

SWIM MEET INFORMATION

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

Schenectady-Saratoga Swim Club engages in a multi-level competitive program with USA Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and various abilities. The following describes our philosophy:

*We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.

*Sportsmanlike behavior is of greater importance than improved performance. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded by the Schenectady-Saratoga Swim Club coaching staff.

*A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. **It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.**

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

*Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his/her potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming.

***DO NOT BE THAT SWIMMER WHO STAYS HOME FROM PRACTICE TO REST THE DAY BEFORE A MEET. ANY RESTING IS A TRAINING MATTER. YOU WILL BE BETTER SERVED TO WORK OUT THE DAY BEFORE A MEET.**

ENTERING MEETS

1. Each practice group will receive a meet schedule. **Swimmers will be signed up for all meets assigned to their practice group**, unless they opt out on the website by the published deadline.
2. If a swimmer wishes to swim in a meet outside his/her group assignment, it needs to be discussed with a coach, and should be a rarity.

3. Swimmers should expect to be entered in the maximum number of events for that particular meet. The coaching staff will have the final say on events entered for the athletes.
4. Relay decisions are made solely by the coaching staff and relay fees are paid by SSSC.
5. If you have any questions about a meet, always confer with your coach. Entry fees are non-refundable.
6. You will receive your account updates in the monthly billing summary email .

CLASSIFICATION AND TYPES OF MEETS

Classified Age-Group Program: There are six age groups in USA Swimming: 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and separately, there is Senior (or Open). Our district will either combine the 15 -16 and 17 -18 age-groups to form a 15 -18 age-group or those swimmers will swim Senior. The Senior or open age-group includes any age USA SWIMMING-registered swimmer who has achieved the qualifying time for that event. Age on the first day of the meet will govern the swimmer's age for the entire meet.

Within each age-group, there are different "achievement levels" or "classifications" (BB, B, A, AA, AAA, AAAA). Time standards for each classification are established and published each January by USA Swimming, Inc. Updated standards can be found online. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that classification. In our district, many meets do not have qualifying times. This allows a swimmer from any classification to compete in that meet. In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke (i.e. "B" Breaststroke, "BB" Freestyle, "B" Backstroke, "A" Butterfly, and "AA" IM).

Adirondack District Team Championship Meets – The ADIRONDACK DISTRICT SHORT COURSE GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS are held in March. The ADIRONDACK DISTRICT LONG COURSE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Districts) are held in late July. The team championships are the culmination of their respective phases of the swim year for most of our swimmers.

Silver Championship Meet - This meet is held in March, before the Winter Short Course Gold Championships. Swimmers who qualify for this meet will compete at this meet. Many swimmers will qualify for both Gold and Silver Championships, and swim in both. All Swimmers who do not qualify for Gold Championships **MUST** attend this meet. Swimmers who achieve Gold qualifying times in this meet can be entered in those events into the Short Course Gold Championships.

Eastern Zone Championships – These all-star meets are the fastest age group meets in the country. Short Course Zones are held in April and Long Course Zones are held in August. SSSC strives to qualify as many of our swimmers as possible for these meets. Unless a swimmer attends a sectional or national meet, Zones is definitely the

meet all of our top swimmers should be training for. To find out the qualifying procedures and additional information about Zones, refer to the Table of Contents and see “Zones”. The next levels of meets are Senior Meets - Speedo Sectionals, Junior Nationals and Senior Nationals.

MEET SCHEDULE EXPLANATION

1. A meet schedule will be given to each swimmer based on group assignment and qualifying times. That schedule should be entered in your calendar.
2. The meet schedule has been established with the expectation that swimmers will attend the meets in their meet classification.
3. TEAM EFFORT MEET - The Adirondack District Short Course Gold Championships and the Adirondack District Long Course Championships are “team effort” meets. All active members of Schenectady-Saratoga Swim Club are required to attend for the entire meet. Swimmers who do not make the cut off times for Short Course Gold Championships must attend the Silver Championships. Failure to attend one of the championship meets will likely cause that swimmer to lose his/her position on the team, unless the coaching staff determines the absence was due to serious illness, injury, or like reason. When meets interfere with higher level meets, coaching staff may allow swimmers not to attend.
4. It is mandatory that all SSSC members come to the Adirondack Short Course Championships (or the Silver Championships for those not qualifying) during March. Swimmers who are registered for the summer season must attend the Adirondack Long Course Championships held in late July. Please note that all swimmers who swim on a Suburban League team or a Country Club team are considered an SSSC member throughout the summer and are encouraged to attend the Long Course Championships to support the team in the championship meet. National or Sectional qualifying swimmers may have limited participation in championship meets due to scheduling problems. Swimmers are expected to swim in all sessions of a championship meet. Any exceptions must be approved by the head coach.
5. Any swimmer who can qualify for “Zones” should be attending these meets or other coach-recommended meets.

SWIM MEET PROCEDURES

1. The week before the meet, check the entries under the *MEETS* tab on our website. Don’t be surprised if you’re occasionally entered in an event you’ve never competed in before.
2. Arrive on deck ready to swim at the required time – which is usually 15 minutes before the meet warm-ups begin to stretch with the team.
3. Obtain a program (not a coach’s) and check to see if your swimmer(s) is properly entered. If there is a mistake, discuss it with your coach so corrective action can be taken if appropriate.

4. Warm-ups are always conducted by a member of the SSSC Coaching Staff. All SSSC swimmers entered in the meet are required to do the team warm up with the team.
5. **All swimmers will own a blue team tee and a grey team tee to be worn at meets. All Sharks are required to wear the team suit and team cap (if a cap is worn) to swim meets.** Bronze and senior group swimmers will be required to own a SSSC warm-up jacket as well. Team warm-ups will be worn on entry to the site – and in any award ceremony. Other team apparel is optional; however, wearing the SHARK apparel and team sweats helps promote team unity and pride and greatly aids spectator recognition. **Apparel from high school teams will not be worn by SSSC swimmers at USA Swimming meets.**
6. Each Shark is responsible for knowing which events he/she is swimming and for being present in time to swim. It is customary for younger swimmers to write event numbers, heat and lane assignments on the back of the swimmer's hand.
7. A swimmer should confer with a member of the coaching staff to review race strategy and goals.
8. At the conclusion of each race, the swimmer should ask the lane timers for their time. The swimmers then come immediately to the coaching staff. This gives the coaches an opportunity to discuss the race with each swimmer and critique splits, stroke technique, race strategy, etc.
9. In between races, swimmers are asked to rest and stay warm. All energy is to be stored up and used in competition. Having something warm and dry to wear on the feet is extremely helpful. If swimmers must eat, a light, nutritious snack is recommended. Keep drinking fluids to stay hydrated.
10. **It is very important that parents have their child check with the coaching staff prior to leaving the swim meet,** making certain that their child has not been placed in a relay. Also, in championship meets, swimmers must make sure they know if they've made finals and what time they need to be back for warm-ups. ***Always check with your coach before leaving prior to meet conclusion.***
11. *What to bring:*
 - a. Sharks team swim cap (if you wear one) and team swim suit
 - b. Goggles
 - c. 2 towels (or more)
 - d. Old blanket or sleeping bag
 - e. Water bottle/Nutritious snacks
 - f. Money for meet program (\$5.00-\$15.00)
 - g. Sharpie marker
 - h. Highlighter
 - i. Folding chairs or blanket

BEHAVIOR AT MEETS

1. Whenever and wherever a Shark wears any item of the team uniform, the individual should remember his/her actions reflect the team he/she represents,

and that swimmer should behave accordingly. Let your actions reflect the pride you have in the Schenectady-Saratoga Swim Club.

2. Parents will stay off the deck and competition venue, unless they are serving in an official capacity.
3. All questions swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, an officiating call, or issues at a meet should be referred to the coaching staff only. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through proper channels.
4. As a matter of pride, leave the rest area and the pool in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of each session of the meet.
5. With regard to which events a swimmer competes in, the coaching staff shall have the final word. Schenectady-Saratoga team members are never to scratch or late enter an event without first consulting one of the coaches and gaining permission to do so.
6. In a meet with preliminaries and finals, it is expected that any Shark qualifying to swim in the finals will do so.
7. Warm-ups will be done as a team. Arrive at the pool area 15 minutes early to stretch and to put cap and goggles on prior to the start of warm ups. Stretching is done before and after warm ups.

RECEIVING AWARDS IN PUBLIC

1. Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary for swimmers to be prompt and to cooperate fully with dignity and respect at the presentation.
2. The team uniform will be worn when accepting awards in public.
3. It is customary for our swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and to receive like congratulations with poise and a "thank you." Good sportsmanship is essential.

OUT OF TOWN MEETS

ATHLETES WILL BE EXPECTED TO LIVE BY 2 VERY IMPORTANT TRAVEL-MEET RULES:

- 1. NEVER WILL A BOY AND A GIRL BE IN THE SAME HOTEL/DORM ROOM TOGETHER WITHOUT A PARENT PRESENT (The only exception is siblings).**
- 2. AT ALL TRIALS/FINALS MEETS, ATHLETES WILL GET AT LEAST ONE HOUR OF ACTUAL SLEEP BETWEEN SESSIONS.**
- 3. IF A SWIMMER COMPETES IN A TRIALS SESSION AND QUALIFIES FOR THE FINALS SESSION, HE/SHE WILL COMPETE IN THE FINAL SESSION. SHARKS DO NOT SCRATCH FINALS TO HEAD HOME EARLY.**

Trips to meets in other cities become an important aspect of a swimmer's career while advancing through the age-group ranks. Schenectady-Saratoga Swim Club has established the following policies for the safety of the swimmer and the peace-of-mind of his/her parents:

1. Parents are to be responsible for confirming transportation and lodging for away meets. **DO NOT ASK YOUR SWIMMER TO HANDLE THIS JOB.**
2. Parents are often encouraged to attend out-of-town meets with their swimmers. These trips can be great fun for parents and swimmers alike and are opportunities to participate in a special way in each young swimmer's career.
3. A coach has too many responsibilities to the team as a whole to accept responsibility for an individual swimmer. Therefore, do not ask a coach to provide transportation or lodging.
4. Any swimmer riding in a car is responsible to the parent/driver for his behavior and is expected to adhere to the Shark code of behavior at all times.
5. An appropriate contribution is expected from each passenger in a car to the driver/owner to help defray gasoline and other expenses. Carry money for meals.
6. When possible, and for well attended meets, SSSC will arrange with a local hotel to set aside a block of rooms at a special group rate which may be reserved by parents. At times a room may be reserved by the team for your child. Pay attention to the details for each meet.
7. The SSSC Travel Policy (see page 17) will also be applicable to certain out-of-town meets and other team travel events **that are planned and supervised by the Club.** If the Travel Policy is to apply to any such meet or travel, the applicability of the Travel Policy will be communicated to parents and swimmers traveling with the Club prior to such travel and they will be obligated to sign and agree to the Travel Policy.

EASTERN ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS – INFORMATION AND HOW TO QUALIFY

The Eastern Zone consists of eleven districts (most of our country calls them LSC's: Local Swim Committees). They range from the Maine District to the Virginia District. Schenectady-Saratoga Swim Club is one of over 30 teams who swim in the Adirondack District. Each district sends its top swimmers to the Winter Short Course and Summer Long Course Eastern Zone Championship Meets.

Winter Qualification: The meet is open to any swimmer who meets the qualifying times and is currently registered with USA Swimming in one of the twelve LSCs in the Eastern Zone. Athletes with seasonal athlete memberships or flex memberships are not eligible.

Swimmers must participate in the Short Course Championship Meet and two other Zone qualifying meets (see schedule) to make the team. The entry deadline will be given in the entry information, found on the AD Swimming web site.

Summer Qualification: Qualifying times may be achieved at any USA Swimming sanctioned meet and swimmers are required to swim at the Adirondack District Long Course Swimming Championships. The Adirondack District is allowed to send any athlete who achieves the automatic qualifying time (we are not limited to two swimmers per event). Our district does not require that all swimmers travel home with the team. The entry deadline will be given in the entry information, found on the AD Swimming web site.

SSSC TRAVEL POLICY

The following Travel Policy will be applicable to certain overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity **that is planned and supervised by the Club**. If the Travel Policy is to apply to any such meet or activity, the applicability of the Travel Policy will be communicated to parents and swimmers traveling with the Club prior to such travel. **The Travel Policy will not be applicable to overnight travel to swim meets or other team activities where the swimmers are supervised by their parents/guardians (e.g., North Shore Invitational at MIT, Colgate Classic, AD LC Championships at Colgate, etc.).** However, during all such travel, team rules will continue to be applicable at all times (whether as set forth in this Handbook or communicated by the Club or Coaching Staff from time to time).

Section 1 - USA Swimming Required Policies

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

Section 2 – SSC Travel Policies

- a) During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained when feasible.
- b) Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present which is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
- c) During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & Over, chaperones would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & Under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where

chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).

- d) To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
- e) A copy of the Club Code of conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- f) The Club may obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete as a condition of participating in a team travel trip.
- g) Team coaching staff and/or chaperones should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- h) Curfews shall be established by the coaching staff each day of the trip.
- i) Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
- j) The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
- k) Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition/practice venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- l) When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc., swimmers will stay in groups of no less than two persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- m) The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate Club leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.