coaches are not responsible for your athletes attendance, our job is to provide a great swim program, not track kids down.

## **Misc. Practice Notes**

The swim program is a group learning activity. As with any group learning activity some individuals may feel the need for outside help from time to time. This should always be an acceptable practice. However, it is necessary to be aware that it may cause confusion for the swimmer with two or more different messages/instruction being given. If outside help is being provided it should be at the knowledge of the coach so that the swimmer, parent and coach can all evaluate it for success.

If a swimmer should have any problems at practice - whether it be feeling sick, a problem with another swimmer, or any other reason - they should contact a coach immediately! The coaches want practice to be enjoyable for all swimmers, but cannot fix a problem they do not know about. No swimmer should leave the pool and pool area without receiving permission from a coach.

## **Locker room supervision**

Black Hills Gold Swimmers are not the only users of the locker rooms attached to the pool area, and coaches are not responsible for monitoring the swimmers in the locker rooms on a regular basis. If notified of a problem however, the coaches will enter the locker room to resolve the issue. Swimmers are expected to be on their best behavior in the locker rooms, to realize that we are guests in the building, and to notify the coaches immediately if someone is acting inappropriately in the locker rooms.

## **Supplies Needed**

It is very important that swimmers have the proper equipment when they come to swim practice. It is very hard for coaches to instruct and for the swimmers to make progress when they are unable to freely move their arms and legs due to "leisure" suits or when they cannot put their face in the water because they do not have goggles. The racing suit's (or fitness suit) main function is to reduce the drag resistance of the swimmer in the water. For this reason racing suits are made of materials that hug the body to minimize friction and that retain less water. Also, for females, these suits do not have arm straps that will slip off the shoulders. Girls should have a one piece suit for practice and must have a one piece suit for competition. Boys generally wear "jammers", but "briefs" (commonly called Speedos) are also acceptable. All suits should be snug.

Because of the chemicals in the water and the prolonged time swimmers are in the water, suits usually wear out before swimmers grow out of them. When suits begin to wear out and are see-through it is fine to wear 2 or more of them to practice at the same time. For competition only one suit is allowed.

At the very least, each swimmer MUST have goggles at each practice. Those swimmers with longer hair should also wear a cap at all times.

The team does not provide suits and goggles for swimmers. Caps are available and every swimmer should have received one when they started swimming. If you did not, please ask.

Aside from the essentials (suit, goggles and cap) there is other equipment that swimmers - especially competing and older swimmers - may want to have such as fins, pull bouys, hand paddles and a mesh bag to store them in. (The team does own these items for practice but to ensure proper fit and to save a lot of practice time it is nice when swimmers have their own.)

Most swim meets have stores with suits, goggles and other accessories for sale. There are also many websites that equipment can be ordered from. If you have any questions or concerns about the equipment needed please do not hesitate to ask a coach!

## **Observing Practice**

Per our insurance, only registered swimmers and certified coaches are allowed on deck during swim practice. Parents who wish to observe practice may do so from the balcony of the pool area.

## **United States Swimming (USA)**

USA Swimming is the national governing body for swimming in the United States. Founded in 1980 as a result of the 1978 Congressional Amateur Sports Act, swimming now governs itself rather than being one of many sports under AAU. Since USA Swimming is not affiliated with the AAU organization, it is able to make rules and decisions that focus solely on swimming. USA Swimming is composed of 60 Local Swimming Committees (LSC) with more than 220,000 registered swimmers across the United States. Registration with USS is MANDATORY for all swimmers registered with a USS-affiliated team. It is also mandatory for insurance purposes.

The national headquarters for USA Swimming are located at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Co. Programs and services are provided to the membership through the national headquarters. Among the many services are applications, education programs, fundraising activities, sports medicine programs, resources and general information

about swimming-related activities. The headquarters staff is available to assist you in answering questions or providing general information about USA swimming. To learn more about USA Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Objectives, and more please go to their website at [USASwimming.org](http://USASwimming.org).

The USA swimming fee is \$63 per year and is renewable each December 31st. Included with this registration is excess medical accident insurance that covers the athlete at any sanctioned event or supervised practice. Please note that the USS swimming fee is a onetime/year fee that is due in addition to monthly fees. (If you are paying the entire season fee upfront, the USA swimming registration is included.)

### **Annual Swimming Dues**

Swimming dues pay for coaching salaries, pool rent, organization/administrative costs. All dues are non-refundable. In order to provide our families with smaller monthly fees it is important that each family participate in fundraising events discussed later in the handbook. A current fee schedule can be found on our website [www.bhgoldswimming.com](http://www.bhgoldswimming.com).

All payments are due by the start of the season if paying the seasonal amount, or by the first day of the month if paying on a monthly basis.

Check or cash payments may be mailed to the team at PO Box 703, Spearfish, SD or can be given to the coaches at practice.

### **Communication**

There are three main ways that Black Hills Gold Swimming communicates with families.

1. We have adopted the TeamUnify platform as its official team management software and all team members (swimmers and families) are registered into this software. Emails about registering for upcoming meets will be through team unify. Also sign up for job duties at home meets will come from team unify. It is very important that you check your e-mail regularly for announcements. To get these emails, you must (on the website) authorize the team to send you emails and text messages. You may also e-mail board members, the coach and other team members from this site.
2. The Black Hills Gold Facebook page is also used for communication. You may “like” the page to receive news.
3. Our team also utilizes a group texting system that is required for families to join. Most all communication from the board and coach about events, activities, meets, etc will be done via text from this group text.

### **Team Unify**

TeamUnify is a swim team specific software platform developed by swimmers for swim teams. This platform has been chosen by the Board of Directors to be the Black Hills Gold Swimming official team management software. It is accessed via our web site [www.teamunify.com/sdbhgs](http://www.teamunify.com/sdbhgs) which is hosted on TeamUnify.com. TeamUnify is a multifunction platform allowing the team to manage all aspects of our swim team. TeamUnify:

1. Manages family and swimmer registration
2. Performs swim meet sign up and event registration and meet fees online
3. Allows swimmers to track their times
4. Generates monthly invoices and automatically emails them to members
5. Maintains active team roster
6. ‘On Deck’ module allows coaches real time access to the data base at meets
7. Maintains a comprehensive email system for the team
8. Has up to date calendars for meets, practice and meetings
9. Many more administrative functions to allow the team to run more smoothly.

## **Web Site**

Team website is <http://www.teamunify.com/sdbhgs>.

The team roster, board members, phone numbers, calendars, upcoming meets and other events and a vast array of information may be found on the web site.

If for some reason you are unable to check your email please regularly stop in at practice and ask the coaches if there is any information you need. Announcements may be made at practice if there is information the swimmers need to know, however it is very hard to get a pool full of swimmers attention all at the same time to relay important messages and paperwork that is sent home with swimmers often ends up a soggy mess in the locker rooms and swim bags.

## **Coaches**

The best way to speak with the coaches is to meet them after practice, to email or call. During practice the coaches are focused on a pool full of swimmers and this is not the best time to have a discussion with them. The coaches welcome communication with the parents so feel free to contact them for any reason.

Problems with a coach?

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy 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:

- 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 good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
- Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
- 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 5 to 50 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 compensate for occasional short term inconvenience.
- 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.

## THE TRIAD

### *Swimmer Parent Coach*

A positive relationship between these three will help the swimmer achieve excellence. Each of us has our own separate duties and responsibilities to perform. The parent is the key to nutrition, lifestyle, sleeping habits, etc. The coach is responsible for the swimmers stroke technique, conditioning, motivation, etc. The swimmer is responsible showing up to practice on time, and working to achieve new levels of performance. Parents, coaches and swimmers must work together, encourage each other, and support the efforts of others. The thrill of achievement must be enjoyed and celebrated by all.

#### **Role of parents:**

As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving, and supportive and enthusiastic environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by assuring your child's attendance at practices and by coming to swim meets. Your children will experience many highs and lows in their careers, and your "pat" on the back is one of the most vital ingredients in their continued success and development within our program. Please be aware that the experience of swimming can be most beneficial only if the goal setting is that of the athlete and not that of the parent. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. Children need to establish their own goals and make their own progress towards them. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, which will help your child develop a positive self-image. Please have a positive attitude, and remember that swimming is only a small part of life -- not the central issue. Viewed in this respect, swimming can be a most enjoyable and exciting sport, and one that can develop great sportsmanship, lasting friendships, and an honest respect for the competition.

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

Please make every effort to have your swimmers at practice on time. Realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. Encourage good diet and sleeping habits.

Make sure that you child knows that –win or lose, scared or heroic- you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure.

Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/her competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their actual skill level. Less than 1% of age group swimmers go on to be Olympic athletes, so don't get overexcited and develop "Olympic Dreaminess" every time your swimmer wins. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his/her hearing.

Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.

Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.

Swimmers often reach plateaus several times in their swimming careers. This is when, after improving steadily for a period of time the swimmer just holds their times, or even declines in performances. The cause of these plateaus can, among other things, be outside stresses (family, school, friends, etc.) or a growth spurt. Parents can help swimmers recognize that a plateau has been reached and should ease off. With patience, motivation, encouragement, rest periods, etc. the swimmers will bounce back.

Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic

children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, sensitive free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you – win or lose – he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.

Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that their philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under their leadership.

### **Swimmers Responsibility**

Be on deck at least 5 minutes early and be ready to get in the water. This means having caps and goggles on, adjusted & ready to go prior to practice. It is expected that you are in the water exactly when practice starts. Those swimmers with continual unexcused tardiness may not be allowed to swim as it is disrespectful and disruptive. Everyone will start practice together at 3:45 PM.

Bringing a positive attitude, including the willingness to learn and improve. Good behavior is expected of all swimmers to ensure all swimmers receive adequate instruction. Respect your teammates: work equally hard for yourself and your team. Encourage your teammates and applaud all good efforts, regardless of winning or losing races. All swimmers shall be supportive and respectful of their opponents, officials, coaches and parents. It is ultimately the responsibility of each and every swimmer to help see that things are working on our team. Team unity and positive support of one another is a must!

Swimmers are expected to complete each set of the workout. Water and bathroom breaks will be given between sets, not in the middle of them. Opportunities for breaks are usually given about every ½ hour and if you choose not to use the break wisely know that it will be another ½ hour before you are permitted to leave the pool again. If you have any questions about a given set please talk to the coach before the set starts so that there is no interruption to others in your lane during the set. If there is a reason you feel you cannot complete what is being asked of you please talk to a coach immediately. Swimmers that chose not to participate in a set for whatever reason may be asked to leave the pool area so as not to disrupt others.

Swimmers are expected to contribute to the setup and tear-down of all practices when asked to help.

If you know that you will be unable to attend practice on your regular practice schedule please let the coach know ahead of time. Please notify the coach for the reason of any prolonged absence.

### **Safety Rules**

1. One long blast of the whistle means to clear the pool immediately. Line up along the wall at the deep end of the pool and sit down until given further direction. Do not leave the pool area.
2. Always wait until the coach gives the signal to enter the water at the beginning of practice. Get permission from the coach to get out of the pool or to reenter the water during practice. Unless otherwise instructed all entry and exit from the pool is to be from the shallow end of the pool.
3. Enter the water feet first in a safe manner for warm-ups at the end of the pool. Do not ever enter the water from the sides of the pool unless specifically told to do so by a coach.
4. Starting blocks are only to be used under a coach's supervision.
5. Kickboards are to be kept on the surface of the water and to be used according to a coach's direction. All equipment is to be used in a safe manner.
6. Circle swim in your lane unless instructed to do otherwise.
7. The following are never allowed:
  - a. Running and jumping into the water
  - b. Any running on deck
  - c. Pushing or shoving another swimmer
  - d. Any form of horseplay (this includes the locker room)

## **Discipline:**

First and second offence – verbal warning by a coach

Third offence – swimmer asked to leave practice and written notice to parents

Forth offence – swimmer asked to leave practice and allowed back after a parent/coach meeting

## **Coaches Responsibilities:**

Coaches will set workout schedules, set workout groups and develop appropriate practices for the age and skill level of the swimmer. Coaches will visually observe and critically scrutinize swimmers, working with all swimmers in a positive manner making corrections as needed. It is the coach's responsibility to show concern for all swimmers by making sure safety rules are followed and that swimmers act in an appropriate manner so that practices may flow smoothly and be a positive experience for all involved.

In addition to poolside duties, coaches are to encourage the growth of the swim team by promoting the team as a service and healthy lifestyle choice for the youth in our community. Coaches will also provide ongoing education to swimmers and parents about the world of competitive swimming. The coaches will help swimmers set realistic goals and continue to motivate the swimmers to obtain these goals throughout the season.

During meet sign up process the coaches will assist swimmers in choosing appropriate events, developing time goals and splits and organizing relays. The coaches will review all meet registrations to make sure they are in the best interest of the swimmer and make changes if they deem necessary. At meets it is the coach that is responsible for athletes' warm-ups, watching and critiquing individual events and relays, and taking care of any administrative issues that may arise.

## **Parent Involvement**

In order to run an efficient swim club, parent involvement is necessary. Parent interest and reliability are the only qualifications for most of the jobs that the team needs help with. Each parent is expected to participate. We appreciate your involvement and hope that you will find this a unique opportunity to be involved in a meaningful working relationship with the swimmers, coaches and other members of Black Hills Gold Swimming.

The purpose of the parent committee is to provide support to the swim team. An objective of the parent committee is to help provide the children with the opportunity to excel in competitive swimming. The parent committee shall be intent upon helping to foster the enjoyment of a competitive swimming environment. They shall administer the swim team program so that the coaches can devote their full attention to the teaching and coaching. The Black Hills Gold Parent Meeting are held monthly at the Young Center. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. We will post the date and time on What's App and/or Team Unify Calendar.

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

## **Mandatory Fundraising**

"Fun"draising efforts help alleviate the cost of swim team fees while reinforcing cooperation and work ethic. There is a \$200 fundraising fee per swimmer per year. Current fundraising opportunities are available on our website, and the team is always open to new ideas for fundraising. To opt out of fundraising a \$200 donation may be made to the team. New swimmers are required to fundraise or pay \$100. Returning swimmers are required to fundraise or pay \$200. If there are multiple children from one family, there is a max of \$400 for fundraising fees. At the end of the short course season in

March, fundraising fees are due. Anyone who has not paid their fundraising fees by the start of the next short course season in Sept, will be required to pay their previous balance, as well and the upcoming season's balance, prior to their child starting the season.

It is very important to note that Black Hills Gold Swimming is a 501 ( c ) 3 corporation under US tax codes. . Individual sponsorships are not allowed under our not-for-profit tax status. As such, any donation or fundraising monies cannot be allocated to specific individuals or families to offset their fees. For example, if a family raised \$250 from a friends' business, the money must be put into the Black Hills Gold general fund and could not be used to pay any part of that families fees.

Also important to note that as a tax exempt organization, any donations made to Black Hills Gold Swimming may be tax deductible. Contributors should consult their accountant for their specific situation.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

For the team to have a successful and fun season, it is **mandatory** for parents to volunteer for jobs throughout the course of the season. Various opportunities for volunteer hours arise almost weekly and are too numerous to print here. If you feel you have a skill or talent that could benefit the team please make the board aware of it!

One of our main sources of income is hosting our home swim meets. The following is a list of board positions, the officials needed to run a meet, and a list of jobs that must be done to host a meet.

### **Board of Directors**

Board Positions, Responsibilities and current members:

- President – Ryan Aalbu
  - The board president is responsible for presiding at all board meetings. The president shall perform other duties between meetings as they are determined by the board.
- Vice President – John Dagit
  - The vice president shall perform all duties incumbent up the President during the absence or disability of the President and perform such other duties as my be prescribed by the board.
- Secretary – Sarah VanTassel
  - The secretary shall have custody and care of the corporate records of Black Hills Gold Swimming, shall attend all board meetings and shall keep a true and complete record of the proceedings of all such meetings.
- Treasurer – Jamie VanDeest
  - The treasurer shall keep correct and complete records showing at all times the financial condition of Black Hills Gold Swimming, shall be the legal custodian of all monies and other valuables, shall maintain such bank accounts in the name of Black Hills Gold Swimmimg as necessary and approved by the board, shall furnish full statements of the financial condition of the team at board meetings, and shall perform other duties as prescribed by the board.
- Meet Director –
  - Meet director duties include the conduct of the meet. The Meet Director shall secure sanctions for home meets, and perform all duties necessary to smoothly run the meet (see *Hosting a Black Hills Gold Meet* below.) The meet director also shall work with the coaches to register swimmers for all away meets.
- Administrative Official – Misty Trewalla
  - The admin official works directly with the meet referee and supervises/directs several position on the “dry” side of a swim meet.
- Members at large – Jenni Hall
  - Members at large help with a variety of board activities such as, but not necessarily limited too, fundraising, communication, publicity, social functions, and helping the meet director coordinate home meets.

## **Officials**

Swimming, perhaps more than any other sport, depends upon parent participation for the conduct of its competitions. For more information regarding certification please contact a board member. Black Hills Gold Swimming generally needs to provide timers at all meets. If you can help in this way, please volunteer. No experience is necessary, the view is terrific, and it is usually cooler on deck than in the spectator area. Please help to time at the meets when asked and tell the meet officials that you are with Black Hills Gold Swimming. In addition to timers, there are many positions that must be filled to hold a meet. Although these positions require training, becoming certified can add a lot to your families swimming experience as you become more involved in the sport. Official Positions at meets are as follows:

- Stroke & Turn Judge - These individuals must be certified by the AAL after attending a stroke clinic. Judges observe strokes, turns, and finishes and relay exchanges to determine if the swimmer is in compliance with the AAL Guidelines. Disqualification slips must be completed correctly and initialed by judges in order to track the infraction(s) and to be valid disqualification.
- Starter - The starter shall begin each event by advising swimmers, judges, and timers of the specific event by name, heat number, and/or appropriate order of strokes. Announcements may also have to be made about combining of heats or other changes occurring during the meet.
- Referee - The referee has the final authority for all decisions and questions during the meet and oversees the work of all officials, assigning and instructing them. The referee must be thoroughly familiar with all applicable rules, as well as meet procedures and the duties of all meet officials. The Referee meets with coaches of each team prior to the meet and all officials and timers to go over meet procedures. Experience and training are needed for this position.

## **Hosting a Black Hills Gold Meet**

Hosting our own meet twice a year is a huge undertaking and is a HUGE fundraiser for our team. In addition to the above, volunteers are needed in the following area for home meets:

- Team Store/Concessions – This person will be responsible for set up of the team store and concession stand. The team store consists of suits, goggles, and other swimming items. He/She will coordinate with the meet director to order necessary supplies as well as coordinate who is bringing snacks that will be for sale during the meet. After the meet, they will break down the stand, count proceeds, and give to the treasurer.
- Announcer - The announcer must arrive early to set up the broadcast system, become familiar with the schedule and announce activities before the actual start of the meet.
- Timing System Operator -
- Meet Director - The meet director is in charge of the conduct of the meet. The Meet Director shall contact each committee several times prior to a meet confirming all necessary volunteers and arrangements, pool and equipment, times and required watches in working order, ready bench, stroke/turn judges, starters, announcer, scoring, ribbons, and computer.
- Ribbons and Scoring - These volunteers coordinate sorting and labeling of ribbons for the swimmers. This position works closely with the computer personnel in scoring.
- Runners - These individuals pick-up cards from the ready bench and deliver them to the timers for each event. After the event, runners pick up and deliver completed cards to the scoring table. Runners must also pick up DQ slips from the stroke/turn judges and deliver them to the scoring table.
- Computer Operator - This position involves coordinating set-up software, entering times, and merging information from the opposing teams. Heat sheets must be prepared before the meet
- Timer/Chief Timer - This person is charged with lane timers for a swim meet. The Head Timer shall run two watches for back-up, in case of malfunctioning watches, or in the event a timer does not start the watch properly. Timers should obtain an accurate recording, checking swimmers name and club on EVERY heat, before recording the time.

- Hospitality - This person brings water to times and meet officials. Helps locate people for shift relief. General go-fer for officials that cannot leave their posts.
- Clean Up - In charge of putting everything away after the meet and general clean up of grounds.

### **Swim Meets:**

Although it is not a requirement of Black Hills Gold Swimming to compete, swim meets are a great family experience! They are a place where the whole family can spend time together. Swim meets are a lot of fun for swimmers as he/she gets to visit with friends, play games and meet kids from other teams. He/She also gets to race and see how much improvement has been made from all the hard work that has been put in at practice. Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances and strokes. This promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his potential in the side range of events offered in competitive swimming. Often times a swimmer's "best" stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

Swim Meets are very different than practice and the first meet can be overwhelming for swimmers and parents alike, but once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Feel free to ask all the questions you have to a coach or a veteran parent - everyone will be happy to help you get orientated!

The Black Hills Gold Swim Team does not provide or arrange transportation to swim meets or lodging for overnight meets. It is the responsibility of the parents to make these arrangements if they are unable to attend a meet.

### **Philosophy of Competition**

Individual improvement, rather than winning ribbons, medals or trophies is not our main goal. The emphasis is competition with oneself. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better.

Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance to improved performance. The coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmers have both a good and a bad swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised by the coaching staff.

Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice and their training efforts.

### **Team Uniform**

Team colors for Black Hills Gold Swimming are black and gold. A team cap is required at every meet. The reason for this requirement is that a coach is responsible for watching all the swimmers at a meet and it is easier to spot the swimmers if they are competing with a team cap. A team cap is given to each swimmer upon joining the team and additional caps are available from the coaches for a cost of \$12. All swimmers should have at least two caps on hand for meets.

Due to an array of swimmers preference the team does not require a specific team suit, however, each swimmer should have a specific suit that is only used for meets. Wear and tear on suits worn to practice every day is great and competition suits should fit tightly and properly for meets.

### **Registering for swim meets:**

Each season's meet schedule is distributed at the onset of the season. Registration forms for each meet are typically due two weeks before the meet. Email reminders are sent out notifying parents and swimmers of the upcoming meet and registration deadline. All information for meets can be found on the team website. Coaches can help the swimmers and parents swing up for meets. Payment must be received at the time of registration for swimmers to be entered into a meet. Once a swimmer has been entered into a meet, the club cannot refund entry fees for any reason. Swimmers are entered into relays at the teams expense once we know who is going to a meet. If a swimmer does not want to be in a

relay for any reason the coach should be notified as soon as registration is made so that relays do not have to be scratched after they are paid for. Coaches have the final decision as to whether or not a swimmer is ready for a meet and what events they can sign up for. Multiple day meets can be attended for one or all of the days. When signed up for a meet plan on the event taking all day, it is difficult to predict exact time of events.

### **On-line registration:**

As soon as the meet entry file has been received from the hosting team our swimmers can sign up for the meet on the Black Hills Gold TeamUnify Website. To register on-line follow these steps:

1. Click on the "events" tab on the top menu bar.
2. Find the "event" you want to sign up for.
3. Click on "attend this event."
4. On the "Athlete sign up" tab, commit your swimmer to attend the meet.
5. When you "commit" your swimmer a list of all the events he/she is eligible for will appear.
6. Click on the events you want to sign up for.
7. Click on "save".

### **What to Bring:**

- Plenty of towels - 2 to 4 depending on number of events
- Clothes to wear over your suit between races
- Chairs or blankets to sit on
- Cooler for fruit, juices, water, yogurt, etc
- Snacks such as granola bars, cereal, sandwiches
- Team T-shirt, team cap, suit, and goggles

For outdoor summer meets you will also want warm clothing (mornings at meets can be cool), shade/tarp if you have one, sunglasses, sunscreen or sun block.

Note to parents – The indoor pool area is usually very warm so dress in layers! Some meets have bleachers to sit on and some have area on the ground for blankets. If neither of these sound comfortable to you feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on.

### **When to Arrive**

Arrive early- at least 15 minutes prior to warm-up time. If you can arrive at the meet early to stake out a "team area" that's helpful! The team usually sits together in one place, so look for some familiar faces. Warm-up times will be posted on the web site prior to each meet. It is very important that swimmers are present for warm-ups as each pool is slightly different and it is important to get a feel for the water, blocks and walls before your first race. Swimmers bodies are just like cars on a cold day – the engine needs to warm up before it can perform well.

Sometime between arriving and the meet starting write each event-heat-lane number on your hand in ink. This helps you remember what events you are swimming and what event number to listen for. This information can be found in the program (heat sheets) that are usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. The program will list all events, heats and seed times. When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a no-time or "NT". A NT swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. The heats in each event are generally seeded slowest to fastest.

## **At the Meet**

Swimmers should stay in or close to team area. Listen for your event and be ready to head down to the starting blocks several heats before you swim. The coaches will be looking for swimmers who have an upcoming race, but it is ultimately the swimmer's responsibility to get to the blocks on time, as the coaches are watching current races and talking to other swimmers about a race they may have just swam. Parents, please know where your swimmer is at all times. If you are working the meet please assign another parent who is willing to watch out for your child.

According to USS rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Spectator areas are usually on the sides and end of the pool. All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

After each race the swimmer should ask the timers their times. Usually times are electronically shown on a board somewhere in the pool area, but sometimes coaches and parents cannot see these times or they do not project correctly. After each race, swimmers should check in with their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer, offering positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

Parents, please realize that things don't always go as planned. Goggles fall off, caps rip at the last moment, races get missed. If your swimmer has a disappointing swim this is a good time to share your appreciation of their courage to get up on those blocks and try to do their best. Ask what the coach has said and remind them to go to the coach if they didn't. Parents should not focus on the negative things. The coaches will discuss stroke technique and race strategy with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are. Sometimes swimmers dwell on the negative too much. Here are some suggestions to help them move on: cheering for others, warm down pool, shower, or ongoing distractions (card game, snack/drink).

Make sure you check with the coach before you leave the meet to make sure you are not in a relay at the end of the meet. If it is a two day meet confirm warm-up times for the following day.

Please use trash cans for your garbage. We are a clean team! The most important thing to remember about swim meets is to HAVE FUN!!

## **Competition Events and Time Standards**

It makes a swim meet more interesting if you know what is going on. There are two basic categories of races: Relay and Individual. All recognized relays involve four swimmers on each team. The most common relays are medley and freestyle. In the medley, each of the 4 swimmers does an equal distance of their specific stroke. The medley order is: Backstroke — Breaststroke — Butterfly — Freestyle. In a Freestyle relay, each of the 4 swimmers swim an equal distance of the freestyle.

The individual races are broken into 5 categories: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and Individual Medley (IM). The IM consists of 4 equal distances of all the strokes in the following order: Butterfly — Backstroke — Breaststroke — Freestyle.

At each meet, you will see Stroke & Turn judges on each side of the pool. These judges are determining that the rules for each stroke are being followed. Their main objective is to determine that no swimmer gains an unfair advantage by violating the rules. If a swimmer violates the rules, they will be disqualified from that race.

*Stroke and Turn judges are looking primarily at the following:*

**Backstroke:** The primary rule is that the swimmer must be on his back. The swimmer is allowed to roll onto the chest before turning.

*Breaststroke:* This is the most formalized of the strokes. On starts and turns, the swimmer may pull in any fashion that keeps the arms underwater at all times and is a simultaneous movement of both arms. The kick must sweep out, then end with a 'frog kick" motion in a simultaneous movement of both legs. The swimmer is not allowed to flutter or dolphin kick (any up and down motions with the feet). When touching the walls for turns and finishes, both hands must touch at the same time.

*Butterfly:* The butterfly is similar to the breaststroke in that all movements must be simultaneous. The swimmer must bring his arms over the top of the water when recovering from the last pull. The kick must be simultaneous, up and down movement of both legs and both hands must touch the wall at the same time.

*Freestyle:* In most cases, there are 2 rules to follow

1. You must touch the wall with some part of your body when making a turn. When executing a flip turn, the feet must touch the wall in the push-off.
2. You may do anything you like to get yourself from one end of the pool to the other, Nothing is barred, except pulling along lane lines, grabbing another swimmer or pushing off the bottom of the pool.

### **Age Group Classifications**

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by United State Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 8-Under, 10-Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-19, and Senior or Master (a registered USS swimming member who is over the age of 18). Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. Some meets also offer Open events in which any swimmer can compete, regardless of age. The swimmers age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmers age for the entire meet.

Within each age-group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as "C" swimmers. As they improve, they advance from "C", to "BB", "B",...SDQ ( South Dakota State Qualifying Time is between A and B)..., "A", "AA", "AAA", and ultimately "AAAA". The times required for each ability level are published each year by United States Swimming. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

**State Meets** – At the end of each season a State Championship meet is sanctioned by South Dakota swimming, the governing body of swimming the state of South Dakota. South Dakota swimming sets the qualifying time standards for these meets. Qualifying times for these meets can be found on the South Dakota Swimming web site.

**Sectional Meets** - These are upper level meets that can only be attended by holding a sectional time cut. These are large, multistate meets and generally require extensive travel to attend.

**All Stars and Zone Championships** – These meets are attended as part of a South Dakota team competing against other states from the Midwest. All Stars is held in January and swimmers must apply for a place on the team. Zones is held in August and can be attended by swimming a "AAA" time, or by placing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> at the summer state meet.

### **Legal Events**

The 8 and under age groups swim 25's and 50's of each stroke, 100 and 200 free, 100 and 200 IM. In the summer (long course) season 8 and unders do not swim 25's.

The 9-10 and 11-12 age groups swim 50s and 100s of each stroke, 200 and 500 Freestyle and 100s and 200 IM.

The 13-14 and 15 & Over swimmers swim 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, and 1650 Freestyle; 100 and 200 Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Fly; as well as 200 and 400 IM.

It is important to note that there are different age group time standards. As your swimmer ages up (e.g., your 10 year old child changes from 9-10 age group to 11-12 age group on his/her birthday), the standards change and get faster. Therefore, the 'A' or 'B' times your swimmer had achieved as 9-10 year old may become 'B' or 'C' times as an 11-12 year old.

It is very important to encourage them when they "age up" so that they do not let up or back off because they are at the "bottom of their age group." We do not want them to waste that year, as is an important building year. It should also be noted that swimming in the short course season is a LONG HAUL. During those months many swimmers "plateau" or hit a time barrier in some strokes. They sometimes are unable to drop that 50 free or 50 breast time no matter how hard they try. At this time a coach may suggest that they give those strokes some time off and concentrate on others.

Much encouragement is required both from our coaching staff and the swimmer's parents to keep the young athlete moving forward, not backward.

The Black Hills Gold coaching staff does not see the first place person as the only winner. We would rather look to see who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics. Swimmers may quickly forget the medals, records and other material benefits. They will however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting and enhanced self-image. These are the things that make a swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to the peak potential and to contribute the world they live in.

### **Nutrition**

The most important aspect of nutrition for swimmers is hydration. It is recommended that all swimmers have a water bottle at practice. Swimmers sweat during hard workouts even though they may not feel it, and that liquid should be replenished as soon as possible. Especially for new swimmers, we recommend water rather than sports drinks to rehydrate.

Swimmers should also "fuel up" their bodies with a healthy snack before practice and try to eat soon afterward. This is doubly important at meets; make sure to bring food to keep your athlete's energy up! Fruit, yogurt, and any food with complex carbohydrates (bagels, granola bars, etc.) are good choices. Candy and drinks packed with sugar are to be avoided!

### **End of the Season Awards Banquet**

At the end of the winter short course season an awards banquet is held to recognize each and every swimmer and their hard work during the season. A number of awards are given out at this event. The following is a list of awards; however it may not be all inclusive:

- Individual Improvement Awards – Time drop trophies are presented noting the number of individual time drops in the season.
- Recognition of new swimmers and Swimmers of the Week
- Beat the clock award – This is simply a math award. Roughly 13 months of times are compiled from our home meet in January to State A the following year. Those with the highest number of seconds dropped are awarded.
- Most time drops is very similar to Beat the Clock, but rather than the exact number of seconds dropped, the swimmer who has the most drops is recognized.
- IM Complete - Recognize those swimmers, generally 13 and over, who compete in all possible events, which are:  
100 fly 200 fly 100 back 200 back 100 breast  
200 breast 50 free 100 free 200 free 500 free  
1000 free 1650 free 200 IM 400 IM
- Top 16 – South Dakota compiles a list of the 16 fastest times in each event in each age group
- State B and State A qualifiers recognition

- A, AA, AAA and AAAA - These letters refer to different national time standards. USA Swimming sets these time standards every four years (based on the Olympic calendar). - AAAA is the top 5% of all swims in an age group.
- Rookie of the Year – Those eligible for this award have been swimming 2 year or less . It goes to a swimmer who stands out as a newcomer and shortly after joining the team takes the leap and begins competing.
- Most Improved – Most Improved goes to someone who consistently improves in both time and form. They are dedicated to practice and getting better, as well as maturing as a person and as a swimmer.
- Swimmers Choice – This award is given to two swimmers who are chosen by their peers. Swimmers were asked to vote for those they felt work hard, were dedicated, good leaders, respectful and their teammates and coaches.
- Golden Goggle – This award goes to one or two swimmers who displayed respect and possessed a positive attitude towards other swimmers and coaches. They are leaders for others to look up to and in general devoted whole heart to practice and meets. They exemplify hard work daily with a smile and definitely go above and beyond what is expected of them. These swimmers set the precedent for others to follow.

## **SAFESPORT**

### **What is SafeSport?**

USA Swimming is committed to fostering a fun, healthy ,and safe environment for all its members, and in 2010, it formally implemented a comprehensive Safe Sport program to respond to and prevent instances of abuse and misconduct within the sport of swimming. Since then USA Swimming Safe Sport has worked tirelessly to educate members, put policies in place and empower LSCs and clubs to create the best possible environments for all members.

<https://www.usaswimming.org/Home/safe-sport>

**All swimmers, parents, and coaches of Black Hills Gold Swimming must review and be familiar with all subcategories under this SafeSport tab. By being a member (or a parent of a member) of Black Hills Gold Swimming, it is implied that these policies are agreed with and will be adhered to.**

### **Electronic Communication/Social Media Policy of Black Hill Gold Swimming**

Black Hills Gold Swimming (the “Club”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered.

USA Swimming member clubs are required to have an electronic communication policy for coaches and non-athlete members to follow. Similarly, athletes should be aware that there are certain standards for electronic communication for all individuals associated with the club. The ability of coaches and non-athlete members to adhere to the required policy relies, in part, on the ability of athletes to respect the boundaries established for healthy electronic communication with the team. Athletes should remember that swimming for the club is a privilege, and they are expected to portray themselves, their team, and their community in a positive manner at all times.

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection. For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- drugs or alcohol use;
- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- the adult’s personal life , social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures

Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?"

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

If your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

#### FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

#### TWITTER

Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter.

#### TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

#### EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

#### REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

The club holds the following expectations of athletes:

- Dishonorable content or derogatory language, including: obscene, profane, racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and physical disability slurs or material of any kind are not tolerated.
- Athletes will not use social media to degrade, demean, or attack any person, team, or organization.
- Athletes will not use social media to contact his/her coach(es) and will instead post appropriate material to the club's profile.
- All communication between athletes and coaches will be related to the activities of the team and should, whenever possible, be limited to in-person communication during team practices or events.

Things to remember – Texting:

- Text messages and photos can be saved or screen-shot. Once the message is transmitted, the sender does not have control.
- Texting between athletes and coaches is not okay unless it is directly related to team activities. If the content of the communication could be interoperated as anything other than this, another adult (such as a parent/guardian or another coach) should be copied on the text.
- It is typically more effective to discuss an issue in person.

Things to remember - Social Media:

- Once you post something online, it is public and permanent--even if you delete it.
- Many employers, college admissions officers, and athletic recruiters review social networking sites as part of their evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how others may perceive the information and content that you share about yourself.
- Never post your email address, home address, phone number, or other personal information, as it could lead to unwanted attention, stalking, or identity theft.

Reporting dishonorable behavior -

If an athlete views or personally receives any social media communication that they find offensive or makes them uncomfortable they should screen shot the content and report it the teams board of directors.

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## **Black Hills Gold Swimming TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT: ATHLETES**

The purpose of a code of conduct for athletes is to establish a consistent expectation for athletes' behavior. By becoming a member of Black Hills Gold Swimming and for the duration of my membership, I agree to the following statements:

- I will respect and show courtesy to my teammates and coaches at all times.
- I will demonstrate good sportsmanship at all practices and meets.
- I will set a good example of behavior and work ethic for my younger teammates.
- I will be respectful of my teammates' feelings and personal space. Swimmers who exhibit sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be faced with consequences.
- I will attend all team meetings and training sessions, arriving on time and participating for the duration, unless I have communicated by absence, tardiness or need to leave early prior and have been excused by my coach.
- I will show respect for all facilities and other property (including locker rooms) used during practices, competitions, and team activities.
- I will refrain from foul language, violence, behavior deemed dishonest, offensive, or illegal.

- If I disagree with an official's call, I will talk with my coach and not approach the official directly.
- I will obey all of USA Swimming's rules and codes of conduct.

I understand that if I violate this code of conduct, I will be subject to disciplinary action determined by my coaches and the swim club's board of directors.

### **Black Hills Gold Swimming CODE OF CONDUCT: PARENTS**

The purpose of a code of conduct for parents is to establish consistent expectations for behavior by parents. As a parent/guardian, I understand the important growth and developmental support that my child's participation fosters. I also understand that it is essential to provide the coaching staff with respect and the authority to coach the team. I agree with the following statements:

- I will set the right example for our children by demonstrating sportsmanship and showing respect and common courtesy at all times to the team members, coaches, competitors, officials, parents, and all facilities.
- I will get involved by volunteering, cheering at meets, and talking with my child and their coach about their progress.
- I will refrain from coaching my child from the stands during practices or meets.
- I will allow coaches to make decisions regarding competition events and respect their decision and support my child in events they are entered in.
- I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward coaches, officials, volunteers, and/or any participating swimmer will not be tolerated.
- I will respect the integrity of the officials.
- I will direct my concerns to first to the coaches and if unable to resolve to the Board of Directors. I will express my concerns in a timely manner, understanding no issues can be resolved without being expressed.

I understand the above expectations and that my failure to adhere to them may result in disciplinary action or the decision of the Board of Directors that I, or my child with me in attendance, may not attend practice or represent Black Hills Gold Swimming at competition or team events.

USA Swimming has a section of their website devoted to parent education and information  
 - <https://www.usaswimming.org/for-you/parents>

### **Black Hills Gold Swimming Code of Conduct: Coach**

The purpose of this code of conduct for coaches is to establish common expectations for all members of the coaching staff of the club. It is to be used as a guide to promote a positive team environment and good sportsmanship.

- At all times, adhere to USA Swimming's rules and code of conduct.
- Set a good example of respect and sportsmanship for participants and fans to follow.
- Act and dress with professionalism and dignity in a manner suitable to his/her profession.
- Respect officials and their judgment and abide by the rules of the event.
- Treat opposing coaches, participants, and spectators with respect.

- Instruct participants in sportsmanship and demand that they display good sportsmanship.
- Coach in a positive manner and do not use derogatory comments or abusive language.
- Win with humility and lose with dignity.
- Treat every athlete fairly, justly, impartially, intelligently, and with sensitivity.
- Always place the well-being, health, and safety of swimmers above all other considerations, including developing performance.
- Continue to seek and maintain their own professional development in all areas in relation to coaching and teaching children.
- Always maintain a professional separation between coach and athlete.

Any complaints of a coach violating this code of conduct will be brought to the attention of the head coach, or in the case of the head coach, the club's board of directors.

### **Bullying Policy**

Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. Black Hills Gold Swimming is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or athlete/mentor.

Bullying is any gesture, written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (pda), or wireless hand held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic. Bullying among children can be defined as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more children against another. These negative acts are not intentionally provoked by the victim, and for such acts to be defined as bullying, an imbalance in real or perceived power must exist between the bully and the victim. A swimmer is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more swimmers. Bullying will not be tolerated.

### **REPORTING PROCEDURE**

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents
- Talk to a Club Coach or Board Member
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach or Board Member
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

### **Locker Room Policy**

Black Hills Gold Swimming uses locker rooms that are shared with the general public. As such, there are likely to be people who are not associated with our team in the changing area around the time of practice. Coaches do not routinely monitor the locker rooms unless they are alerted to a problem. Swimmers should tell a coach immediately if there is something happening in the locker rooms that needs to be addressed for any reason or if they feel uncomfortable for any reason. Swim practice, including the locker rooms, needs to be a safe, comfortable place for everyone.

Coaches make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room during practice and if they do not return in a timely fashion, will check on the athlete's whereabouts, usually by sending another swimmer in as coaches cannot leave the pool deck. However, as coaches do not know what swimmers were dropped off for practice each day they often have no way of knowing if a swimmer is in the locker room or other areas of the building when

parents assume they are at practice. If a swimmer does not swim for any reason and they are in the building they should let a coach know why they are not attending practice and sit on the pool deck or outside the glass doors while waiting for a parent. For a number of safety reasons, it is not advisable for swimmers to hang out in the locker rooms during practice. If a coach is aware of this happening parents will be notified. Attendance is taken daily and can be accessed on the swimmers team unify account.

Important notes on locker rooms:

1. All belongings in the locker room need to be locked up every single day! Items not locked in lockers should be brought out onto the deck for safe keeping. Many people use those locker rooms all throughout the day including our practice times. The Young Center and Black Hills Gold Swimming are not responsible for any lost or stolen item in the locker room during practice or at any time.
2. Swimmers should only touch items that belong to them. Taking, hiding or throwing around other people's belongs is unacceptable.
3. Swimmers should clean up any snack wrappers, water bottles, etc. that they have brought into the locker room.
4. If a swimmer notices belongings that others have left out they should bring them out to the pool deck and give them to a coach.
5. Locker rooms are for changing and showering. Locker rooms are not hang out locations.
6. *Swimmers need to be picked up when their schedules practice time is over. Coaches still have swimmers in the water when the youngest groups are released and cannot be supervising in the locker rooms, hallways or outside. We are guests in the Young Center and there are many other activities including night classes that should not be disturbed by running in the building or other distracting behavior while waiting to be picked up. Swimmers who are waiting for parents or siblings need to SIT either on the pool deck or right outside the glass doors. They should have a book or other activity with them to pass the time. Again, it is not advisable for swimmers to hang out in the locker rooms while waiting for parents or swimmers.*

**USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES** Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. The USA Swimming Athlete Protection Policies prohibit the use of such devices in the locker room or other changing area:

305.3 Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.

### **TEAM TRAVEL**

**Unless specified as a Team Travel Event parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their swimmers to and from meets and events. If parents/guardians are unable to attend it is up to the family to make arrangements with another swimmer's family to transport their child. Financial contributions/reimbursement should be agreed upon prior to travel.**

*Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.*

### **Team Travel Policy for Black Hills Gold Swimming**

**Purpose:** Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct. During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar.

Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the club.

### **Section 1 - USA Swimming Required Policies**

- a. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

- b. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
- c. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
- d. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.

**Section 2 – Black Hills Gold Additional Policies**

- a. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained. If only one chaperone is attending he/she will never be alone with an athlete (unless the chaperone is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
  - b. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
  - c. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
- a. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
- b. To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
- c. A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- d. Team officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- e. Team officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- f. Curfews shall be established by the team staff each day of the trip.
- g. Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
- h. The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
- i. Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- j. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- k. The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to Black Hills Gold Swimming and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.
- l. Specific information regarding this trip is outlined, agreed upon and attached to this form.

**Section 3 – General Guidelines**

*Safety*

- a. Additional guidelines to be established as needed by the coaches;
- b. Respect the privacy of each other;
- c. Only use hotel rooms with interior entrances; and
- d. Must wear seat belts and remain seated in vehicles;

### *Behavior*

- a. Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in hotel;
- b. Be prompt and on time;
- c. Cell phone usage guidelines and computer use guidelines including social media may be established;
- d. Respect travel vehicles;
- e. Use appropriate behavior in public facilities;
- f. Establish two different curfews – in own rooms and lights out;
- g. Must stay in assigned hotel room; and
- h. Needs and wellbeing of the team come first.

### *Financial*

- a. Swimmers responsible for all incidental charges;
- b. Swimmers responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel;
- c. Must participate in contracted group meals; and
- d. Communicate travel reimbursement information and policies.

### *Requirements*

- a. There may be eligibility requirements;
- b. There may be age guidelines for travel trips;
- c. Parent(s) are responsible for getting swimmer(s) to stated departure point on time and for retrieving swimmers promptly when trip is over

### **Code of Conduct / Honor Code**

All team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached USA Swimming Code of Conduct. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

- a. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- b. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- c. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- d. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- e. No “deck changes” are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.
- f. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the Black Hills Gold team. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club.
- g. Swimmers are to refrain from inappropriate physical contact at team activities and events.
- h. Swimmers are to refrain from use of inappropriate language.
- i. Failure to comply with the Honor Code as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:
  - i. Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete’s expense;\
  - ii. Disqualification from future team travel;
  - iii. Dismissal from the team; and/or
  - iv. Other disciplinary action as agreed up by Black Hills Gold Board and parents/guardian of swimmer

Specific information relating to the trip and medical release forms must be filled out. Please see the team's website for more detail.

### **USADA/Anti-Doping**

Doping Control rules are in place for all athletes. Doping Control takes place during competitions and with no-advance-notice (Out-of-Competition testing). Individuals attending major competitions are subject to drug testing regardless of whether or not they are a National Team member, an Olympian or a first place finisher. In addition, all USA Swimming athletes are eligible for out of competition testing.

All athletes are responsible for any substance that goes into their eye, nose, mouth, ears or skin. Doping Control rules can be confusing for athletes, coaches and parents, and it is critical that any questions/concerns be clarified. For more information about USA Swimming's policies, athlete medications, U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) and more please use the following link:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/doping-control-group/doping-control>