

McFarland Spartan Sharks



Parent, Swimmer, Coach, Official Handbook

Updated 8/17/2021

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1-1. 2021-22 Board of Directors

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2-1. History

The McFarland Spartan Sharks, Inc. was granted team status in 1982 by the Secretary of State of the State of Wisconsin. It has remained a non-profit organization since its inception, relying on club dues and fund raising activities to cover expenses.

2-2. Where We Are Going

The McFarland Spartan Sharks have great growth potential, both in the quality of the organization and in the quantity of membership. Our organization can grow and prosper, provided we have input and help, not only from the coaches and swimmers, but also from the “backbone” of our club – the parents. McFarland has a strong tradition of sports support for the “major” organized sports. We need parents who are willing and able to do all of the “little things” necessary to help our club function and grow. It only works if you help it work. Please volunteer your time!

2-3. Philosophy

The McFarland Spartan Sharks is a non-profit swimming team where each participant, regardless of age or ability level, is important. It is the MSS philosophy to provide our children with the following:

- The skills for participating in a lifelong sport
- The recognition of the relationship between effort and reward
- The opportunity to succeed and gain confidence
- The opportunity to compete with children of similar ability

Everyone is encouraged to participate on Sharks; however, minimum requirements exist for each of the team levels. In order for an athlete to learn to reach his or her potential, he or she must be willing to work intelligently, consistently and conscientiously. The understanding of these principles will be of great worth not only in each athlete’s swimming career, but also in achieving his or her goals later in life.

2-4. Objectives

The objectives of the McFarland Spartan Sharks program are as follows:

- To develop a wide base of experienced swimmers who will be able to meet and increase their skills and knowledge needed for high school and college swimming;
- To provide training and competition to all swimmers who desire it;
- To furnish a wholesome and worthwhile physical and recreational outlet;

- To provide an opportunity to learn sportsmanship and to instill the values of team cooperation;
- To provide opportunities to learn healthy habits;
- To provide opportunities for social and emotional development; and
- To have FUN while trying to accomplish goals.

3-1. Membership Responsibilities - Swimmers

The following are the membership responsibilities for swimmers:

- Meet the Sharks' basic ability requirements for Minis, Kickers, Travelers, Extreme and Senior groups as stated on our website group descriptions and determined by our coaching staff.
- Show respect for the coach(es), your teammates, the pool facilities and equipment as well as your abilities.
- Develop and maintain the essential qualities of good sportsmanship both within the team structure and while representing the McFarland Spartan Sharks at meets.
- Maintain a safety first attitude which includes refraining from doing ANYTHING that might cause injury to yourself and others and reporting any unsafe actions taken by others to the coaches.
- Stay up to date with MSS emails and the MSS website. Please notify coaches if you change your email address. We use this as a way of keeping our team informed about all MSS team information.

3-2: Membership Responsibilities - Parents

The following are membership responsibilities for parents:

- Complete all registration forms
- Notify the club of termination as well as important changes (i.e. address, phone, e-mail address changes, change of insurance) by [contacting a board member using the contact information listed here](#). This includes credit card information. All fees are paid by credit card. Once a family has \$100 outstanding their swimmers will be ineligible to compete in meets for the Sharks until their fees are paid. Fees not paid will result in the exclusion from any club activities, including practices and meets, until paid in full. Unpaid fees may also be subject to additional late fees.

- Volunteer for home meets per the Family Service Hour obligation. See [Section 5.5](#) for more information.
- Keep the coach informed of anticipated absences from practices or meets.
- Alert your child's coach if your child is unable to attend a meet for which he or she has been entered so a substitute might be found. Please try to avoid missing meets at all cost as the team and coaches rely on the swimmer's attendance. You will still be charged for meet entry fees and splash fees if you do not attend a meet.
- Monitor your swimmer when necessary, as coaches and MSS are not responsible for swimmers outside the pool area.
- Behave in a supportive manner to all swimmers, coaches and Shark families during all practices, meets and team functions and with all communications pertaining to the Sharks.

3-3. Personal Business

If you have questions or personal business to discuss with the coach(es), please do so before or after practice sessions. Please **DO NOT** disturb the coach(es) or athletes during practice.

If your personal business cannot be conducted during the official practice time, please contact the coach via email. The coach will return your call as soon as possible. You may also contact a Board member regarding any organizational questions or concerns.

4-1. Parent/Swimmer/Coach Relationship

To have a successful program, there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coach(es). The progress your child makes depends, to a great extent, on this relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section carefully.

Parents' Guidelines:

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided and the model you have been. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective:

- Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of instruction in skill development. This fact requires patience on the part of the parents, swimmers, and coaches.
- When a swimmer initially joins the team and begins practicing, it is possible for his or her skills to diminish rather than improve. Sometimes the swimmer has to regress before he or she can progress. In time the swimmer will improve.
- Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmer's career. They can occur both in competition and in training. As most athletes experience plateaus at some point in their careers, they will need to patiently and persistently work through them. Working through the plateau will make the athlete a better swimmer and individual.
- Swimmers who are age ten and under are typically the most inconsistent swimmers; this can be frustrating for parents, coaches and swimmers alike! The adults should be patient and allow these youngsters to develop a love of the sport in their own time.
- Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal and is perhaps more desirable than precocious or forced early development. It is important that everyone learns to compete and develop a competitive spirit. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as children prepare them for the larger problems they are certain to experience as adults.
- It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition and encouragement necessary for young athletes to feel good about themselves. The parents should not attempt to coach as this often leads to confusion on the part of the athlete.
- Parents' attitudes and models of behavior often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place, while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about his or her parents' desires. Therefore, it is important that parents remain enthusiastic about taking their child to practice and meets, participating in fund raising projects and home meets as well as attending meetings.
- Parents are encouraged to see these activities as helpful in the development of healthy athletes and not as chores.
- If you have any questions about your child's training, contact the coach. Criticizing the coach in front of the athletes undermines the coach's

authority and breaks down the swimmer. Parental support of the coach is necessary for maximum success.

- No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coach and handled by the coach.
- Parents should be certain that their child is personally motivated to swim. People tend to resist anything they “have to do.” Self-motivation is the stimulus for all-successful swimmers and programs.
- The meaning of the word competition goes back to two Latin words –“com” and “Petere” which combined mean to strive. Avoid “playing” your child against his or her nearest competitors, thereby creating vendettas with teammates or other competitors.
- The communication between coach and swimmer is very important. The two-way relationship must exist daily at practice and at meets. It is imperative that the coach has the swimmer’s full attention at these times. Visitors to practice sessions are asked to sit on the bleachers.
- The board will review any infractions regarding the Parent/Swimmer/Coach relationship before any actions will be taken.

Please remember that the attitude and behavior of the parents in regards to their outlook on the sport will affect their child. We can all work together to help our children learn to set and achieve their goals through hard work and dedication. Every child can gain from his or her experiences whether or not he or she ever wins a single race. It is most important to keep on striving to do better the next time.

The [USA Swimming website](#) is a great resource for parents to learn about swimmer development, parenting advice and nutrition tips.

5-1. MSS Swim Sessions

The McFarland Spartan Sharks operates on a year-round, three-session format as described below:

Fall/Winter Session

Begins in mid-September and runs through the championship meet held the first week in March. Meets are scheduled approximately twice a month. Fundraisers are generally conducted during the fall/winter session. The session concludes with a banquet in late March or April.

Spring Session

Begins in April and runs through May. A fundraiser is generally conducted during the spring/summer session. Typically no meets are attended during this session.

Summer Session

Begins the first week in June and runs through the championship meet held the last week in July.

This session emphasizes long-course swimming, and includes the state meets and Junior Nationals for swimmers who qualify. Every Olympic year we will participate in the Olympic Trials if we have qualified swimmer(s).

A bonus August session may be scheduled for Senior-level swimmers based on interest and coach availability.

5.2. Fees

The McFarland Spartan Sharks swimming fees are based on the amount of pool time and coaching hours assigned to the team, the USA Swimming registration fees, coaching fees and administrative costs. There is also a per-family fundraising fee charged at the start of the Fall/Winter season. The MSS Board of Directors sets fees for each session.

Fees paid to USA Swimming are not refundable.

Training fees are not refunded, except in cases of debilitating injury or illness and then only with a documented medical excuse as detailed in our policy manual.

Fees paid to the McFarland Spartan Sharks Swim Team are not tax-deductible.

Meet entry fees

Swimmers must pay for meet entries. Once meet entries are sent in, these fees become non-refundable. If the swimmer does not come to a meet that results in a relay team being scratched, the appropriate amount will be deducted or added to the swimmer's account. See our policy manual for detailed information.

Travel policy

Athletes attending elite meets like the Grand Prix and Junior National meets will be billed an extra fee to pay for coaching expenses. This fee will be split among the participants of the meet and will be added to the families splash fee accounts. See our policy manual for detailed information

These meets are a great opportunity for our qualified athletes to receive experience and individual coaching attention. Sharks are happy to support our elite athletes! We hope our elite athletes are happy to support their club.

5-3. Where Do Our Fees Go?

MSS training fees

Our team's training fees goes toward coaches' salaries, pool rentals, equipment maintenance, and administrative costs.

All season fees are paid by credit card via our TeamUnify platform on the first of most months of the duration of a session. The team charges two months' worth of training fees at time of registration; in turn, no fees are due the last month of the season.

Meet entry fees

There are fees associated with all meets that a swimmer attends. These fees are called splash fees. Your TeamUnify account will be invoiced for splash fees following each swim meet your swimmer participates in. Splash fees will be charged to the credit card on file and are due on the 1st of the month following each swim meet. Failure to pay these fees or accruing a balance in excess of \$100 will result in a suspension of your athlete from future meets. Please see our policy manual for detailed information.

USA membership fees

Our team's sanctioning body, USA Swimming, is the chief controller of amateur swimming in the USA. Monies received from athletes and clubs pay for a variety of services, including administrative, educational and promotional activities. Much of the money goes toward paying for an accidental medical insurance policy to cover all registered athletes, coaches, officials and teams.

For a USA Swimming insurance summary, please check out the USA Swimming website at www.usaswimming.org.

Fall/winter season family fundraising fee

A per-family fundraising fee is charged at the start of the fall/winter season. This amount may change each year; the amount for 2021-2022 is \$75 per family. Families can earn back this fee through the club's annual wreath sales.

5-4. Club Fundraising

We depend upon dues and fundraising activities to raise the money needed to support our club. Because all members of our club benefit in some way from our fundraising activities, we require that 100% of our membership participate in fundraising events in some way. Fundraising activities include home meets, wreath sales, pizza sale, silent auction, and others. Fundraising events help our club to purchase pool supplies and to assist the high school with the costs of maintaining and buying new pool and weight room equipment. All fundraising events must be approved by the Board of Directors prior to the event.

The wreath sale, which occurs during the Fall/Winter session, is a required fundraising event for **ALL** members. Members have the option to sell wreaths or buy out of this responsibility. For all other events, a participation record will be kept to ensure that all members are helping in some way.

5-5. Service Hours

Membership Service Hours Obligation - Fall/Winter Season

Hosting meets is the largest single fundraiser for our club. In order to run a successful meet other clubs will want to attend, we need every family

participating to cover the various roles and duties involved. MSS typically hosts two meets per year: one in fall the weekend before Thanksgiving and the second in summer with the date varying slightly year to year.

Beginning in 2020, MSS began **requiring** participation in meet duty coverage. Each family will have a service hour obligation whether or not their swimmer is participating in the meet. Every swimmer and family benefits from the profits made during our hosted meets as the profit helps to keep registration costs reasonable for all.

Details:

- Each family is required to work 8 hours during the meet. Job shifts are either 2 or 4 hours in length. You can combine 4-hour and 2-hour shifts to meet the total 8-hour obligation. Exception: If your family has swimmers in the Girls/Boys HS groups ONLY, then you will be required to work 4 hours during the meet.
- For each 4-hour shift worked in a premium job role, it will be counted as 8-hours (essentially you meet your requirement with a single 4-hour shift). ***These premium job roles are:***
 - *Timer*
 - *Head Timer*
 - *Colorado Operator (training required)*
 - *Hytex Operator*
- For **each** shift worked beyond your 8-hour requirement, you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win raffle prizes.
- Job Sign-Up information and deadline will be communicated by the Volunteer Coordinator in September. If you have not signed up for your shifts at the time of the Job Sign-Up deadline, you will be assigned a role as determined by the Volunteer Coordinator.
- If you are a no-show to your shift(s) or leave early, this will be considered zero hours worked for that shift. We understand life happens sometimes, in these instances you need to contact the Volunteer Coordinator ASAP so back-up coverage may be obtained.
There are some jobs that may run longer depending upon how the meet is progressing (Timer, Head Timer, Colorado Operator, HyTek Operator, Meet Runner) and you are expected to finish out the shift even if it surpasses the 4-hour mark.

- If you do not fulfill the 8 hours per family requirement, you will not be considered in good standing with the club. During registration for the next season, you will not receive priority registration as a returning family. Your registration will be accepted along with new families.
- Your service hour obligation can be fulfilled by another swim family, family member such as grandparent, or friend. Please communicate to the Volunteer Coordinator who will be filling your job shifts on your behalf.

Considerations:

- We understand there will be occasional, unique exceptions to fulfilling the service hour obligation for home meets. We will be doing our best to communicate everything as early as possible so you can coordinate your schedule well in advance. If circumstances come up that prevent you from fulfilling your home meet service hours, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as you possibly can. The Volunteer Coordinator may have some duties the club needs assistance with to enable you to meet your service hour obligation in another manner, and the club is looking to create volunteer opportunities, such as committees, that can count toward your family's obligation.
- You will be able to step away from your assigned job to watch your swimmer. We plan for this and that's why every job role has at least 2 positions staffed. In some cases, you may be the only one in your role and in that case, contact the Volunteer Coordinator to make arrangements so you can step away to watch your swimmer.
- On-deck roles like Timers, Colorado/Hytek Operators, and Officials can step away momentarily to use the restroom or make a phone call. Instructions will be given to you at the beginning of your shift on how to request someone step in for you. Meet personnel try to bring around water and check-in frequently with these on-deck roles to keep everyone comfortable.

Summary

Our club is non-profit and the work required to keep our club operating and offering reasonable registration fees cannot be done without everyone contributing. MSS wants a club culture where everyone knows the expectations of membership and willingly contributes. Parent involvement is not just encouraged, it is expected. To be a member of the Sharks means you not only

have a swimmer in the club, it also means you are actively participating in club hosted meets/events.

6-1. Practice Sessions

The length of a practice session depends on whether your child swims with the Senior, Extreme, Travelers, Kickers, or Minis team. A normal format for a practice is as follows:

- Arrive early, if possible, to help with any set up.
- Sit quietly on the bleachers for attendance, news items and instructions. Running in the halls or locker rooms is strictly prohibited.
- Participate in group stretching.
- Participate in dry land activities (generally for older swimmers).
- Complete warm-up swimming.
- Complete main sets swimming.
- Complete cool-down swimming.
- Help with equipment storage.

This is a generalized version of a practice session. We try to make the practice as much fun as possible, but most of our practice sets are hard work, which is how improvement is made. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend practice sessions.

Behavior at Practice Sessions

It is expected that team members will arrive at practice sessions on time with the appropriate equipment (i.e. suit, goggles, towel). Swimmers who work hard at practice will be rewarded with the satisfaction of knowing they've done their best. It will show on meet day, too.

Attendance and Punctuality

Swimmers need to develop good, lifelong habits of punctuality. Being on time to all of the practices and MSS events will promote this. Swimmers who are unable to attend practice should call or e-mail the coaches. Attendance on a regular basis is also essential to good, steady progress.

Safety

Good safe habits are primary to the team and its members. Swimming can be a sport that is relatively free of accidents and injuries. However, swimmers must

follow the rules set by the McFarland Pool Staff and the MSS Coaches. This includes listening to the staff at any other facility we rent as well. Any swimmer who is not practicing safe pool habits may be suspended from all MSS activities.

MSS is a Safe Sport Designated Club and follows all safety directives of both Wisconsin Swimming and USA Swimming. As a Safe Sport Designated Club MSS follows the guidelines set forth in the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy, developed by the Center for Safe Sport and adopted by USA Swimming.

Please refer to the Safe Sport Tab on the MSS website for complete details regarding the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy and the steps our Club takes to keep all Club members safe.

The team takes safety seriously, and encourages swimmers and families to follow this common advice: “if you see something, say something.”

6-2. Philosophy of Competition

Meet participation is optional; however, it is encouraged. It is highly recommended that swimmers compete on a regular basis. Meets provide swimmers with an important “yardstick” by which to measure their progress. Without meets swimmers are unaware of their improvement and potential. Swimmers who do not compete will eventually feel no sense of goal accomplishments and it will reflect in their practices.

Entry fees for each competitor are not refundable. Swimmers who do not show for a meet are responsible for their fees and the fees of the relay team if applicable. Parents who have mixed feelings about entering their swimmer in meet should consult one of the coaches.

Our MSS hosted meets are strongly encouraged for all swimmers. Parents must volunteer, and this is a good opportunity for the swimmers to swim in the comfort of their own pool.

6-3. Behavior at Meets

Swimmers’ actions at meets reflect on the McFarland Spartan Sharks as a team. It is expected that a swimmer’s actions will reflect his or her pride in the team.

As a matter of courtesy to the officials and meet hosts, it is expected that swimmers and parents stay off the deck and competition venue unless they are officiating, competing or coaching. This is also a USA Swimming rule.

In addition, for the safety of our swimmers:

- Deck changing is not allowed at meets.
- No cameras are allowed behind the blocks.
- No adults are allowed in locker rooms.

Please refer all questions regarding meet results, disqualifications, or conduct of the meet to an MSS coach or board member. They will then pursue the matter through proper channels.

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

6-4. Classification and Types of Meets

Home Meets and Parent Support

Great meets rely on great parent support. The logistics of a meet can be staggering unless people work together for the common good of the team. MSS has a history of enthusiastic parent volunteerism, which benefits the organization as well as the individual swimmer. Please volunteer your time.

Dual Meets

A portion of the Sharks schedule includes “dual” meets, consisting of the McFarland Spartan Sharks and one other team. These meets are USS sanctioned. They are also an excellent opportunity for beginning swimmers to participate in future USA Swimming meets.

Age-Group Meets

There are seven age groups in USA Swimming:

- 8 & under
- 10 & under
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 15-16
- 17-18
- Or sometimes 13 & O, 15-18 or Senior

The open age group includes any USA Swimming registered swimmers. Age on the first day of the meet will govern the swimmer's age for the entire meet.

Within each age group, different ability levels or Time Standards (C, B, A, AA, AAA, AAAA) are identified. The USA Swimming Organization establishes these time standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time (cut) for that particular event. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels. For a list of the current age group motivational time standards, please see USA swimming website.

The Wisconsin State Championship meets run in a similar way. Swimmers must obtain a certain time standard (cut) to attend this meet. Similar to making an "A" time to attend an "A+" meet. For a list of Wisconsin Short course and Long course time standards, please check the Wisconsin swimming web page at www.wisconsinswimming.org.

USA Swimming meets must be refereed by USA Swimming officials, must be USA Swimming sanctioned for final standings and times to count toward a swimmer's official record and ranking, and must utilize an approved timing system.

Timed Finals Competition vs. Preliminary/Finals Competition Meets

Most meets we attend have a timed final format, meaning that a swimmer will swim an event one time and final placings are determined by the time swum.

However, some meets have a preliminary/final format. At these meets a swimmer could swim twice. All swimmers will swim their events earlier in the day. Then the top 24 swimmers (see note) with the fastest times will qualify to swim again at a finals session usually held at night. *(Note: The number of swimmers to qualify for a finals session is determined by the host team and can be found in the meet information.)*

Should the swimmer qualify for a finals swim, the heats will consist of the top 8 (or number defined in the meet information) swimmers will be in the A or Championship final. Swimmers qualifying 9th-16th will be in the B or

Consolation final. Swimmers qualifying 17th-24th will be in the C or Bonus final.

Each swimmer who qualifies for a final swim has the opportunity to improve their final placing within their bracket. For example, a swimmer who qualifies 16th could swim faster at the finals session to end up in 9th place. They may not however move higher than 9th even if their time places them 2nd overall. Additionally they will not drop lower than 16th should their finals swim be slower than 16th place. Please read the meet information or ask the coach for additional information.

6-5. Other Meet Formats

Wisconsin Championship Meet

To qualify for this meet, which showcases the best swimmers our state has to offer, certain established time standards (cuts) must be met. Please visit www.wisconsinswimming.org for both the short course and long course state cuts.

Central Zone Championship Meet

This meet allows an entire statewide team to train together for one meet, to establish regional rivalries and to build team spirit by having a true “team meet”. A swimmer must be a registered member of USA Swimming (regular membership, not seasonal), and have achieved a AAA time or faster in an individual event in a USA Swimming Sanctioned Meet between the first week of August and the last week of July of every year. Current motivational time standards are located on the USA Swimming website. Swimmers with Junior/Senior National Championship times cannot swim those events or swim related legs of relays at the Zone meet. Qualifying times for the Open Water events are "A" or better times in the longest freestyle event for each age group. Please visit [http:// www.centralzones.org/index.htm](http://www.centralzones.org/index.htm) for more information.

Speedo Championship Series Meet

This meet could potentially feature Olympic champions to swimmers slightly slower than the former Junior National time standards. A swimmer must be an annual registered member of USA Swimming (regular membership, not seasonal), and have achieved a Speedo Meet qualifying time during the year prior at a USA Swimming sanctioned meet. More information about the Speedo meets may be found at www.usaswimming.org

Junior National Meets:

This meet is open to all swimmers ages 18 and under who are regular registered members of USA swimming (not seasonal) and who have achieved a Junior National time standard during the prior year. This standard must be achieved at a USA Swimming sanctioned meet. Those standards are located in the USA Swimming rule book.

Senior National Meets

This meet features past and future Olympians. It is open to all ages of swimmers who have achieved a senior national time standard during the prior year. A swimmer must be a registered member of USA Swimming (regular membership, not seasonal) in order to compete. The time standards are available from the USA Swimming Rule Book.

6-6. Swim Meet Sign-up

The meet sign up is done on our website. Swimmers must sign up for meets prior to the deadline. Swimmers who are not on the list will not be entered in the meet. Our website address is www.spartansharks.com.

6-7. Swim Meet Procedures

The following items outline some swim meet procedures:

- Transportation to and from meets is the responsibility of each family. Carpools can be arranged, however, written parental permission is required/advised.
- Swimmers should be to warm-ups on time and should never warm-up without a team coach on deck!
- Swimmers should obtain a heat sheet and check to see if they are properly entered in events. Any mistakes should be brought to the attention of the coach. . Swimmers must know what they are swimming!
- Swimmers should sit together as a team or with family members. Each swimmer is responsible to make it to the blocks on time. It is not the coaches' responsibility if an event is missed.
- Swimmers should always talk with the coaches before and after events for advice.
- Swimmers can ask one of the timers for their unofficial times at the end of the event.

- Swimmers are asked to rest and not run around between events. Energy should be conserved for the race.
- All sharks are asked to wear a black Speedo suit and team cap at meets.

6-8. Things to Bring to Meets

Some items to bring to a swim meet are listed as follows:

- Team swimsuit (an extra might also be a good idea)
- Team swim cap
- Goggles (an extra pair might also be a good idea)
- Towel
- Sweatsuit/team warm-up
- Sandals
- Quiet games, books or music
- Nutritious snacks
- Lock for the locker if you are leaving your bag in the locker room

6-9. Meet Recognition

- **Heat Winner Ribbon:** Sometimes awarded to the winner of each heat. Sometimes the heat winner will receive other awards at the discretion of the meet host.
- **Medal/Ribbon:** Sometimes awarded to the top 6 or 8 swimmers of each event. Please remember the difference between a heat and an event.
- **Achiever Certificate:** Sometimes awarded for a jump in qualifying times. For example, jumping from a “C” time to a “B” time standard.
- **High Point Award:** Sometimes awarded to individuals who have the most total points for their age group in a meet.
- **Team Trophy:** Sometimes awarded to the team with the most points.

Some USA Swimming meets are not scored. These meets serve a different purpose. Usually they qualify swimmers for state or zone cuts.

Please remember the best award out there is getting your best time or gaining points for the team!

Club Recognition MSS Awards Program

Our awards program is designed to encourage swimmers of all abilities to work hard towards their personal goals. In order to emphasize this we have developed

tools that encourage swimmers to continually strive to improve their technique and therefore their times.

When younger swimmers attend meets our coaches focus on their times and award Sharks with pins for “best times.” These pins can be displayed on their backpacks and encourage them to work hard to collect more. Coaches award these to the swimmers at the meet or at their earliest convenience.

As kids continue to grow in their swimming we offer the patch program. This is a series of patches that kids can earn by swimming nationally standardized times. (These times are geared for 9 year old and older swimmers) In order to participate in this program, parents sign up a swimmer at the start of the summer or winter season. Age group patches are given to each swimmer entered in the program. Other patches are put in swimmer pool folders as they earn them and billed to their splash account monthly.

Our Travelers and Extreme teams have Sharks on the bulletin board that can be moved into different lanes to show their achievements. This is a fun way to encourage Sharks to strive for faster times and it is led by our coaches. This is similar to the patch program but it is free.

Our state swimmers receive a “State Team” gold cap for the state meet and also a treat bag of sorts. We are thrilled for all the hard work they have put in and want to send them off with a “Shark Surprise.” It is a privilege to swim at the state meet and both our relay and individual swimmers are following a tradition of competing at the highest level in the state for our club and our community. Shark Power!

Coaches award Team Record Holder pins annually at the awards banquet for swimmers who achieve this honor. Also, each swimmer who competed for MSS at the state meet will receive a State Team trophy.

When a swimmer (8-14) achieves a national “AAA” or “triple A” time they are eligible to compete for Team Wisconsin at the Zone meet. This is held annually in August. Swimmers register online through the WI Swimming website link. Parents can also purchase team gear when they register their swimmers. MSS is proud to support our Zone swimmers with a surprise and also to put their names on our pool bulletin board. Shark “AAA” Power!

Some of our senior swimmers move on to elite competitions at the National level. As a Speedo team we are able to provide them with a suit, backpack and warm-ups. Our club has these items embroidered with our logo and the athlete's name and awards these competitors a "National Team" towel (or other item). If an athlete attends the Speedo Summer National meet or the Olympic Trials then their names are added to the appropriate banners on display at the pool. We've been known to throw parties to allow our younger kids to encourage their teammates and celebrate these Shark successes.

Our team has a long and proud history of developing fast swimmers and incredible coaches. Shark Power!

End of year banquet

At the conclusion of the MSS Fall/Winter session, the team gathers for an awards banquet to honor the performance of our club as a whole and to honor outstanding accomplishments or achievements of individual members over the past year. Trophies may be presented to State participants at this time. If presented, they will only be given to those who swam at the State Meet. This does not include alternates.

7-1. Meet Locations and Directions

See the meet information located on wiswimming.org meet section for the pool address and meet location. Online resources are encouraged to be used for direction to each pool location.

8-1. Nutrition

Probably the most neglected form of athletic training is the way in which athletes fuel themselves. Athletes train their bodies day after day, yet feed themselves with all sorts of unhealthy substances. Swimmers must make the effort to eat properly in order to give their bodies the necessary nutrition to maintain good health and enhance athleticism.

[Find nutrition information on the USA Swimming website.](#)

9-1. Swimming: The Skills

The following definitions offer general explanations of the strokes and are intended to give a visual concept of the motions involved. Please contact a member of the coaching staff for a more complete explanation.

The four competitive strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly.

- **Freestyle:** The competitor may swim any stroke he or she wishes. The usual stroke used is the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate overhand motion of the arms and an alternating up and down flutter kick.
- **Backstroke:** The competitor must stay on their back at all times except when initiating the flip turn. The usual stroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick. Swimmers must stay on their backs until they touch the wall at the finish.
- **Breaststroke:** The breaststroke is perhaps the most difficult stroke to master. It requires simultaneous movements of the arms and legs on a horizontal plane. The hands are pulled from the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered out in front of the body in a streamline position. The kick is a simultaneous, somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog kick. Flutter, scissors or dolphin kicks are not permitted. On turns and at the finish, both hands must touch the wall simultaneously.
- **Butterfly:** Features a simultaneous overhand stroke of the arms combined with a dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not use the flutter, scissors, or breaststroke kicks.
- **Individual medley:** The individual medley (or "IM") features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to backstroke, then changes after another fourth of the race to the breaststroke, and completes the final fourth of the race with the freestyle.
- **Medley relay:** All four strokes are swum in a relay form. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the fourth freestyle.
- **Freestyle relay:** Consists of the four swimmers, all swimming freestyle.

Starts & Turns

Many races are won or lost by the swimmer's performance at the start and turns. In the start, the swimmer steps onto the blocks or enters the water (backstroke) at the sound of the whistle. The starter will then give the command, "take your mark." Swimmer's should get into a set position and stay set until the sound of the gun or horn. If the starter feels that someone has moved too early, that swimmer will be disqualified after the race. Turns are also a very important part of every swim. Fast turns can make a fast swimmer. Many different turns are used in all four of the strokes; consequently, it is important to practice these turns as much as possible.

9-2. The Courses

Competition pools may be short course (25 yards or meters), or long course (50 meters). The international standard used in the Olympics is 50 meters.

The abbreviations are as follows:

- SCY = Short Course Yards (25 Yards)
- SCM= Short Course Meters (25 Meters)
- LCM= Long Course Meters (50 Meters)

If a swimmer was to swim in each one of these pools, he or she would find that his or her fastest times would be in the 25 yard pool, the second fastest times would be in the 25 meter pool and the slowest times would be in the 50 meter pool. The turns really make a difference!

10-1. Officials

Officials are present at all competitions to implement the technical rules of swimming and to ensure that the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass written tests and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved in officiating.

- **Timers:** Operate timing devices (watches or automatic timing systems) and record the official time for the swimmer in his or her lane.
- **Turn judges:** Observe from each end of the pool and ensure that the turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke.

- **Stroke judges:** Observe from both sides of the pool, walking abreast of the swimmers, to ensure that the rules relating to each stroke are being followed. Note: The positions of Stroke Judge and Turn Judge may be combined into one position called the Stroke and Turn Judge.
- **Relay takeoff judges:** Stand beside the starting blocks to observe the relay exchange, ensuring that the feet of the departing swimmer have not lost contact with the block before the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.
- **Clerk of the course:** Arranges the swimmers in their proper heats and lanes before the event. Usually there is a clerk of the course only for 10 & under swimmers.
- **Starter:** Assumes control of the swimmers from the Referee, directs them to “take your mark,” and sees that no swimmer is in motion prior to giving the start signal.
- **Referee:** Has overall authority and control of the competition, ensuring that the rules are followed; assigns and instructs all officials; and decides all questions relating to the conduct of the meet.

Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee, and the rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmer or coach of the disqualification.

Parents are reminded to be supportive rather than critical if their child is disqualified (DQ'd) in an event. For beginning swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to areas of correction in the swimmer's stroke. More info available at www.usaswimming.org

10-2: Swimming Terms

- **Anchor:** The swimmer who swims the last leg on a relay team.
- **Backstroke flags:** A line of flags stretched across the pool 15 feet inside each end of the course to help swimmers know when they are approaching the wall.
- **Block:** The starting platform
- **Circle swimming:** Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.
- **Cool-down:** Low intensity swimming used to rid body of excess lactic acid and keep muscles loose after a swim.
- **Cut:** Slang for qualifying time standard. Time standards are necessary to attend a particular meets or events.

- **Delay of meet:** Swimmers who do not report to the block on time or are late getting on the blocks after the whistle.
- **DQ:** Acronym for disqualification.
- **Entry fee:** Fee paid to the host club for each individual event that a swimmer enters. Typical cost ranges from \$3 to \$8 per individual event and \$10 to \$17 per relay (team).
- **False start:** If a swimmer moves or leaves the starting blocks too soon.
- **Heat:** A division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time (i.e. the event has more swimmers than lanes)
- **IM:** Acronym for Individual Medley.
- **Lap:** Two lengths of the pool equal a lap.
- **LCM:** Acronym for long-course meter; 50-meter pool
- **Motivational times:** Age group motivational time standards set by USA swimming located on their website at www.usaswimming.org
- **Scratch:** To withdraw from an event in a competition.
- **SCM:** Acronym for short-course meter; 25-meter pool.
- **Seed time:** Time for an event attained at a previous meet.
- **Splash fee:** \$2 charge paid by each swimmer to Wisconsin Swimming per meet entered.
- **Split:** A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. The split time shows the length of time taken to swim a particular section of a race.
- **Sprint:** Describes the shorter events (25, 50 & 100's)
- **SCY:** Acronym for short-course yard; 25-yard pool.
- **Time trial:** A time-only swim, which is not part of a regular meet. Separate fees apply.
- **USA Swimming:** United States Swimming, Inc. www.usaswimming.org
- **Warm-up:** Warming up to slowly stretch out, increase blood flow in the muscles, increase muscle temp, and review swimming technique/turns/starts.