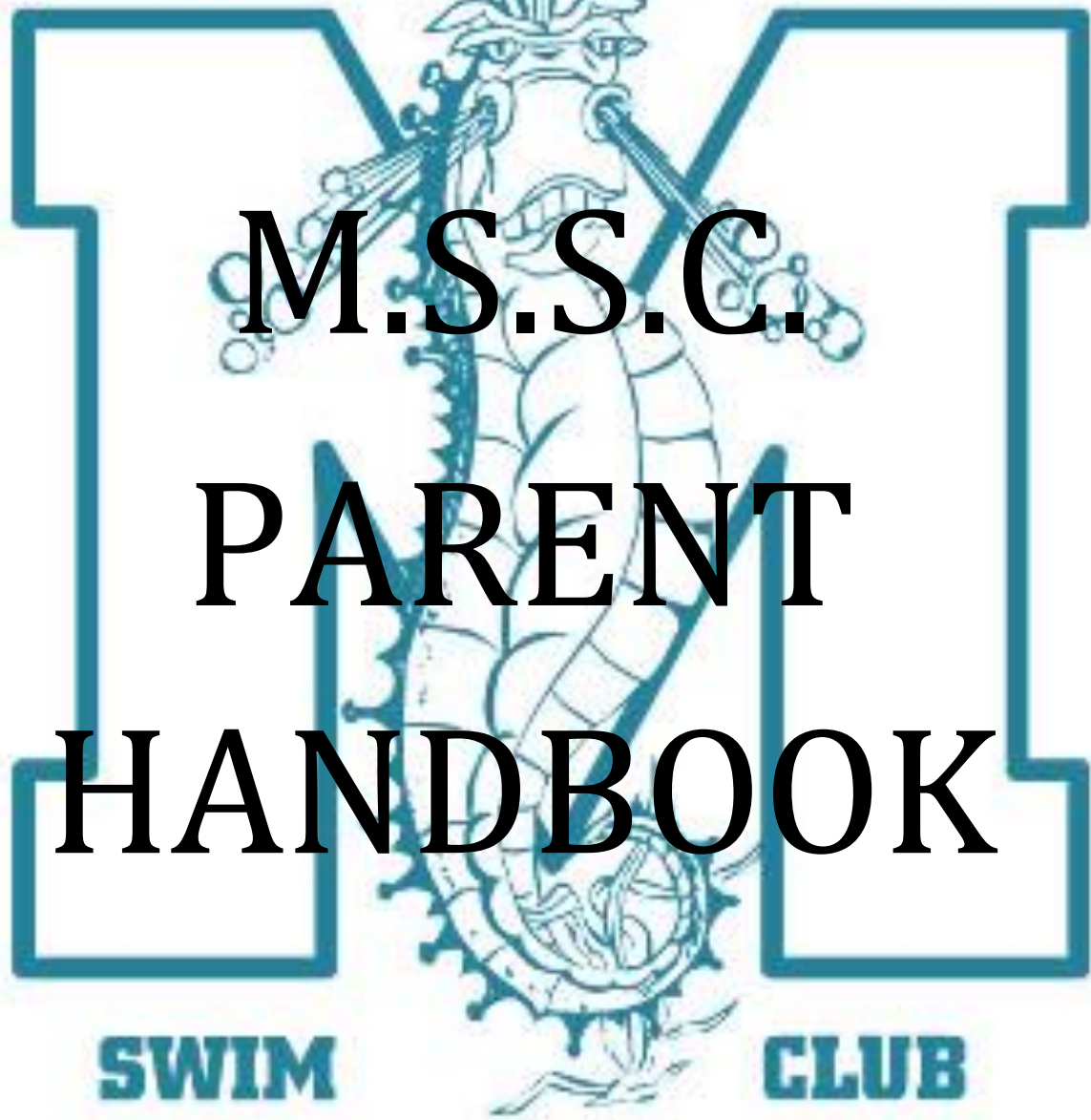


**MORRISON**

**SEAHORSE**



**M.S.S.C.**  
**PARENT**  
**HANDBOOK**

**SWIM**

**CLUB**

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## INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this "Parent's Manual" is to prepare parents and swimmers of the Morrison Seahorse Swim Club (MSSC) for the complexities and promises of the world of competitive swimming. The coaching staff hopes that you will find time to read this handbook in its entirety throughout the coming season and then refer to it later as a resource when questions arise. New information and innovation necessitate the need to add pages at various times, so check for these updates. It is hoped that the handbook will make you a more knowledgeable participant in your team and swimming in general so that you can be more supportive of your swimmer. It is no surprise that the more successful swimmers and teams are those who have supportive and well-informed parents.

From the beginning, you should know that your involvement with MSSC will necessitate your assuming certain responsibilities and investments of your time and money. The amount of this investment will be small when compared to the benefits that you and your swimmer will gain in the long run.

Being a member of MSSC is not all about responsibilities and investments. Swimming is a sport full of opportunities--opportunities to meet new friends, get to know your children in new ways, help your swimmers learn to win graciously and lose gracefully, be part of a bigger family, direct your children towards challenging and attainable goals, learn about success, develop positive physical traits, and give your children wonderful alternatives to undesirable after-school activities. Take advantage of these opportunities, because in this fast-paced world, they don't come along as often as they should.

The purpose of MSSC is to give the athletes a fun, positive environment in which they can strive to meet their potential. Swimming is a lifetime sport, as evidenced by the worldwide emergence of Masters Swimming that has competitors over 100 years old! Very few swimmers make it to the Olympics, but that does not make anyone a failure. In fact, swimming can produce winners in so many more ways than ribbons or medals. In a recent survey, it was found that a higher percentage of Collegiate Academic All-Americans came from the sport of swimming than any other sport! You get all this, in addition to the fact that swimming is one of the best total-body workouts in all of sport.

MSSC strives to work together in a family-friendly environment. We are glad you have decided to join our family, and we look forward to getting to know you better!

# Welcome aboard!

## **HISTORY AND MISSION OF MSSC**

MSSC's long history began in 1972 by a group of individuals who foresaw a future for swimming in Morrison. They convinced the high school P.E. teacher, who was also the manager of the new pool, that a swim team was feasible. Together they wrote the bylaws, organized and chartered Morrison's first age group competitive swim club under the existing USA Swimming rules.

From its inception the club has enjoyed excellent support from local individuals, organizations, and businesses. In the beginning, people with competitive swim backgrounds acted as assistants in teaching strokes, administering guidance and running the competitive meets. Everyone, including the head coaches, acted on a completely volunteer basis. As the program has grown, the United Way Fund, club dues, and various fundraising activities have met increased financial needs.

Former Seahorse achievements include: multiple state champions; several state records, All American honors, a National age group record holder; both Junior and senior US National qualifiers; a member of the National team, and two qualifiers to the Olympic Trials. As well as numerous former Seahorses who are now swim coaches in various organizations.

Today, it is a non-profit chartered club. A Board of Directors composed of elected parents governs the club. Parents, grandparents, and interested friends of the program support the board and willingly volunteer their time to help the team. MSSC is affiliated with USA Swimming, the national governing body for the sport of swimming.

MSSC's mission is to encourage and further competitive amateur swimming not only in the City of Morrison but in the Whiteside County area. Corollary purposes shall be the development of a competitive age group swim team, the promotion of mutual interest of the Club's members, the participation in and promotion of group activities pertinent to the organization. The Club will maintain organizational and individual swimmer membership in the USA Swimming, Inc. and abide by all the rules and regulations of USA Swimming, Inc.

MSSC provides an opportunity for individuals to learn to swim competitively in a variety of swim meets, to endeavor to keep swimming a fun learning experience, to meet new friends, and to develop a team spirit and an individual personal pride in accomplishment. MSSC offers more than swimming competition. It offers an introduction to a life-long aerobic conditioning program. It leads to responsibility through participation and individual discipline. Competitive swimming skills are measured by time standards. It leads to responsibility through participation and individual discipline. Pride in accomplishment follows personal improvement; effort leads to achievement. Team unity and self-reliance develop concurrently. Self-confidence is one of swimming's positive benefits. The experience of meeting new groups of young people in competition, which accentuates individual improvement against time standards, increases self-confidence and social poise. Lowering one's time in an event makes that swimmer a winner, whether they are first, sixth, or fiftieth in a race.

Team Rules,  
Responsibilities,  
and  
Policies

### **MSSC Membership Requirements**

For a swimmer to obtain membership in the Morrison Seahorse Swim Club, the following requirements must be met:

- Members and parents/guardians (if athlete is under age 18) must sign and return the membership REGISTRATION FORM before the athlete's participation in the program.
- Members must be registered for the current year with USA Swimming.

Members transferring from another club within Illinois must pay a transfer fee. The transfer will be done by the club Treasurer and the appropriate fees will be added to your bill.

- Members must meet minimum swimming requirements as set forth by the coaching staff.
- Members must maintain current balances on their accounts for all training and meet entry fees. Swimmers will not be allowed in the water unless all past and present fees are paid or prior arrangements have been made with the Treasurer. If a member becomes 30 days delinquent, the parent board has the right to revoke membership until payment is made. **Please see the team Financial Policies.**
- Members must abide by all rules of the MSSC, Morrison Community Pool, and USA Swimming.

For a non-swimmer to obtain a membership in the Morrison Seahorse Swim Club, the following requirements must be met:

- Active membership will confer upon all adults living in the same household one vote in the organization on matters coming before the general membership. The Board of Directors may require an annual fee as a condition of this membership
- Honorary membership may be conferred for life upon any person who, in the opinion of Board of Directors, has made such significant contributions to the sport of swimming and to the Club that they should be recognized in this fashion. An Honorary Member is entitled to one vote on all matters coming before the general membership
- Staff membership may be conferred upon on all employees over the age of 18 who are compensated by the Club for their coaching duties.
- Membership in more than one category is permitted, but one vote per person

**Expulsion:** Any member, regardless of category (active, honorary, or staff) may be expelled for conduct or such significant financial delinquency which, in the opinion of the majority of the Board of Directors, is detrimental to the welfare of the Club.

## **Board of Directors**

The normal business of the Club shall be conducted by the Board of Directors and the Board shall establish and administer the Club's policies. The Board shall elect its officers from among its members. Election of officers shall be held yearly and re-established at the Annual Meeting. The Board shall consist of seven Active or Honorary Members and shall have four officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Board will also consist of three parent representatives who will head and coordinate the following committees: Special Events, Communications, and Awards. The duties of the officers shall include but are not limited to descriptions included. The Board will also have an Athlete Representative (swimmer) as well as a Team Manager (Head of Personnel). These nine Board members shall have one vote at any meeting of the Board.

## **OFFICERS**

### **PRESIDENT**

The President shall conduct the meetings of the general membership of the Club and the meetings of the Board of Directors. The President shall schedule and approve all such meetings. Any requests for a special meeting of the Board of Directors or the membership shall be submitted in writing to the President for approval. The President may appoint such ad hoc committees as the President deems appropriate. The President shall annually appoint the Club's ISI delegate. The President works with all the committee coordinators in smoothly facilitating the Club, and is a big help to the Awards Coordinator.

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice-President shall assume such duties and responsibilities as delegated by the President and shall preside in the absence of the President at meetings. The Vice President works with the Special Events Coordinator to help facilitate events for the Club.

### **TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the financial records and accounts of the Club. The Treasurer shall receive all funds paid to the Club and shall account for all dues, receipts, and expenditures. He/She shall make a financial report to the members at all membership meetings and be responsible for all fees and filings made to Illinois Swimming, Inc. as well as meet fees. The Treasurer shall submit to the Board of Directors and the membership an annual financial report and records shall be open for inspection by any member upon reasonable notice and request. The Treasurer shall help work with the committee coordinators on budgeting for their committees.

### **SECRETARY**

The Secretary shall keep permanent minutes of all Board meetings and all membership meetings. The Secretary shall be custodian of the permanent records of the Club, except those to be maintained by the Treasurer. The Secretary shall publish a list of Board of Directors, their addresses and telephone numbers, and shall publish updated membership

rosters as provided by ISI. The Secretary shall be responsible for all Club correspondence. He or She shall notify the membership of any membership meetings. The Secretary will work in collaboration with the Communications Committee Coordinator in any area they might need help.

### **REPRESENTATIVES- 3 NON OFFICER POSITIONS**

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

The Board of Director Representative who heads the Special Events Committee helps coordinate and facilitate all swim meets. They would work alongside the Meet Director and make sure things run smoothly. The Special Events Coordinator appoints members to the committee and delegate various tasks to their committee. Such events include but are not limited to: fundraisers, swim meets, lining up volunteers for the previous stated events, and assisting the President in organizing the annual meeting/banquet. Vice President assists.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

The Board of Director Representative who heads the Communications Committee helps coordinate and is not limited to: newsletters, website, newspaper articles, school fliers and press needed to promote the Club. The Communications Committee Coordinator will be helped by the Secretary as well as other Committee members. He/she will appoint members and delegate various tasks to their committee.

#### **AWARDS COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

The Board of Director Representative who heads the Awards Committee helps coordinate and is not limited to: swim meet individual awards, heat winners, and high point trophies; banquet awards, swimmer of the week incentives and practice incentives. The Awards Committee Coordinator will appoint members and delegate various tasks to their committee. They will be assisted by the Team Manager.

#### **ATHLETE REPRESENTATIVE**

The Athlete Representative will be a liaison for the swimmers and the Board of Directors. This allows the Athletes to have a vote and say in Club business. The Athlete Representative will hold a monthly meeting of team members during the swim season. The Athlete Representative will be assisted by the Team Manager and elected by his/her peers.

#### **TEAM MANAGER**

The Team Manager is responsible for assisting and reporting to the Board of Directors anything that is in need of being addressed at membership meetings or Board of Director Meetings. The Team Manager will do all meet entries, results, and be a liaison for Personnel and the Board of Directors. The Team Manager will be handling the day to day functions and responsibilities to the team and help all Committee Coordinators in their functions. The Team Manager will assist the Athlete Representative in being a voice for the majority of the team



### **ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

Election to the Board of Directors shall be by plurality vote and shall take place at the annual meeting of the membership. The term of office for each director shall be two years, but there shall be no limit to the number of successive terms for which a director may be elected. The terms of the members of the Board of Directors shall be staggered so that three members shall be elected in one year and four members shall be elected in the next year. President, Secretary, Special Events Coordinator, and Awards Coordinator shall be elected odd years, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Communications Coordinator shall be elected even years. Athlete Representative will be voted on as needed by swimmers. Team Manager shall be depending on Personnel.

### **MEETINGS AND QUORUMS**

There shall be an annual meeting of the membership held in March. A special meeting of the membership may be called by the President, by his or her own action or upon written request of not less than ten members. Each member/family shall be given at least seven days' notice of any meeting. A majority vote will be taken by those members present, no proxies will be permitted.

### **DUES AND FEES/FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Dues, fees, and other monetary charges shall be established by the Board and shall be paid at such intervals determined by the Board. Delinquency will be handled by the Board as previously stated. The financial management shall be responsibility of the Board of Directors and the Treasurer shall keep accurate records thereof.

### **COACHES**

The Board of Directors shall hire such employees as necessary and appropriate to further the goals and purposes of the Club. The coach or coaches shall be solely responsible for the training and coaching of the swimmers. The Board shall establish the terms and conditions of such employment.

### **DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution or other termination of the Morrison Seahorses Swim Club, the funds and properties of the Club in the excess of its liabilities shall be paid or distributed in accordance with the decision of the existing general membership by majority vote of the members present at a duly called membership meeting.

### **AMMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS**

Any amendment to these Bylaws may be proposed by the Board of Directors or by the lesser of ten member families or twenty percent of the current member families, which proposal shall bear all the signatures of all such members and be first submitted in writing to the President. Any proposed amendment to the Bylaws shall be distributed to the membership at least three days prior to the meeting. The vote on any proposal to amend the Bylaws may take place at a regular or special meeting of the membership.

Any vote to amend the Bylaws of the Club shall require the affirmative vote of the two-thirds of the member families present at any such regular or special membership meeting.

## **MSSC TEAM RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Morrison Seahorse Swim Club promotes good, wholesome, physical activity to its participants. In the interest of creating and maintaining a positive atmosphere for the team, the following team rules and disciplinary code and procedures was adopted on April 29, 2011 by the Board of Directors. In addition to the disciplinary code here are the expectations:

### **SWIMMERS**

#### **Expectations**

- Swimmers will treat other adults (Parents, Officials, other Coaches, etc.) with the same respect extended to the MSSC Coaching Staff.
- All swimmers will exhibit the generally recognized attributes of good sportsmanship towards their teammates, competitors, and officials.
- Swimmers who miss practices due to illness should let the Head Coach know as soon as possible.
- Swimmers will encourage their teammates through positive comments and through cheering for them during races.
- Swimmers will avoid any derogatory remarks concerning teammates, competitors, coaches, parents, etc.
- All swimmers (excepting those in their first two weeks of trying the team) shall be members of USA Swimming's local branch—Illinois Swimming Inc.
- Swimmers shall notify the Head Coach as early as possible in the event that they will not be attending a scheduled meet. The meet fees will still have to be paid for by the swimmer.
- The decisions of officials are not to be questioned.
- The Head Coach's decision is final.
- Always follow the rules of a host pool when the team is at an away meet.
- Team members should represent MSSC by wearing their team suits, shirts, etc.
- Between races, swimmers will be expected to stay warm and, at outdoor meets, avoid sunburns.
- Experienced swimmers will be expected to help less experienced and younger swimmers listen for their events at meets.
- Swimmers shall be prepared to participate in relays at meets they sign-up to attend.

## **Disciplinary Code of Conduct**

### **Class I Objectionable Behavior:**

Unacceptable Behavior (including, but not limited to): Sale or distribution of illegal drugs; conviction of felony and fighting that results in the severe bodily injury of any person (regardless whether at a club activity or not). Including, but not limited to, activity that would be breaking the law.

#### ***Disciplinary Procedure:***

- Board shall send notice of hearing to parent/guardian and swimmer via certified mail.
- Hearing before the Board of Directors with parent/guardian and swimmer being given the opportunity to be present; the facts shall be presented by the Board President or his/her designee; Head Coach shall be present in advisory role.
- Board decision to be mailed to the parent/guardian and swimmer within one week via certified mail.

#### ***Recommended Discipline:***

- 1st offense: Suspension\* from the team for a minimum period of thirty (30) days of the swimmer's season (these days may extend into the swimmer's next season, if needed).
- 2nd offense: Suspension\* from the team for a minimum period of sixty (60) days of the swimmer's season (these days may extend into the swimmer's next season, if needed).
- 3rd offense: Shall be considered by the Board of Directors and may result in membership termination or other action as determined by the Board of Directors.

\* Terms of suspension shall be spelled by the Board of Directors and must be adhered to by the swimmer/parents in order to be reinstated by the Board of Directors at the end of the suspension period. During the periods of suspension, swimmers remain a member of Morrison Seahorse Swim Club and thereby all dues and fees are still due in full from the swimmer. The swimmer cannot be reinstated until any fees and/or dues that are delinquent are paid in full. Additionally, during periods of suspension, all work session requirements remain the responsibility of the swimmer and any missed session will be charged in accordance with the then current fee schedule.

### **Class II Objectionable Behavior**

Unacceptable behavior at Morrison Seahorse Swim Club practices, competitions and team functions that include, but are not limited to: minor vandalism (locker rooms), being disruptive in practices or meets, abusive language or behavior, insubordination to members of the coaching staff, chaperones, or others, littering, bullying, swearing, spitting, pushing, throwing equipment, towel snapping, being disruptive in practices, and any other acts of misconduct as determined by the coaching staff.

***Disciplinary Procedure:***

- Handled by the Coaching staff (Parents will be involved depending on the situation).

***Recommended Discipline:***

As determined by the coaching staff (including but not limited to, extra laps, clean-up duties, suspension from practice, and/or suspension from meet(s)). Repeated Class II offenses may result in the offense being considered a Class I Objectionable Behavior if the offenses continue.

The following action will be taken in the event of inappropriate behavior during a practice:

- 1st offense: A warning will be given to the swimmer about their behavior explaining WHY behavior is unacceptable.
- 2nd offense: A SECOND warning will be given to the swimmer about their behavior along with stated physical/practice consequences for the behavior. Could possibly be calling parent/leaving practice as consequence.
- 3rd offense: SAID consequence will take place.
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense: Loss of fun set at the end of practice AND/OR parent called and kicked out of practice.

The Head Coach has the final say in the matter during the practice, each disciplinary step is determined by the specific infraction, and therefore it's on a case to case scenario.

Board of Directors will determine the final course of action as reflected on the swimmer's season.

**Expected Behavior at Swim Meets**

Any behavior as listed above or deemed inappropriate while at a swim meet will be handled as follows:

- The swimmer will automatically be scratched from the remainder of their individual events for the meet. In the event that the swimmer has completed their individual events at the meet, they will be suspended from the next meet they planned to attend.
- The swimmer may or may not be scratched from their relay events based on the availability of a replacement, the severity of the offense, and the discretion of the Parent and Head Coach. Every attempt will be made to avoid punishing other relay members for the inappropriate behavior of their teammates.

**PARENTS**

- Parents are expected to help the team in running meets, fund-raising, serving as officials, and/or serving on the MSSC Board.
- Parents are expected to express any concerns or frustrations in an appropriate manner that does not cause a scene in front of the swimmers. They are expected to voice their

concerns with the swimmer, then the Coach, and then, finally, the Board if their concern is not addressed.

- Parents are expected to model appropriate language, attire, and manners at functions where the swimmers are present.
- At meets that require overnight stays, Parents are expected to enforce the curfews set by the Coaching Staff.
- Parents are expected to keep all financial obligations to MSSC, as laid out in the team **Financial Policies**.

### **COACHES**

- Coaches will model appropriate language, attire, and manners.
- Coaches are to treat each swimmer as an individual and with respect, understanding differences in personal thinking.
- Coaches will make every effort to keep all lines of communication open.
- Coaches will pursue active education in the sport of swimming.
- Coaches are expected to make themselves available for questions, comments, and concerns on a reasonable basis.
- Coaches have the right to determine relay participants based on performance, attendance, attitude, and leadership.
- Use of illegal drugs is absolutely forbidden and will not be tolerated.

**NOTE:** There is a sign-off sheet acknowledging that you have read and agree to abide by these team rules. In order for your swimmer to participate in any MSSC activities, including practice, this sheet **MUST** be signed and returned prior to joining MSSC.

## **PARENT BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Congratulations! As a parent of a MSSC Team member, you are now part of the MSSC family. Membership in this family entitles you to some great benefits, and it also comes with some responsibilities.

### **Benefits:**

- The knowledge that your child is in a positive, healthy activity under the guidance of a coaching staff that care about your child's well-being.
- The opportunity to get to know a great group of kids whom your child will be spending a lot of time with during practices and meets.
- The opportunity to watch your child master new skills, deal with challenges, learn teamwork, and have fun.
- The knowledge that swimming is a low-impact, high-fitness exercise.
- The chance to meet new families in new towns at meets.
- The chance to learn about your child's activity by watching, listening, and asking questions of a knowledgeable coaching staff.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Please have your child to practice on time.
- Support your child unconditionally—remember that you are not the athlete or the coach.
- Encourage good nutritional habits.
- Check mailbox and read Monthly MSSC Newsletter with your swimmer- discuss the newsletter and be aware of any "homework" the coaching staff expects from your Swimmer.
- Encourage good sleeping habits.
- Encourage good posture.
- Follow the team **Financial Policies**
- Help the team run home swim meets (there are many ways to help!)
- Help the team with fundraisers such as concessions or Swim-A-Thons®
- Let the coach know if your swimmer will be missing practices.
- Let the coach know about any health-related issues your swimmer might encounter.
- Keep winning and losing in perspective—it is not as important to the kids as you think it is!

### **RELAY and MEET POLICIES**

If the swimmer owns a team suit it is to be worn at ALL meets unless authorized by the Head Coach. Special cases will be made in correlation with technical suits and Championship meets. All events will be chosen by the Head Coach and can be contested prior to the meet entry deadline by the parents or the swimmer. Such contesting needs to be done in a dignified and respectful manner. The Head Coach has the final say in meet events but the swimmer/parent input will be taken accordingly.

Some of the most exciting competitions in the sport of swimming are the relay events.

There are two main types of relays--freestyle races in which four swimmers all swim the same distance of the freestyle, and medley relays in which four swimmers each swim the same distance of one of the four competitive strokes. The order of strokes for a medley relay is the backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

At times, it can be difficult for coaches to determine which athletes will participate in a relay. In addition, it can be a frustration for swimmers and parents who may not agree with the decision of the Coach. Adding to this difficulty and frustration is the fact that swimmers from younger age groups can "age-up" or swim relays in age divisions for older swimmers. There actually may be times when the appropriate course of action is to age-up a younger swimmer who is more proficient than a swimmer in the older category.

The MSSC Coaching Staff recognizes that relay participation can be a touchy issue at times. In light of this realization, the team has set down the following policies.

1. The Head Coach shall make all relay decisions.
2. If a swimmer or parent wishes to question the decision of the Head Coach, they must do so in an appropriate manner.
3. If a parent or swimmer does question the decision of the Head Coach, the swimmer or parent has a right to an explanation from the Head Coach. The swimmer or parent may bring to light information that may change the decision.
4. Swimmers will be expected to swim in their assigned relays.
5. Swimmers who refuse to swim their assigned relays will be scratched from the remainder of their individual events for the meet. If the swimmer has completed their final individual event, the swimmer shall be suspended from the next meet they plan to attend.
6. Relay fees are divided equally among all four relay participants. Because meet fees are not refundable, the board has established a specific policy regarding relay fees. Please see the **Financial Policies** page for this policy.

Typically, the policy of the team will be that the fastest four swimmers will swim at high-level (e.g. championship) meets. During the season, the coaches may experiment with different lineups.

### **PRACTICE CANCELLATION POLICY**

From time to time, it may become necessary to cancel a daily practice due to weather, illness of the coach, etc. Whenever this becomes necessary, every attempt will be made to get the news onto the team phone bulletin. The coaches of MSSC are dedicated to keeping themselves in good physical shape so that they are rarely ill, but obviously there may be other things beyond their control such as deaths or illnesses in his family. Unless you are notified differently, please plan to attend the next regularly scheduled practice. During the school year, unless otherwise stated, if there is no school or an early dismissal there is no practice.

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH A COACH**

One of the traditional problem areas in youth sports of any kind is a communication gap between parents, coaches, and athletes. Typically, the problem comes into play the most between the people who don't interact with each other on a daily basis—the parents and coaches. Athletes usually have the opportunity to speak to parents when they have something on their minds, and hopefully the same holds true for athletes talking to coaches. Unfortunately, the gap usually happens because a parent is not on the pool deck daily and does not express their feelings on a regular basis. The good side of all of this is that in the end, parents and coaches both want what is ultimately best for the athletes and the team. The bad side is that there is often disagreement by either party on what is best or how best to achieve the objective.

When you find yourself in a position of disagreeing with, or questioning the decision of the Coach, please keep in mind the following things:

1. Discussing your disagreements with other parents does nothing to let the coach know that you disagree. In fact, the worst-case scenario is where another parent tells the coach that you were complaining about something. We all know that information becomes more negative as it travels from person to person, so what starts as a very minor problem can end up getting to the coach as a near-disaster.
2. Feel free to discuss your concerns directly with the Coach. If your concern is with an assistant coach, talk first to that coach. If you feel that you are not receiving proper explanation or attention, then speak to the Head Coach. The Head Coach will want to speak to you and the assistant so that both sides can present their viewpoints.
3. If your concern is with the Head Coach, please speak directly to the Head Coach. If you feel the Head Coach is not listening to you, then you may speak to the Board. The Board will want to meet with you and the Head Coach to listen to both sides before making a decision of any kind.
4. Remember, the Coaching Staff always wants to do what is best for the team and the athlete. This can be an extremely difficult balancing act. For example, who should swim on relays? Is it better for the team to have their fastest four swimmers on a relay, or is it sometimes better to put a swimmer on a relay for experience? Should a swimmer who is faster, but regularly misses practices, be on a relay over a swimmer who is slightly slower, but rarely misses practices? The possibilities can be endless, so please take into account the juggling act a coach is asked to do every day.



5. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for their concerns, please urge them to speak to the Coach as soon as possible. Also be sure to keep your conversation totally private, so that no unnecessary misinformation is spread. The only parties who will be told or asked are those involved (for example the assistant coach, etc.)

## Electronic Communication Policy of the Morrison Seahorse Swim Club

### PURPOSE

The Morrison Seahorse Swim Club (“MSSC”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary methods of communication. While MSSC acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, MSSC also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

### GENERAL CONTENT

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 or involvements. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain reference or relate to any of the following:

- Drug or alcohol use
- Sexually oriented conversation, sexually explicit language and/or sexual activity
- The adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems
- 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 use in communication is:

- “IS this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to face meeting?”
- “Is this something I would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of my communication in front of the intended recipient’s parents, the coaching staff, the board or other athletes?”
- “Is this something I would be comfortable with if it were on the front page of my local newspaper?”
- 

With respect to electronic communications, electronic communications with swimmers should be **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

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

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

**Professional:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally. 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 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, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private or instant message" each other through Facebook.

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

MSSC has an official Facebook page, athletes and their parents can "friend" the club for information and updates on team-related matters and instant message the club page.

#### TWITTER

MSSC has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches and athletes are allowed to follow each other on Twitter- the Coach must be aware of their tweets and each tweet must meet and live up to each MSSC guideline.

#### TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and the athletes during the hours from 6 am – 10 pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communication information directly related to MSSC.

#### EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 6 am- 10 p.m. When communication with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach or board member must be carbon copied in.

**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.

## Seahorse Swim Team Action Plan to Address Bullying

### **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the Morrison Seahorse Swim Club and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. MSSC 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 team captain.

*Objectives of MSSC's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:*

- 1) To make it clear that MSSC will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- 2) To define bullying and give all board members, coaches, parents, and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
- 3) To make it known to all parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise
- 4) To ensure a clear understanding of how and when to report bullying.
- 5) To spread the word that the Morrison Seahorse Swim Club takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when they are gathered as a team.

### **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying may result in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or the physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonable and objective person has the effect of:

- i. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property
- ii. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property
- iii. Creating hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity
- iv. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity
- v. Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or operation of any USA Swimming activity

### **REPORTING PROCEDURE**

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

- Talk to your parents
- Talk to the Coach, Assistant Coach, Board Member, or team captain
- Write a letter or email to the above stated people
- 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 first 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.

### **HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING**

IF bullying is occurring during team- related activities, we STOP THE BULLYING ON THE SPOT:

- 1) Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help
- 2) Separate the kids involved
- 3) Make sure everyone is safe
- 4) Meet any needs
- 5) Stay calm... Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders
- 6) Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

IF bullying is occurring in our club or it is reported we address the bullying by finding out what happened and supporting the kids involved using the following approaches:

#### **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED**

- 1) First, we get the facts.
  - a) Keep all the involved members separate
  - b) Get the story from several sources (those involved and those viewing)
  - c) Listen without blaming
  - d) Don't label the act bullying until it is understood what happened
  - e) It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social or cyber bullying. Collect and review all available information
  
- 2) Then, we determine if it is bullying. There are many behaviors that may look like bullying but require a different approach. It is important to determine whether it is bullying or something else.
  - a) Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying
  - b) Consider these questions:
    - What is the history between the kids involved?
    - Have there been past conflicts?
    - Is there a power imbalance?

- Has this happened before? IS the child worried it will happen again?
- c) Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior
- d) Once we have determined whether the situation is bullying or not we support all kids who are involved

SUPPORTING ALL KIDS WHO ARE INVOLVED

- 1) We will support the kids being bullied.
  - a) Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault
  - b) Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied member. The member, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
    - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out
    - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between MSSC and the parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward
  - c) We will be persistent, bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied member
  
- 2) We will address bullying behavior.
  - a) Make sure the member knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others
  - b) Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem
  - c) Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied
    - i) Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone if they are different from them (insecurity)
    - ii) Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, school, stress- is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support
  - d) Involve the member who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others
    - i) Write an apology letter
    - ii) Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in our community
    - iii) Clean up, repair, or pay for anything they damaged
  - e) Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied understand how what they do affects other people

- 3) We will support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but they don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.
- a) Be a friend to the person being bullied
  - b) Tell a trusting adult- parent, coach, or club board members
  - c) Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction and focus the attention on something else or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start"
  - d) Set a good example by not bullying others
  - e) Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, the least you can do is walk away



## LOCKER ROOM MONITORING POLICY

### PURPOSE

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

### FACILITIES

The following is a description of our practice facility to allow athletes and their families to plan their use:

We practice at: Morrison High School Community Pool

This location has: a changing area and locker room dedicated to our swimmers.

### MONITORING

Coaches and staff make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and meets and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, we will check on the athlete's whereabouts.

We discourage parents from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. There are public restrooms available across the cafeteria and ask that you use those if you need to. We understand times arise that you may need to enter the locker room and in that instance it should only be same-sex parent. If this is necessary, parents should let the coach know about this in ADVANCE. If an athlete needs assistance with his or her uniform or gear then we ask that parents let the coach know beforehand that he or she will be helping the athlete.

MSSC has predictable and limited use of the locker rooms- immediately before and following practices and meets ONLY. This allows for direct and regular monitoring of locker room areas. While constant monitoring inside locker rooms and changing areas might be the most effective way to prevent problems, we understand that this would likely make swimmers uncomfortable and may even place our staff at risk for unwarranted suspicion.

Therefore, we conduct a sweeps of the locker rooms before athletes arrive, during periods of use we leave doors open only when adequate privacy is still possible, we conduct regular sweeps inside locker rooms during practice to monitor if staffing is available as well as post practice. While we do not post a monitor inside the locker rooms we make all efforts to monitor accordingly.

### USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice, 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:

Article 305.3 Use of audio or visual recording devices, including cell phones and ipods, are not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.

THEREFORE:

We have developed a strict no tolerance policy when it comes to the electronic devices in the locker rooms. MSSC will now allow any electronic devices in the locker rooms- even if they are in a bag not being used displayed.

Staff can choose to leave their cell phones in their vehicles or in the office. They are a distraction and due to frequent locker room sweeps by staff would be a direct violation of - this policy.

We will provide a basket for ALL athlete/staff phones to be placed into before each practice. The basket will be kept in the pool office or on deck in view of everyone and the video camera system.

Swimmers can choose to use the basket in the pool office or keep their devices in their vehicles or book bags in the hallway. MSSC is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

# **MONEY MATTERS**

## **MSSC SCHEDULE OF FEES AND EXPECTED COSTS**

**Fall session-** September-December

Winter Break will have optional Stroke Clinics

**Winter session-** January-February

**Spring/Summer session-** April- July

Dues will be evaluated and reassessed by the Board of Directors prior to the beginning of the season. Any rate change will be announced before the beginning of the session.

### **Bills**

All dues/bills will be paid monthly to avoid a late fee. (Example: January dues must be paid by the last day in January or a late fee of 10\$ will be assessed. If January's dues are not paid until March, two late charges of 10\$ will be added to January's dues. As well as a 10\$ fee to February's dues for late payment)

The swimmers are divided into 5 levels according to age and/or ability. The groups are currently Pollywogs, Piranhas, Dolphins, Sharks, and Seahorses.

### **INSURANCE**

MSSC is a member of USA Swimming, which provides insurance for the team. USA Swimming requires that all team members pay a yearly membership fee to the local branch of USA Swimming (Illinois Swimming, Inc.). Memberships in USA Swimming are good from September of one year to December of the next year. Please turn your check and USA Swimming Registration form into the Head Coach so that the team can accurately track our membership and insure that your swimmers are covered under USA Swimming's Insurance policies.

### **SWIM MEETS**

MSSC is a member of the Stateline Conference. This conference consists of Byron, Rockford, Morrison, and Sterling. When we swim in meets that involve only other Stateline Teams, there is no additional cost to the swimmer.

MSSC also participates in USA Swimming Invitationals throughout the area. These meets all have their own entry fees and per event fees. Typically the meet entry fee will be \$2.00, with a \$3 fee per individual event.

Relay events are divided equally among relay participants (**please see Financial Policies for specific relay payment information**). All fees are the responsibility of the swimmer's

family. Parents will always be made aware of whether a meet is a Stateline Meet or an Invitational so that they may make the decision on whether or not to participate. **Please see Financial Policies for information regarding Swimmer Meet Accounts.**

### **EQUIPMENT**

Swim suits, goggles, and swim caps can be purchased through MSSC. MSSC Team suits range from \$38.00 to \$65.00, and are Tyr brand. Goggles run \$6-\$20 and Team caps can be purchased for \$3.00. Upon first joining the team each female swimmer will receive one free team cap. Once a new male swimmer participates in a swim meet he will receive one free team cap as well. For information on purchasing team caps, T-Shirts, etc., please contact the Team Manager, who will direct you to the team equipment volunteer or to the online team store.

### **FUNDRAISING**

MSSC currently participates in these larger fundraisers per year—

Soil Sale- Spring

Casey's Card Sales- Summer

Paint the Town Food Tent- Fall

Swim-a-thon®- Winter

Along with some smaller fundraisers at various times of the year

We also sell spirit gear throughout the year. We have an online store available for most items. Items like team towels, caps, sweat shirts, long-sleeved and short sleeved shirts can be purchased and counted towards fundraising.

Our fundraisers are not limited to the above

For more details, suggestions, questions and ideas please contact the Team Manager, and/or a board member.

### **Scholarship Opportunity**

MSSC has a scholarship program designed to help low income families. If interested please contact the Board of Directors or Team Manager for more information and/or an application.

## Financial Policies

MSSC operates as an independent, not-for-profit, parent-run, youth sports team. It is a member of USA Swimming's local branch, Illinois Swimming, Inc. In order to continue to function as a business, the Board of Directors has put in place the following financial policies.

- All members of MSSC must maintain current balances on their accounts for training dues.
- Members must maintain current balances on their Meet Fee Accounts.
- All members of MSSC must be paid and registered in the current year with USA Swimming.
- Members who transfer from other USA Swimming Clubs must pay all transfer fees as set forth by USA Swimming.
- Members who purchase equipment (e.g. goggles, suits, towels, etc.), from MSSC shall pay the team in full at time of delivery.
- Members shall be expected to meet MSSC Fundraising policies as set forth in the **Fundraising Policy** section of this handbook.
- Members shall be responsible for communicating with the Team Treasurer in regards to all current and past due fees.
- The Team Treasurer, under the guidance of the Board of Directors, may make payment arrangements for current and overdue fees.

Swim meet fees are non-refundable, and relay fees are divided equally among the four participants. In order to insure fairness to member families who attend meets planning to see their children swim relays, only to have the relay cancelled by a swimmer who chooses not to swim at the meet. The following is now in place:

- Swimmers who sign-up to attend a swim meet shall plan to participate in relays at that meet. If a relay swimmer fails to show up at the meet, and a suitable replacement is not found, the swimmer who did not show up at the meet shall be charged the **entire relay team** fee. (Example: John Doe is signed up to swim at the ABC Invite Meet. As a part of the team, the coach put John into one relay. On the day of the meet, John fails to show up for the meet. No other swimmers can be found to take John's place, and the relay is forced to scratch. John's family will be charged the entire \$7.00 relay fee, instead of the \$1.75 (1/4 of the fee) they would have paid if John had swam.

Swimmers whose families do not follow these guidelines may not be allowed in the water. If a member becomes thirty (30) days delinquent, the Board of Directors has the right to revoke membership until payment is made current.

### **MSSC Fundraising Policy**

In order to keep the club dues as affordable as possible, MSSC is involved in fundraising activities. We do not currently have a fundraising policy in place. Some teams require each swimmer accounts for (x) amount of fundraising dollars. We as a Club, ask that you do your very best at fundraising as this is how we finance our club and without fundraising and finances there would be no team. With that said, please get the word out about fundraisings and do your best at them. Thank you.

# **Practice Schedules and Groups**



### **MSSC Practice Schedule**

Practice schedules are subject to change on a week-to-week basis in the event of holidays, swim meets, etc.

During the School Year:

|                   |                   |                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Polliwogs (Blue)  | Mon- Wed- Fri     | 3:15 - 4:30                         |
| Polliwogs (White) | Tues-Thurs-Fri    | 3:15 - 4:30                         |
| Piranhas          | Mon- Tues- Fri    | 3:15 - 5:00                         |
| Dolphins          | Mon- Wed- Th- Fri | 3:15 - 5:00                         |
| Sharks            | Mon-Fri           | 3:15 - 5:00                         |
| Seahorses         | Mon-Fri           | 3:15 - 5:00 some Saturday practices |

Summer (end of school year through July) AM and AFTERNOON PRACTICES  
Varies due to swim lessons- some practices at outdoor pool in Clinton

### **MSSC Level Advancement Guidelines**

Polliwogs—8 Years and Younger (entry level)

Polliwogs must possess a basic knowledge of free and back and be able to swim 25 yards without stopping (or be “teachable”). In this group we work on perfecting the breathing pattern in free and teaching stroke work along with appropriate starts and turns.

When swimmers turn 9 years old, they automatically advance to the Piranhas.

Piranhas-

Piranhas must have the ability to do 100 yards without stopping or be 10 years of age. This group is proficient in free and back and able to do breaststroke. Piranhas will be doing more yardage, more pool time, and the beginnings of butterfly. Stroke, start, and turn techniques will be taught in this group. Piranhas are expected to compete in conference meets.

To Advance to the Piranhas for an 8 and under:

Know all strokes, correct turns, and be able to do starts.

Pass a swim test of 3 x 100 @ 2:45 Freestyle and/or 5 x 50 free @ 1:20

Dolphins-

Dolphins are our intermediate swimmers. Stroke, start, and turn techniques are emphasized and refined in this group. Yardage and pool time are increased. Anaerobic (without breath) work is introduced. Dolphins are required to attend one meet a season.

Dolphins should be in the pool a minimum of 3 days a week. Dolphins will be able to legally do all four strokes.

To advance to Dolphins:

Know all strokes, correct turns, and be able to do starts

Pass a swim test of 4 x 100 @ 2:30 Freestyle and/or 6 x 50 free @ 1:15  
Be able to swim a 100 IM correctly and legally  
Be able to alternate breathe (every 3<sup>rd</sup> stroke)  
Be able to read a pace clock

Sharks- designed for 11 and up

Sharks are the more advanced swimmers. They have practices available every day, a minimum of 4 a week. They practice with more yardage and are constantly critiqued on their techniques and strokes. This critique is designed to enhance speed. Sharks will be introduced to hypoxic breathing (holding breath). Sharks should take every opportunity available to them to attend meets. A minimum of two meets are required throughout the season.

To advance to Sharks: (Must be 11 or over)

All above requirements  
Be able to complete correctly a 200 IM and 500 Freestyle  
Pass a swim test of 5 x 100 Freestyle @ 1:40 and/or 7 x 50 free @ 1:00  
Be able to hypoxic breath 3-5 pattern

Seahorses- Must be at least 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Seahorses are the elite swimmers. They practice every day, swim longer yardage, and are worked to enhance their speed. A one-half second difference in a finishing time can mean winning an event or placing far down in the pack. A double workout is at the discretion of the Head Coach. During the summer season it is encouraged. Seahorses should make every opportunity available to them to attend meets.

To advance to Seahorses: (Be at least in 7<sup>th</sup> grade)

All above requirements  
Be able to do 400 IM and 1000 Free  
Do repeat sets of 8 x 50 each stroke on standard interval  
Pass a test set of 6 x 100 Freestyle @ 1:20 and/or 8 x 50 free hold :45 on 1:00

All advancement is at the discretion of the Team Manager- He/She will take into account not only abilities in and out of the pool, but maturity level as well.

# Positive Parenting

## **“Ten Commandments for Swimming Parents”**

By Rose Snyder

(Adapted from Ed Clendaniel's “Ten Commandments for Little League Parents”)

### **1. Thou shalt not impose your ambitions on thy child.**

Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on what you think they should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is that every person can strive to do their personal best.

### **2. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.**

There is only one question to ask your child: “Did you have fun?” If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

### **3. Thou shalt not coach your child.**

You have taken your child to a professional coach; do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. That is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.

### **4. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.**

If you are going to show up at a swimming meet, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.

### **5. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.**

A first swimming meet, 500 free or 200 IM can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event if your child was not ready to compete in it.

### **6. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.**

If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are doing the best they can.

### **7. Honor thy child's coach.**

The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child; it will only serve to hurt your child's swimming.

### **8. Thou shalt not jump from team to team.**

The water isn't necessarily bluer at the other team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time by the teammates they leave behind. Oftentimes swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

### **9. Thy child shalt have goals besides winning.**

Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, “My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. This does not make me a failure, in fact, I am very proud of that swim.”

### **10. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.**

There are 225,000 athletes in United States Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in about 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he coaches. Chances are, he was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that he wants to pass that love for the sport on to others. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal they may have won. Swimming builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate.

## ARE YOU A PRESSURE PARENT?

You may be a pressure parent if . .

- you feel that winning is the only way your child can enjoy swimming.
- you spend a lot of time talking with the coach about race strategy, swimmer's skill levels, and the way the coach conducts practices or meets.

- your child has stopped enjoying

swimming or has asked you to stop coming to meets or practices.

- you *require* your child to take extra practice.

- winning is more important to you than it is to your child.

- your child's goals are more important to you than they are to your child.

- you find yourself disliking your child's opponents.

- after a poor swim, your disappointment is so overwhelming you don't want to talk to your child.

Be an involved parent, show interest, help when asked, and encourage your child. Just don't overdo!

A study performed in 1996 by sport psychologist Suzie Tuffey, indicated that kids drop out of swimming because . .

⇒ their parents emphasized winning too much

⇒ it takes too much time

⇒ the coach was negative

⇒ they enjoyed nonswimming activities more than swimming

⇒ swimming was boring

⇒ the coach was boring

⇒ of a lack of fun

**10 Great questions to ask a swimmer after practice:**

- Did you have fun?
- Did you try as hard as you could today?
- What did you learn today?
- What do you feel you need to work on?
- What do you like the most about swimming?
- What do you like the most about this team?
- How can your coach help you improve?
- Did you communicate your needs to the coach?
- Did your coach listen to you?
- Are you excited for the next meet?

**10 Great questions to ask a coach.**

- How can I help?
- What is your coaching philosophy?
- Why do you coach?
- Are a USS registered coach?
- What are your long-term professional goals as a swim coach?
- Is my child putting forth a good effort in practice?
- How important do you feel technique is for young swimmers?
- How long have you been coaching?
- Do you attend trainings to keep up to date on changes?

## Glossary

Since swimming is a very different sport from those with which you may be familiar, you will probably encounter some terms that will be foreign to your vocabulary. This glossary will help you understand the new words your swimmer may use in describing a day at practice or a particular race. If you hear a term that you do not understand, please feel free to ask about it. This will help us to include more terms in the next edition of this glossary.

**"A "**—Time classification for a swimmer. **Illinois Swimming Inc.** sets time standards for each event and each age group.

**"AA"**—Time classification for a swimmer set by **USA Swimming**.

**"AAA"**—Time classification for a swimmer set by **USA Swimming**. The AAA times are used as the qualifying times for **Zone** Championship Meets.

**"A" Championships**-An **Illinois Swimming Inc.** championship level meet for swimmers who have achieved an **"A"** time in their event(s), but have not achieved a **Junior Olympic** time.

**A-Meet**—Swim meet which requires that swimmers have times classified at the **"A"** level or above in the events they wish to swim.

**A-B Meet**—Swim meet that offers separate competition for both swimmers in the **"A"** and **"B"** classifications.

**A-B-Open Meet**—Meet similar to **A-B Meet** with three divisions. The open division is for all swimmers who are not classified.

**Aerobic**—Training that involves long, slower paced swimming with short rest **intervals**. This type of training is designed to improve the body's ability to use oxygen efficiently.

**Age Group Championships**—See **Junior Olympics**.

**Age Group Swimming**—The **USS** program that offers fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide educational experiences, and allow for younger swimmers to enjoy competition with their peers. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 & Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and 15-18. Many times, local meets will include 8 & Under categories as well. Sometimes, a meet may be defined as a **Swim-Y our-Own-Age Meet**.

**American Swim Coaches Association**—The professional organization for swimming coaches throughout the nation. Certifying coaches and offering services for coach's education and career advancement is their primary function.

**Anaerobic**—Training that involves short, fast swimming with long rest periods. This type of training is designed to help the body deal with **oxygen debt**.

**Anaerobic Threshold**—The fastest training pace at which a swimmer can swim for long periods of time without slowing down

**Anchor**—The final swimmer in a **relay**

**"B"**—Time classification for a swimmer set by **Illinois Swimming Inc.**

**Backstroke Flags**—See **Flags**

**Bullpen**- An on-deck type area used to prepare swimmers and line them up in the right heat and lane assignments.

**B Championships**. It is a fun meet for swimmers with **"B"** times to receive the same treatment that swimmers will receive at higher-level championship meet.

**Blocks**—See **Starting Blocks**

**Championship Finals**—The final heat of an event in which the top swimmers from the preliminaries compete.

**Code of Conduct**—An agreement signed by a swimmer/coach/parent stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

**Consolation Finals**—Final race for swimmers who qualified slower than the **Championship Finals**- Typically the consolation finals are for swimmers who qualified in the 7th-12th places or 9th-16th places.

**Cool Down**—The end portion of a practice when the swimmer does easy work to reduce their heart rate and cool their body down. Swimmers also cool down after a race so that they will avoid unnecessary muscle soreness. Also known as a **Warm Down**.

**Courses**—The length of the pool. USS recognizes three courses: 25 Yards (**Short Course Yards** or **SCY**), 25 Meters (**Short Course Meters** or **SCM**), and 50 Meters (**Long Course** or **LC**)

**Cut**—Slang term for a qualifying time. A time necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

**Deck**—The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, coaches, and timers. No parent may be on the deck during competition unless serving one of these capacities

**Descend**—To swim faster. For instance, if a swimmer in practice is doing 100 meters five times (5 x 100), they might swim the first in 1:45, the second in 1:40, etc.

**Disqualification**—This occurs when a swimmer has committed a rules infraction of some kind; e.g. a **false start**. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can their time be used to make a **Cut**.

**Distance**—Term used to refer to events longer than 400 Meters/500 Yards

**Drill**—An exercise used to improve a stroke technique. A drill breaks a stroke down into smaller pieces to make it easier to learn.

**Dryland Training**- Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance. This may include weight lifting, stretching, running, etc.

**DQ**—See Disqualification

**Entry Form**—Form on which a swimmer enters a competition. Usually includes USS ID Number, age, gender, event number, and entry times.

**False Start**—Occurs when a swimmer is moving prior to the starting signal. In USS, one false start will result in disqualification.

**Finals**—See **Championship Finals**

**Finish**—The final phase of the race; the touch at the final wall.

**Flags**—Backstroke flags placed 5 yards (Short Course) or 5 meters (Long Course) from the end of the pool. The flags enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more effectively.

**Goal**- A specific time, technique improvement, lifestyle choice, or accomplishment that a swimmer strives to reach.

**Gun Lap**—The part of a **distance** race when the swimmer has 2 lengths of the pool left to swim. The starter fires a single shot over the lane of the lead swimmer when the swimmer is coming into the turn under the **backstroke flags**.



**Gutter**—The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is recirculated through the filtration system.

**Heats**—A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers times, after all the heats of the event are complete. If the meet involves **preliminaries** and **finals**, the heats determine who swims in **championship finals** and **consolation finals** and may be referred to as **trials**.

**Heat Sheet**—The pre-meet listing of swimmers entered in the meet. The Heat Sheet lists the heats and lanes the swimmers will race in.

**Illinois Swimming Inc.**—The local branch of **USA Swimming** that registers swimmers and organizes local championship meets

**I. M.** -See **Individual Medley**

**Individual Medley**—An event in which a single swimmer swims through all four of the competitive strokes in this order-butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle

**Interval**—A training term which lets a swimmer know how long they have to swim a distance and how long they will be allowed to rest. The interval includes both the swim and the rest, so a swimmer who swims faster will receive more rest.

**ISI**—See **Illinois Swimming Inc.**

**JO's**—See **Junior Olympics**

**Junior Olympics**-- Illinois Age Group Championship meet conducted by **Illinois Swimming Inc.** A swimmer must achieve specific time standards to be able to swim at Junior Olympics

**Lap Counter**—Plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. This term also applies to the person who counts for the swimmer and is stationed at the end opposite from the start.

**LC**—See **Long Course**

**Local Swimming Committee**—The local branch of **USS**. In Illinois, this is **Illinois Swimming Inc.**

**Long Course**—A pool that is 50 Meters long

**LSC**—See **Local Swimming Committee**

**Meet**—Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmers test themselves against the clock to see how they are improving.

**Mile**—The slang term referring to the 1500 Meter or the 1650 Yard Freestyle. Both events are just slightly short of a mile

**Negative Split**-Swimming the second half of a race equal to or faster than the first half.

**Non-Conforming Times**—Entry times that come from a different course than that which the current meet will be conducted. Non-conforming times are usually seeded ahead of **NT's** and behind all conforming times.

**No Time**—The time classification for a swimmer who was not entered with an entry time **NT**-See **No Time**

**Officials**—Stroke and Turn Judges, Starters, and Referees that ensure that competition occurs in a fair manner for all competitors.

**Open Competition**--Meets that do not have time qualifying standards.

**Open Water Swims**—Any freestyle event over 1500 Meters, normally conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river, or ocean.

**Oxygen Debt**—A state of being deprived of air due to an all-out effort where the body cannot take in enough air to make up for the energy being used.

**Pace Clock**—Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain **intervals** in practice; may also be digital.

**Positive Check-In**—The process by which a host team establishes which swimmers are in attendance at a **meet**. This process helps the host team properly **seed** swimmers into heats without empty lanes. If a swimmer fails to positive check-in, they will not be able to swim that day.

**Preliminaries**—Also called **heats** or **trials**. Those races in which swimmers qualify for **championship** and **consolation finals** in their events.

**Prelims**-See **Preliminaries**

**Psych Sheets**—The pre-meet listing of swimmers in order from either fastest to slowest or vice-versa.

**Qualifying Time (Q-Time)**—Time standard necessary to compete in a particular event or competition.

**Relay**—An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

**Repeats**—Within an **interval**, the coach may give swimmers a repeat goal. The repeat represents the swimming time in the interval.

**Sanction**—A permit issued by **Illinois Swimming** to a USA Member Club to conduct an event or **meet**.

**SCM**—See **Short Course Meters**

**Scratch**-To withdraw from an event in a competition.

**SCY**—See **Short Course Yards**

**Seeding**—The process by which swimmers are placed into **heats** and lanes. Seeding takes into account the number of swimmers and swimmers entry times.

**Short Course Meters**—A pool that is 25 Meters long

**Short Course**-A pool 25 yards or 25 meters in length. **USS** conducts most of its winter competition in **short course yards**.

**Short Course Yards**—A pool that is 25 Yards long

**Split**—A time recorded from the official start to the completion of an initial distance within a longer event. Also, the time for one of the four individuals in a relay. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times, for example, the lead swimmer in a relay, or the leadoff portion of an event.

**Sprint**-Describes the shorter events (25, 50, and 100). In training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance

**Starting Blocks**—The raised platform from which a swimmer either will perform a dive to begin a freestyle, breaststroke, or butterfly race or will pull themselves up from in the water to begin a backstroke race.

**Stateline Conference**-A conference in which MSSC is a member. The other teams in the conference are Rockford, Freeport, Sterling, and Byron.

**Streamline**—The position used by swimmers when starting or pushing off the walls designed to reduce water resistance

**Swim-Your-Own-Age Meet**—A meet where swimmers compete only against swimmers of their own age. For example, nine-year-olds would only swim against other nine-year-olds.

**Taper**—The final preparation phase, sometimes referred to as "rest". Prior to major competitions, older, more experienced swimmers shave their bodies to reduce resistance and heighten their feel for the water.

**Team Illinois**—Squads representing **ISI** at inter-**LSC** competitions such as **Mid-States** and **Zones**. **Threshold**-See **Anaerobic Threshold**.

**Timers**—The individuals who record the times for competitors at swim **meets**. Timers serve as the back-ups for the electronic timing system used at most pools. If an electronic timer is not available, the timers are the primary timing system.

**Time Trial**—A time-only swim which is not part of a regular **meet**

**Touch Pad**-A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's finish time is registered and sent electronically to the computer.

**Trials**—See **Heats**

**USA Swimming**—The national governing body for swimming in the United States. Organizes National level competitions and supports USA athletes in international competition.

**USS**—See **USA Swimming**

**Warm Down**—See **Cool Down**

**Warm-up**—Low intensity swimming used by a swimmer at the beginning of practice or before a **meet** to get the muscles loose and warm. Warm-ups help prevent injury.

**Zones**—Large subdivisions of **USA Swimming** that encompass many **LSC**'s. Zones hold annual championship meets. Qualifying for the Zone meet requires a national **AAA** time standard. Once a swimmer has achieved a Zone cut, they must apply to be a member of **Team Illinois**.

## BASIC RULES OF COMPETITION

In order to create a fair playing field for honest competition, USA Swimming has set in place technical rules of competition. While these rules are extremely technical in nature, the following information highlights the most basic of these rules. When a swimmer fails to meet the regulations of an event, they are disqualified from competition for that event. This means that they are not eligible for awards, points, medals, trophies, or ribbons for that event. In some cases, a swimmer can be disqualified from competing in any more events in that meet. This is very rare and thus not covered in this text.

### STROKES & EVENTS:

Swimming has five individual competitive stroke events that range in distance from one length of a 25-yard/meter pool to 66 lengths of a 25-yard pool or 30 lengths of a 50-meter pool. The events are broken down into freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley. There are also two different forms of relays, both of which have four swimmers who swim one quarter of the total distance.

**Freestyle**—The competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is the front crawl, which is characterized by the alternate overhand motion of the arms and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick. On turns, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn and touch with their feet. Swimmers may not pull on the lane lines or push off the bottom, but they can stand up without being disqualified, so long as they do not walk on the bottom or push forward from the bottom. Swimmers may stay submerged after each start or turn for 15 meters, at which time they must surface or be disqualified. Freestyle races are contested in the following distances: 25 yards/meters, 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, 200 yards/meters, 400 meters, 500 yards, 800 meters, 1000 yards, 1500 meters, and 1650 yards.

**Backstroke**—The competitor may swim in any manner on their back. The stroke most commonly used is an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick. Swimmers may stay submerged after each start or turn for 15 meters, at which time some part of their body must break the surface of the water. Swimmers may not stand up or pull on lane lines or they will be disqualified. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn with some part of the swimmer touching the wall. Swimmers must finish the race on their back. Backstroke races are contested in the following distances: 25 yards/meters, 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters.

**Breaststroke**—The competitor must make simultaneous arm motions in the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast, go wide and then sweep back together under the chin. The kick is a simultaneous, somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and finishes, the swimmer must touch with two hands simultaneously. Swimmers can be disqualified for failing to touch with two hands together, allowing their hands to pull past their waist (except on the first stroke after a turn

or start), or doing a "scissors" style kick. Swimmers may never stand up or pull on the lane lines. Breaststroke races are contested in the following distances: 25 yards/meters, 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters.

**Butterfly**—The competitor must use a simultaneous overwater recovery of both arms combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not use a flutter, scissor, or breaststroke kick. Swimmers may stay submerged for up to 15 meters after each start and turn, at which point they must surface. Swimmers must touch the wall with two hands simultaneously or they will be disqualified. Swimmers may never stand up or pull on the lane lines. Butterfly races are contested in the following distances: 25 yards/meters, 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters.

**Individual Medley**—Commonly referred to as the IM. Competitors swim equal distances of all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. In the IM, freestyle is any stroke that has not been previously swum. IM's are contested in the following distances: 100 yards/meters, 200 yards/meters, and 400 yards/meters.

**Medley Relay**—Four swimmers each swim one of the competitive strokes for the same distance. Because backstroke is the only stroke that begins in the water, the order for medley relays is different from an IM. The order of strokes is backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle. As in the IM, freestyle is any stroke not previously swum. Strokes in the relays are judged the same as in individual events. On the relay exchanges, a swimmer may be in motion before their teammate touches the wall, but their feet must still be in contact with the starting blocks until the touch occurs. Medley relays are contested in the following distances: 100 yards/meters, 200 yards/meters, and 400 yards/meters.

**Freestyle Relay**—Four swimmers each swim equal distances of the freestyle. Relay exchanges are the same as in the Medley Relay. Freestyle Relays are contested in the following distances: 100 yards/meters, 200 yards/meters, 400 yards/meters, and 800 yards/meters.

## What to Bring to Practice

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Practice swim suit             | Chlorine is hard on fabric and meet suits are too snug for comfortable practicing. Remember to rinse your suit after practice and hang it up to dry!   |
| Towel                          | Towels are needed not only to dry off but to sit on or lay on during dryland. Please bring your towel on deck with you.  |
| Goggles                        | Goggles come in various styles and swimmers may have to try or have several pairs before they find that perfect fit. Once this happens, buy several pairs and mark the swimmer's name on them.   |
| Caps                           | Caps for long hair are a must; we highly recommend a cap for everyone in the pool. The chemicals are not kind to hair and hair clogs the pool filters. All meet swimmers are required to wear a team cap (male and female swimmers alike).                 |
| Tennis Shoes                   | Tennis shoes will be needed for dryland practice throughout the various swim seasons. Please be prepared with proper shoes.  |
| Padlock                        | Lockers are available and sometimes more convenient to leave your items instead of bringing them to and fro (you are less likely to forget an item at home this way!) Swim suits can be rinsed and hung outside of the locker to air dry using the padlock |
| Water bottle                   | Each swimmer is required to have a water bottle for them at all times. They can have a squeezable bottle in their locker to fill at the drinking fountain and reused at each practice. This is to keep the swimmers properly hydrated.                     |
| Lotion, Shampoo<br>Conditioner | Pool chemicals sometimes leave the skin and hair dry. We recommend swimmers wash their hair after practice. Lotions are good to use on the skin. A good wash and rinse helps prevent chlorine build up and drying of the skin and hair.                    |

We also emphasize the importance of prompt entrance and exit of the locker rooms before and after dressing. Horsing around may lead to serious injury and disturbing the personal property of another **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

Lost and Found is located in the MSSC Pool office- please be sure to check it out from time to time. The team is not responsible for lost items.

## What to bring to a Swim Meet?

Between events swimmers usually spend time in a gymnasium-type setting. Down time depends on the meet and the number of age group swimmers in certain sex/age levels. The following is offered suggestions:

Sleeping bag/blanket/lawn chairs-

Comfortable alternatives to the floor or wooden bleachers

Books/Deck of Cards/Video Games-

Anything that will entertain the swimmers while they're not on deck

Extra Towels (2-3), Goggles, Warm-up sweats, flip flops, team caps

Whatever the swimmer wants or uses to keep dry and warm

Shampoo, Conditioner, Lotion, Brush, extra change of cloths

Other Items:

Permanent Marker (to add heat and lanes to the events on the arms)

Pens, Highlighters (for keeping track of events on heat sheets)

Newspapers, magazines (to keep pesky parents occupied)

Cooler with drinks and snacks

Swimmers need to be fueled, most host teams have concessions to fundraise for their team but swimmers constantly will need to drink and eat

Sun block/Hats/Umbrellas/Tents

For protection at outdoor meets

Swimmers should replenish fluids frequently. Not carbonated beverages! Sports drinks, water, fruit juices are encouraged. Skip the fatty foods (chips, donuts) because these foods digest slowly and diminish swim performance. Foods such as vegetables, fruits, pasta, bread, and cereal are better alternatives.

Coach Contact information- [www.morrisonseahorseswimclub.com](http://www.morrisonseahorseswimclub.com)

Check out our facebook page!

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