

Parents' Role in the Sharks Program

PARENT/SWIMMER/COACH RELATIONSHIP

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

PARENTS' GUIDELINES

Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills. The slower learner obviously takes more time to learn, and this requires more patience on the part of the parents and coaches, who must both remember that the child's ultimate swimming potential may be as great as or greater than that of the faster learner.

When an athlete first comes out for the team and starts practicing, it is possible for his/her times to worsen rather than improve. In the case of younger team members, this is likely due to the emphasis placed on stroke technique in these groups. It takes a great deal of the swimmer's attention to master these skills. These new sets of habits are the basis for later improvement. As training proceeds in Group 2, additional stress is placed upon the muscles. The muscles will at first break down under the demand of additional work and this can explain an initial lack of improvement. As the need for improvement is realized, the muscles will gradually strengthen and the athlete's performance will improve.

Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmer's career. Plateaus can be both in competition and in training. A plateau signifies that the swimmer has mastered lower-order skills, but they are not yet sufficiently automatic to leave the attention free to attack newer, higher-order skills. It is important to explain to the athlete that plateaus occur in all fields of physical learning. The more successful athletes are those who work through this temporary delay in improvement, and go on to achieve greater performance and approach their personal potential.

10-and-unders are the most inconsistent swimmers, and this can be frustrating for parent, coach, and swimmer alike! We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.

Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal and perhaps more desirable than precocious or forced early development. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop some competitive spirit. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional

stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as youngsters prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.

It is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the young athletes feel good about themselves.

Parents' attitudes and behaviors often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your child to practices and meets, fund-raising projects, meetings, etc. Don't look at these functions as chores.

If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, contact Jerry before or after practice or at home.

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.

Be sure that your youngster swims because he/she wants to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.

The etymology of the word "competition" goes back to two Latin words, "com" and "petere", which means together to strive. Avoid "playing" your child against their nearest competitors, thereby, creating vendettas within the team and swimming community. Close competition provides two great services for the athlete: it brings out the best in them and shows where improvement is needed.

The communication between coach and swimmer is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice. It is imperative that the coach has the swimmer's full attention at these times. It is **imperative** that parents refrain from making stroke corrections or trying to coach their swimmer. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim, it causes considerable, and often times, insurmountable confusion as to which the swimmer should listen to and respect. Your child's coach is the expert, so please let them do their job. **There are many ways to do anything – the right way for any Shark is the way his coach teaches him.**

Remember, particularly in the case of younger swimmers, that attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can "win" or succeed all the time. There will always be some disappointment. Every youngster can gain from this experience whether or not he/she ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on

striving to do better next time. ***The secret is not only to produce great swimmers but to produce great young people who swim.***

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS

By Rose Snyder-Reprinted from the USA Swimming Swim Parent Survival Guide

1	Thou shall not impose your ambitions on thy child.
2	Thou shall be supportive no matter what.
3	Thou shall not coach your child.
4	Thou shall only have positive things to say at a swim meet.
5	Thou shall not to relive your athletic life through your child.
6	Thou shall not criticize the officials.
7	Honor thy child's coach.
8	Thou shall not jump from team to team.
9	Thou shall have goals besides winning.
10	Thou shall not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

WORKING AT MEETS

The major fund raising activities for the club are the home meets that we host. There are generally four to five per year. To ensure the smooth operation of the meets we need the participation of all parents.

Each family will have to work at least one shift at each SSSC-hosted meet, per day, for each child that is participating. If this is a problem for you at a given meet, *communicate with a board member*. When we host Championship meets, we need the help of every team family. Online sign-up sheets will be posted on our website about two weeks prior to the meet. First come first served! If you sign up for a job and cannot attend, you must find a replacement. If a parent fails to work a meet they will be contacted by a member of the board of directors to discuss the policy. If this continues for a second meet, the swimmers account will be billed \$100. Upon the third occurrence, the swimmer make be suspended from the team and/or not included in following meets, at the discretion of the board of directors and coaches.

At most meets *not* hosted by SSSC that we attend, the club must still provide timers for at least one lane. Timing is a responsibility to be shared by all parents. If you have a swimmer at an away meet, it is expected that you will periodically do your share of the timing.

SSSC will host the following meets for the 2019-2020 season:

Some of these details are subject to change.

October 19 & 20	Trick or Treat Meet	Shenendehowa Aquatics Center
December 14	Sharks Mini-Meet	Union College
January 11 & 12	Chris Goody IMX Meet	Shenendehowa Aquatics Center
February 14 - 17	Region 1 Invitational	Union College and Shenendehowa Aquatics Center
March 8, 13-15	AD Gold Championships	RPI

OFFICIATING

Every swim meet must be officiated by parent volunteers. Officiating is a task that requires training and certification in advance. Officials are trained, certified and coordinated by Adirondack Swimming. Officiating fulfills a parent’s responsibility to work at meets. If you are interested in officiating at swim meets, contact any Board Member for information on how to apply. Our club is always in need of new officials.

FUNDRAISING

The club will have several opportunities to raise funds each year. The Swim-A-Thon and the Cardiac Classic Run are the only fundraisers that will require the participation of our swimmers. Please support them in this effort. If these and our hosted meets are successful, we will try to limit additional fundraising.

COMMITTEES

Parental participation is essential so that we can offer our children the best program possible and continue to improve on the program from year to year. Donate a small amount of your time to work on the committee that most interests you. Our biggest needs are **concession** and fundraising, including **Swim-a-thon** and **Cardiac Classic**. SSSC Board members are listed in Part One. If you would like more information about any

committee, feel free to call any member. Committee participation not only benefits our children directly, but also is a terrific way to become more informed and get to know other parents.

TIMELINESS

Please get your swimmers to practices and meets on time. All clubs have a limited amount of pool time and we want to take maximum advantage of the time we have. The swimmers need to be at practice about 15 minutes before it starts so that they can change and stretch out. They **MUST** be on deck and ready at meets at least 15 minutes before warm-ups, so the coaches can take attendance and make up the relay cards before the start of warm-ups. The team prepares for warm-ups together.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between swimmers, coaches, parents, and executive board members is essential for the smooth functioning of the team (and your sanity!) Please make note of the following:

SSSC Web Site: The SSSC Web Site is our **primary source of communication** and can be reached with any web browser. It is *crucial* to regularly check the SSSC website for updates. It is a wealth of information and includes team email links as well as links to the AD and USA Swimming sites. We post as much as we can here - meet schedules, practice schedules and changes, fund-raising, social events, etc. We do not post phone numbers or addresses of members unless specifically required (such as the Registrar's phone number). Don't forget to refresh the site on your computer when looking for updates. **Both parents and swimmers should be regularly checking the website.**

Family Folders: A file box with family folders is at the Skidmore pool and at BH-BL or Union depending on the time of year. Either the swimmer or the parent should check this folder frequently. Ribbons from meets and small equipment, like caps, will be delivered via the folders.

SSSC Directory: A directory of registered swimmers is available on our website under the Team Info Tab once you have logged in. The Directory is a useful tool to contact other SSSC parents to obtain swim information, arrange carpools, share rides to practice, etc. The Directory is only to be used for these purposes or in furtherance of Club-related matters. Any other use of the Directory, including any commercial use, is strictly prohibited and is a violation of Club rules.

NOTE: For best communication, it is recommended that the parent and swimmer check the web site as often as possible. Practice schedules, meet information, and other items are subject to last minute changes.