



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome to St. Petersburg Aquatics!

Congratulations! You have made the decision to explore the world of year-round competitive swimming. You will discover there is more to swimming than a suit, goggles, and a cap. Reaching the highest levels of the sport requires dedication, hard work, and commitment on the part of both the swimmer and the parent. We hope that this handbook helps you understand more about the exciting sport of swimming and what you can do to be the best swim parent you can be.

The following information is a quick reference of the websites and contact information that you will find useful as a member of St. Petersburg Aquatics. The team website is an extremely important tool and is updated regularly so please check it frequently.

Head Coach – Fred Lewis

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Board of Directors

spaswimclub@gmail.com

Website Information

St. Petersburg Aquatics

www.stpetersburgaquatics.com

Florida Swimming

www.floridaswimming.org

Southern Zone

www.szonesswim.com

USA Swimming

www.usaswimming.org

Midnight Sports

www.midnightsports.com

Fast Swim Results

www.fastswimresults.com

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to explain to new members just what St. Petersburg Aquatics is and to outline various policies and rules of the club.

Board of Directors

St. Petersburg Aquatics is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, run by a board of directors. The Board of Directors is elected each year at the annual meeting in September. The Board provides a base of support for the coaching staff, offers suggestions for the continual improvement in the organization, and organizes the meets and other events hosted by the team. The day-to-day operations of the team are the responsibility of the Head Coach.

General Description and Objective

St. Petersburg Aquatics is known throughout the country as a first-class, year-round swim program. The club has consistently sent swimmers to major national and international meets including U.S. Olympic Team Trials. We offer a guided age-group youth program for children age 6 and up, from beginning swimmer to the most competitive and skilled athlete.

When a person becomes a member of St. Petersburg Aquatics, he or she learns the values of sportsmanship and teamwork. Swimming, through St. Petersburg Aquatics, provides physical, emotional, and intellectual skills that will last a lifetime.

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Petersburg Aquatics is to provide affordable, competitive swimming programs and services to our community while ensuring a safe, healthy and positive environment for these athletes. These programs encourage the development of the athletes to their fullest potential as swimmers and leaders in life through lessons in dedication, perseverance, integrity and accountability.

Vision Statement

It is the vision of St. Petersburg Aquatics, through the success of its programs:

- To be a destination for and a resource for all levels of competitive swimming
- To prioritize water safety within the community
- To be a focal point of the City of St. Petersburg's development plans

- To be a leader in providing safe, healthy and positive athletic activity in the community
- To have influence, through current members and alumni, extend beyond competitive swimming into all walks of life, both within and outside the community.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming (USAS) is the National Governing Body (NGB) for competitive swimming in the United States. At its headquarters office, located at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA Swimming staff provide a variety of services to registered athletes, non-athletes and swim clubs.

USA Swimming is broken down into 4 **Zones** (Eastern, Southern, Midwestern, and Western). In turn each Zone consists of one or more **Sections**. Each Section then contains one or more **Local Swim Committees (LSCs)**. Within each LSC are the swim clubs. There are 59 LSCs in total in USA Swimming. Saint Petersburg Aquatics is a member of the Florida Swimming LSC which is in the Southern Section of the Southern Zone of USA Swimming.

Coaching Staff

Nothing has greater influence on the quality of children's sports than the excellence of the coach. St. Petersburg Aquatics' staff consists of the finest professionally trained coaches available in the area. They, as member coaches in the American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA), have access to the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport in the United States. Certified coaches in the USA Swimming programs possess training and experience in the physiology and psychology of adolescent development. Our coaching staff provides the assurances that the time your children spend in swimming will be quality time.

Fred Lewis, Head Coach

Fred Lewis is the Head Coach of St. Petersburg Aquatics. He has been SPA's full-time coach since 1988. The coaching philosophy of the team comes under his direction. Coach Lewis is a graduate of The University of Pittsburg with a degree in Health and Physical Education. Prior to becoming SPA's Head Coach, he was the Head Coach of The University of Pittsburg Varsity Men's Swim Team where he was named Big East Conference Coach of the Year and Eastern Collegiate Conference Coach of the Year. His teams won the Big East Conference Swimming and Diving Championships four years in a row. He has coached swimmers on all levels, age group, Junior National, Senior National, Olympic Trial Qualifier, and Olympic Team swimmers. He is certified a Level 5 coach by the American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA), their highest level of certification.

Coach's Responsibilities

The coach's job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The St. Petersburg Aquatics coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for swimmers that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself – “to be the best you can.” Therefore, the coaches must be in total control of matters affecting training and competition. The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the SPA program. It is the swimmers' and parents' responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.

Team Organization

St. Petersburg Aquatics uses a “progressive” age group program designed to develop the child physically, mentally, and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined, long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during a swimmer's physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge must be introduced to the training program. In this respect, “too much too soon” is more often the cause of failure to achieve maximum potential in senior swimming than in the reverse situation.

In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, it is also important that we establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. This approach is considered, by the club, to be the most productive.

At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long-term goal of total excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he/she will progress at his/her own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental, and emotional level of development.

North Shore Aquatic Complex Pool

Senior I Team

The Senior I Team is the most advanced level a swimmer may progress to within the SPA program. The team primarily consists of high school age swimmers as well as returning college and professional swimmers. Generally, once a swimmer enters high school, with certain exceptions, the swimmer is moved from the Senior II Team to the Senior I Team. The Senior I Team also may have younger members who have shown an advanced level of ability, commitment and attitude. Senior I Team members are expected to be mature, responsible, dependable, and have a year-round commitment to the club and to

swimming. We also insist that these swimmers maintain good academic standing in their respective schools. Senior I swimmers practice six days a week for 2-4 hours depending on the day and time of year. Competition required.

Senior II Team

Swimmers may progress from the Senior III (formerly known as High School Conditioning or Junior Teams to the Senior II Team. Senior II Team members are well-versed in technique and strategy. They are a full-fledged training group. Generally, they have a skill level commensurate with Florida Age Group Championship (FLAGs) time standards. Swimmers in the Senior II Team are usually between the ages of 10 and 17 years old. Practices for the Senior II Team are offered six days a week for two hours each practice. Competition required.

Senior III Team (Formerly High School Conditioning)

This group includes high school swimmers who do not wish to make the all-out commitment to Senior I and Senior II groups but want to maintain and improve their swimming skills for the high school season and also acts as a progression group for our younger swimmers to the Senior II level. Senior III practices from August until May, Monday through Friday for 70 minutes per day and continues June and July at the Shore Acres Pool. Competition required.

Junior Team

The first step for swimmers in the SPA Program is the Junior Team. These swimmers may be referred to as beginners or novice. The majority of time is spent working on refining stroke mechanics. As they begin to exhibit good swimming skills, they are introduced to some training skills and processes. Junior Team members swim for one hour or 30-minutes each day Monday through Friday during fall, winter, and spring seasons. During the summer season, these swimmers may participate in the summer league swimming program. The Junior Team is grouped as Blue, Red, White and Green as listed below under the Walter Fuller and McLin sites. Competition required.

Walter Fuller Pool & McLin Pool

St. Petersburg Aquatics offers year-round swim team at the Walter Fuller Pool and at the McLin Pool. These programs, in addition to our Junior Team, are grouped as follows:

Blue Team

Blue team swimmers are well versed in technique and strategy and are a full-fledged year-round training group. Most of the swimmers in the Blue group are between the ages of 12-17 years old. Workouts for this group are offered Monday through Friday and last

one and a half hours a day. This is comparable to the Senior III group at North Shore. Competition required.

Red Team

The swimmers in this group spend the majority of the time working on refining stroke mechanics. These swimmers have begun to exhibit decent swimming skills and will be introduced to some training strategies and processes. Red Team swimmers practice Monday through Friday for one hour each day. Competition required.

White Team

Members of this group are making the transition from swim lessons to competitive swimming. The emphasis is on stroke mechanics and basic competitive swimming skills such as circle swimming, drills and diving. The White Team swims Monday-Friday for either 45 minutes or one hour depending on coach recommendation. Competition required.

Green Team

This is our first level of the Junior Team primarily for Ages 6-7 and includes swimmers that have graduated from a general swim lesson program and have basic water survival skills plus knowledge of freestyle and backstroke. Green team members will learn more advanced competitive swimming skills that will allow them to complete a full one hour practice. We work on building up endurance in order to swim farther in the pool, while also emphasizing proper swimming techniques & strokes. In this group, we continue teaching freestyle & backstroke technique, while introducing basic breaststroke and butterfly skills. Workouts are offered five days per week for 30-minutes per day. Competition is not required initially but will be required once the coach determines the child is ready, usually after 2-3 months of practice.

Training and Responsibilities

Practices

Training sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed to progress through the different groups or teams. It is important that each swimmer attends as many practices as possible in order to derive the full benefits of the program. Practices days and times are posted on the team website and are subject to change.

Locations

The Senior I and most of the Senior II Team members train year-round at North Shore Aquatics Complex (North Shore Pool) on the St. Petersburg bayfront. This facility is also the training location for the Junior Team and High School conditioning members during the fall, winter and spring seasons. Some of the Junior and Senior III swimmers, as well as some of the Senior II Team swimmers, may move to the city-wide site pools during the summer season to participate in the SPA Summer Swim League. The Blue, Red, White and Green Team members train year-round at Walter Fuller Pool and McLin Pool.

Attendance

Each training group has attendance requirements appropriate for the objectives of that group. As a general rule, the least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success. The club does, however, understand that younger swimmers may participate in other activities in addition to swimming. The expectation level of the coaches regarding attendance increases as the swimmers move to higher groups.

Senior I and Senior II practices year-round Monday through Saturday. Junior Team, including Blue, Red, White, and Green groups at all sites, practice Monday through Friday. All age groups practice during the holiday breaks. Swimmers do get a break of ten training days after their last championship meet of the summer, which usually takes place at the end of July or beginning of August.

During holiday breaks the training schedule may and usually does change. In addition, there will be times when most of a training group may be absent due to a swim meet and some of the coaches may also be absent. If and when this occurs, you will be notified of a practice change or cancellation by email and updates will be posted on the team website.

If your swimmer will be out of the water for an extended period of time due to illness or injury, please notify the coaching staff so they are aware of the issue and can adjust practices for your swimmer accordingly.

Expectations

While on any of the city pool facility properties, the swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. During practice times, the swimmers are not to leave the pool or dryland area without the coach's permission. If a swimmer needs to leave practice early, please let the coaching staff know ahead of time via email.

The club has the obligation to behave as guests while using any city facility pools. It is a privilege to have the use of these facilities, not a right. This applies to both swimmers and parents. Every member of the club needs to do everything possible to respect this privilege. Any damage to pool property at either location may result in financial liability of the swimmers' parents.

Parents are not allowed to observe practices from the pool deck for liability reasons. You may observe practices from the bleachers. Do not try to communicate with any swimmer during practice. It is not only distracting to the swimmer but also to other swimmers and to coaches. Consider the pool to be a classroom, with the swimmer as the student, and the coach as the teacher. We expect all swimmers to abide by the SPA Expectations, Discipline Policy, and Safe Sport Policies located on our team website.

Swimmers

EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

All swimmers are expected during practice to:

- Listen and pay attention to the swim coach.
- Show respect to all teammates at all times.
- Not touch or excessively splash other swimmers.

Our swim practices are a safe space for swimmers to develop and grow. It is important to us that each swimmer has a positive environment to learn, swim, and challenge themselves without anybody limiting their experience and opportunity. We do not allow any physical or verbal abuse of any kind toward swimmers, coaches, or staff by other swimmers or parents. We have a firm no-bullying policy. We follow and enforce all USA Swimming Safe Sport Policies.

If a swimmer feels that a teammate is interfering with any of the above items, please have them speak with their coach or ask the coach to contact the parents and speak to them. All coaches will follow St. Petersburg Aquatics Disciplinary Action Plan for all swimmers who fail to follow the team and/or Safe Sport rules.

Disciplinary Action Plan:

- First Offense: Swimmer will be given one warning.
- Second Offense: Swimmer will be asked to sit out of the pool for five minutes.
- Third Offense: Parents will be called into the pool area and the swimmer will be asked to leave practice. If a swimmer is asked to leave practice, they will need to schedule a meeting with the coach and/or head coach before the swimmer is allowed to return to practice.

Parents

To have a successful program there must be understanding and cooperation between parents, swimmer, and coach. This triangular relationship to a great extent, determines the progress of the swimmer. With this in mind, we ask you to consider this section as you join St. Petersburg Aquatics or to reacquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning St. Petersburg Aquatics parent. We consider joining St. Petersburg Aquatics to be a family affair rather than just the swimmer joining a team.

The club and coaching staff acknowledges that, as a parent, you have done a great deal to raise your child. The club and coaching staff also see instances where parents can lose some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning their children's athletic endeavors. We believe the following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective and give you the tools to assist your child in reaching his/her full potential as an athlete.

Coaching

The SPA coaching staff has been properly trained and all hold the appropriate certifications required by USA Swimming. It is important that both the swimmer and their family trust the coach in all aspects of the swimmer's training and competitive career. When parents interfere in this relationship with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train it causes considerable and oftentimes insurmountable confusion as to who the swimmer should be listening to.

Keeping this philosophy in mind, and that the St. Petersburg Aquatics by-laws give the Head Coach total responsibility for training of the athletes, if at any time families feel they want their swimmer to receive additional swim training outside of St. Petersburg Aquatics, these are the policies for each training group:

Senior I & Senior II

No outside coaching. If you decide your swimmer needs outside coaching, your swimmer will be moved to a different training group.

Senior III, Junior Team & Summer Swim League

Outside training and coaching is not to interfere with any practice or swim meet.

McLin & Walter Fuller Sites

Outside training and coaching is at the discretion of the Head Site Coach and is not to interfere with any practice or swim meet. Parents and coach will meet and decide the best situation for the swimmer.

Questions or concerns regarding any coaching issue, concern or philosophy should be addressed after practice or by email.

Concerns

The coach's job is to motivate and constructively critique the swimmer's performance in practice and at the swim meets. The parent's job is to supply love, recognition and encouragement necessary for the child to work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition.

Ten and Under swimmers can be the most inconsistent, in terms of performance, and this can be frustrating to parents, coaches and swimmers alike. Parents AND coaches must be patient and permit these swimmers to learn to love the sport. Realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. Undue stress from parents and coaches will have the exact opposite effect.

When a young swimmer first joins SPA, there may be a brief period of time when the swimmer appears to slow down. This is the result of added concentration on stroke technique but will soon lead to faster swims for the individual. Swimmers may also experience plateaus in their swimming where they do not set best times over the course of a few months to years. Support and understanding are crucial in these plateaus, which are eventually overcome.

No swimmer will set personal best times every time they swim. To expect this is not only unrealistic but unfair to the swimmer and the coach. Consider the swimmer who holds a world record, he or she is not expected to break the record every time they swim. Over the course of a season times should improve, provided the swimmer has been participating in practices and has followed practice protocol and objectives. For most of the meets, the swimmers will not be rested, and some older swimmers may have had a full practice the day of the meet. Best times for these swimmers come at only 2 or 3 meets in a season.

Nutrition is important for all swimmers. The increase in physical activity leads to increased demands on the body and the fuel you put into it. Swimmers are expected to keep an optimum body weight and percentage of body fat. Unlike many clubs, SPA DOES NOT weigh swimmers on deck, in the locker room, in the 'weight room' or EVER. It is incumbent on parents to monitor their child's eating habits and his/her sleeping.

Being on time is an important factor in swimming. Swimmers are expected to be ready for practice at least 5 minutes prior to the practice start time. Ideally, they will be at the pool 15 minutes prior to practice and prior to warm-ups at swim meets. It is an old swimming axiom that if you are 5 minutes early to practice, you are 10 minutes late. Most swimmers rely on parents for their transportation. Plan to stay the entire practice. Many times, announcements are made at the end of practice.

On 12/11/2012, USA Swimming has published the Ten Commandments for Swim Parents on its website:

- I. Thou shall not impose thy ambitions on thy child.
- II. Thou shall be supportive no matter what.
- III. Thou shall not coach thy child.
- IV. Thou shall only have positive things to say at a competition.
- V. Thou shall acknowledge thy child's fears.
- VI. Thou shall not criticize the officials.
- VII. Thou shall honor thy child's coach.
- VIII. Thou shall be loyal and supportive of thy team.
- IX. Thy child shall have goals besides winning.
- X. Thou shall not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

Swim Meets

Where practice is the hard work, swim meets are the reward. Annually, swimmers from St. Petersburg Aquatics compete in over 30 swim meets depending on level and achievements. These meets can range from single day, single session meets on a Friday night to a major national multi-day competition, like the Olympic Trials. St. Petersburg Aquatics hosts several meets a year that all SPA swimmers are expected to compete in, unless it is indicated otherwise by the coaching staff. We host a 3-day Area 3 Championship in February or March, a Summer Invitational meet in July, the 3-day Summer Area 3 Championship meet at the end of July, and the 3-day Kiefer Invitational meet in September. In addition, we host several smaller 1 and 2 day meets in January, April, May, August, October and November,. There are two 'seasons' for swimming, Short Course (in a 25-yard pool) which runs from September to March and Long Course (in a 50-meter pool) which runs from April to August.

USA Swimming sanctions meets and establishes rules regarding swimming. In addition, USA Swimming maintains a database of times (SWIMS) for every swimmer who is a USA Swimming member from every sanctioned meet throughout the country. USA

Swimming is not the only organization conducting swim meets and developing rules to be used at their meets. Other groups include the YMCA and the various state high school athletic associations as well as others. These meets are not sanctioned but may have their times entered into SWIMS if they are observed by USA Swimming officials who note any discrepancies in the swims to make sure they would be 'legal' under USA Swimming rules and regulations. All the meets SPA competes in are sanctioned by USA Swimming or are officially observed by USA Swimming. At meets, the rules governing such meets are strictly enforced by certified officials and meet management. These rules are evenly applied regardless of the age or ability of the swimmer.

The Meet Information Letter

The Meet Information Letter is the governing document of a particular meet. It is what gets submitted for a sanction to be granted. The Meet Information Letter contains all information pertinent to the meet including the list and order of events, the start time of the meet and the start time of warm-ups. Meet Information Letters may be found on the host LSC (usually Florida Swimming) website or on the website for the host swim club.

Psych Sheets and Heat Sheets

Psych sheets are published shortly after the deadline for meet entries has passed. Not always available, they can be found on various websites and list the swimmers in each event in order of fastest to slowest. It provides a swimmer with his/her seeding in each event they have entered. Heat sheets are the program for the meet. They list each event with the heats and lane assignments for the swimmers. Heat sheets are available for purchase at the swim meet and may cost between \$5.00 and \$20.00. Most clubs charge a fee per swimmer as a part of the entry fees and then post the heat sheets online where they can be downloaded and printed prior to the meet.

What to Bring/Where to Sit

Arriving at the meet, you should immediately take your swimmer to the designated team area. If you do not know where this area is, there are plenty of SPA people around who can direct you to the location. SPA swimmers generally sit together at meets, both home and away. Your swimmer should bring a folding chair with them. It is also recommended that you bring a small cooler with drinks (not soda) and healthy snacks as sessions can last up to 4 hours long. Before leaving home, be sure they have their swimsuit, goggles and at least 2 towels.

At SPA-hosted meets, there will be two or more SPA parents working as clerks in the team area, assigned to help the younger swimmers get to the starting blocks. If your swimmer leaves the team area or chooses to sit with you at a meet, it is no longer the clerks' responsibility to get your swimmer to the blocks. Remember that the tents are there for swimmers first and sitting with your child in the team area is not an option at

SPA-held meets. In addition, at away meets, SPA may be seated in areas that are off-limits to parents. If parents are allowed to sit with swimmers at an away meet, it is assumed that you will be responsible for getting your child to the block for his/her events. If it is not possible then one or more SPA parents may be assigned this responsibility.

Critiquing Swims

It is not the job of a parent to critique their child's performance. That is the job of the coach. Your child should meet with the coach shortly before each event and immediately after each swim during which time the coach will give the swimmer a general critique and guidance as to how to improve their performance.

The Pool Deck

The pool deck is off-limits to anyone other than swimmers, coaches, officials and designated volunteers for liability reasons and the safety of the swimmers. Please do not be offended if you are asked to leave the pool deck. Coaches, Officials and Volunteers all wear designations to permit their presence on the pool deck. USA Swimming rules provide that photography, including video, is not permitted behind the starting blocks when they are being used for that purpose, nor is flash photography permitted during starts. Once again, this is for the safety of your swimmer.

Disqualifications

At some time, you may see an official speaking with your child immediately after they swim. It is likely your child has been disqualified (DQ'd) for some violation of the rules. This is a learning experience for the child and should be handled by the coach. As a parent you are not allowed to approach and speak to any official during a meet and any question about a disqualification must come from the coach or his designated representative.

Timed Finals and Prelim/Finals Meets

The majority of the meets your child competes in will be Timed Finals Meets. At these meets, the results are based on the times achieved during heats where the fastest swimmer out of all the heats is awarded First Place with the remainder of the placements being based on the next fastest times.

Prelim/Finals Meets are those competitions where the swimmers compete in preliminary heats, typically in a morning session, to determine the fastest group of swimmers who will then swim in a finals session, typically in the late afternoon or evening of the same day. The fastest group of swimmers are placed in the Championship or "A" finals heat. Some meets offer a Consolation or "B" final and even "C" and "D" finals for the next

fastest groups of swimmers. Most year-end championship meets follow a Prelim/Finals format.

Awards

At most meets, ribbons are awarded to the top 8 or 10 swimmers in an event. Some meets may award medals to the top swimmer or the top three swimmers and most meets award a trophy to the swimmer with the most points overall in each age group and gender. At most meets, there are no awards presented for senior events.

Championship Swim Meets

FLAGs and Senior Championships

At the end of each season, Florida Swimming sanctions a Florida Age Group Swimming Championships (FLAGs) meet and a Florida Swimming Senior Championships meet. Florida Swimming sets the qualifying standards for both these meets which may change from year to year. They are posted on the Florida Swimming website. FLAGs are held for swimmers age 14 and younger utilizing single age groups for 11, 12, 13, and 14-year olds and a fifth age group, the 10&Unders. Senior Championships has two groups, 15-16 year olds and an open group which has no age restrictions. When the date for Senior Championships is before the date for FLAGs, the 15-16 group may be changed to 14-16 to include those 14 year-olds whose birthdays fall between those dates.

Sectional Championships

The Zone sanctions a meet at the end of each season for each section. SPA is in the Southern Zone Southern Section. Qualifying standards are posted for the meets which are held in either Florida Swimming territory or Florida Gold Coast territory, alternating the host LSC. There are no age restrictions for these meets.

All Stars

At the conclusion of the Short Course FLAGs, an All-Star team of swimmers is chosen to represent Florida Swimming in a dual meet with a similar team of swimmers from the Florida Gold Coast LSC. If a swimmer finishes in the top 6 of an event at FLAGs they are eligible to sign up to be a part of the All-Star team. A nominal fee is charged and the costs of all transportation and meals are the responsibility of the swimmer. For several years, the dual meet has been held at the Indian River State College in Ft. Pierce, Florida. Swimmers receive two T-shirts and a swim cap.

Southern Zone Age Group Championships

At the end of July or the beginning of August, the Southern Zone sanctions a meet where the top swimmers of each LSC in the Zone compete against each other. Eight swimmers of each gender in three age groups (11-12, 13-14, 15-18) are selected. The selection criteria may change from year to year but generally some swimmers are chosen by virtue of their ranking in Florida Swimming and some based on the results of Long Course FLAGs. Swimmers must pay a fee and all costs of transportation and meals while at the meet site are paid for by Florida Swimming. Swimmers receive shorts, T-shirts, and may receive other items as well. The meet location varies year to year within the Southern Zone.

National Level Meets

USA Swimming Futures Championships

The USA Swimming Futures Championships were created to provide a step between Sectional Championships to USA Swimming Junior Nationals. There is no age restriction and swimmers must meet published time standards. Futures is a long course meet held during the summer in four to five locations around the country. Locations may vary from year to year.

ISCA Senior Cup and Elite Showcase Meets

The International Swim Coaches Association hosts two Senior Cup and two Elite Showcase Meets (14 & under) at North Shore Pool each year. These are usually held in March/April and July/August time frames and qualifying times are required.

Pro Swim Series

USA Swimming sanctions a series of meets around the country known as the Pro Swim Series, formerly known as Grand Prix meets. Despite its name, the Pro Swim Series is not just for professional swimmers. These meets have qualifying standards that can change drastically from year to year. Sites may also change from year to year. These meets typically bring the best swimmers in the country as there is prize money awarded to professional swimmers.

USA Swimming Junior Nationals

There are two Junior National meets held each year and hosted by USA Swimming. Locations vary from year to year. Short Course Junior Nationals are held in December while Long Course Junior Nationals are the end of July or beginning of August. Time

standards for these meets are faster than other Junior meets, with Long Course standards being faster than Short Course standards.

USA Swimming Nationals/US Open

Like Junior Nationals, there are normally two National meets each year hosted by USA Swimming. In some years, depending on the international meets being held that year, the Nationals and the Open may be separate meets. Time standards for these meets may be the fastest of any meet held in the country (even faster than Olympic time standards) with the Long Course Nationals being faster than the Short Course standards. These meets are usually held the week before or after Junior Nationals and may be in the same or different locations than Junior Nationals. SPA generally sends qualifying swimmers to Long Course Nationals.

Olympic Trials

The Olympic Trials may be considered the ultimate swim meet held in the United States. Held only in Olympic years (every four years), time standards may vary from trials to trials. Qualifying periods are usually the 2 years leading up to the meet. SPA has sent swimmers to every Olympic Trials since Coach Lewis' arrival.

Summer Swim League

As has been mentioned previously, during the summer months, most of the Junior Team and Senior III team, and some of the Senior II Team will train and compete in the Summer Swim League. The St. Petersburg Aquatics Summer Swim League program, run in conjunction with the City of St. Petersburg, is an introduction to competitive swimming for ages 6-18. The program begins in May at the following neighborhood pools: Fossil Park, Lake Vista, McLin, Northwest, Shore Acres and Walter Fuller. Practices are conducted Monday – Friday and there are weekly swim meets to prepare for the end of season City Championship Meet.

Summer Swim League Meets

Summer Swim League meets are not run as strictly as USAS meets, nor are they sanctioned as such. There may or may not be a certified official on deck and disqualifications are limited. In addition, every swimmer in Summer Swim League receives an award. Summer Swim League is used to maintain the child's interest in swimming while at the same time getting them used to procedures used at USAS meets.

Family Participation Policy

Your child and your family have now joined the St. Petersburg Aquatics Club Swimming program and the club obligates you and your child in two ways. Failure to comply with the club's obligations can result in the swimmer's dismissal from the team.

- 1) Your child is expected to compete in all home meets with a minimum of eight (8) meets attended to remain eligible for the team. May be excused at coach discretion.
- 2) A family member is expected to volunteer at all home meets in which your child is entered

The purpose of this requirement is:

- 1) To ensure that team activities are carried out
- 2) To involve and share fairly the responsibility of team activities among all SPA families

Rules:

- 1) Families are required to provide one worker at home swim meets for each session in which their child competes
- 2) Sessions are worked from beginning to end. Leaving early will result in a charge.
- 3) Families are responsible for signing-in legibly at each session or activity worked and all sessions will be tracked.
- 4) Permission must be obtained from head coach for the swimmer to be excused from competition
- 5) Failure to meet volunteer requirements as stated above will generate a \$100.00 per session fine assessed to your Team Sports Engine account.
- 6) Your volunteer hours will be rewarded with SPA promotional items

Monitoring Competition Participation:

1. Must compete at all home meets each quarter or will be charged the non-compete rate for next billing quarter at:

\$200/month for 1-hour group
\$175/month for 45-min group
\$150/month for 30-min group
1 ½ hour group demoted to 1-hour group and charged \$200/month
2. During penalty quarter, swimmer must compete to gain access to competitive rates for following quarter.
3. Quarters are as follows:

September-November
December – February
March – May
June – August (Summer Swim League is exempt for this quarter).

4. No competition for one full season (September-August), spot on team is forfeited.

Volunteer Information:

SPA utilizes an online sign-up program to assign workers for swim meets through the Sports Engine system. Before every swim meet that SPA hosts, you will receive an email, which provides a link for the sign-up for that particular meet. The sign-up provides the different positions available. It is imperative that we have a current and active email address for each family. Please log on to your Sports Engine account and verify the information located there.

Other Team Events

There are additional events hosted by the team that are not swim meets. The following are the two major such events:

Senior Holiday Breakfast

On the Saturday before Christmas, SPA hosts a team breakfast for Senior I and Senior II Team members. Food and drink are supplied by the team. National awards are presented, and high school seniors are honored.

Fall Festival and Costume Contest

At the end of October, the Junior Team members participate in a Halloween costume contest. Prizes are awarded for best costumes and food and drink are provided.

Communication

Problems

Communication between coach and parent is crucial to the success of both the team and individual swimmers. One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents feel more comfortable discussing problems or disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Problems are

never resolved this way and often new problems arise. The following are some guidelines for the parent in discussing difficult issues with a coach.

Remember that both you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy a good rapport and constructive dialogue.

Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of a training group or even the entire team. We strive to cater as much as possible to each individual athlete without compromising the integrity, safety, or philosophy of group training.

If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss the matter with that coach first, following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted. If the assistant coach is unable to resolve your concern satisfactorily, then ask the head coach to join the dialogue as a third party.

If another parent approaches you with complaints about the coach's performance or policies, please encourage the parent to speak directly with the coach since he/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

Contact

When contacting coaches, please be considerate of their responsibilities and avoid disrupting practice. Sending an email is the best way to communicate and to set up face-to-face meetings to discuss issues. If the matter is relatively short, you may be able to meet with the coach after practice but do try and set up even this brief meeting by email prior to approaching the coach.

The team typically contacts families through email. **It is imperative that the team has a current and active email address for each family** to send information such as meet entry forms and changes in practice times. Adding your cell carrier information to receive text messages is also helpful. Log on to Sports Engine through the SPA website and keep your information up-to-date.

Fees and Costs

St. Petersburg Aquatics maintains a reasonable fee structure which covers most of the expenses of the team. Fees are paid either monthly or quarterly for Senior I & II only. Fees are due by the 1st of the month. Late fees are assessed on the 10th of each month.

In addition to fees, athletes are required to obtain a City of St. Petersburg ADVANTAGE card. This card is valid for one year. There is no charge for this card but it is required for

entrance into the facility. There is a \$5.00 fee for a replacement card, charged by the City of St. Petersburg.

Families are also required to purchase a USA Swimming membership annually. The term of this membership is January 1 to December 31. USA Swimming membership is required for an athlete to practice with the team and to compete in USAS sanctioned meets and is completed on the USA Swimming website. Families are also required to pay a \$60.00 per family annual registration fee on September 1st.

Resources

Joining St. Petersburg Aquatics and USA Swimming opens up several resources of information which can answer simple questions and satisfy your curiosity or needs.

USA Swimming

www.usaswimming.org

USA Swimming provides its members with many services and information. It conducts national meets, holds various camps, and selects members of the national and junior national teams. In addition, the organization's website contains a wealth of information regarding the sport, nutrition and training in the form of articles and videos. As a member of USA Swimming you will also receive the organization's SPLASH Magazine.

Florida Swimming

www.floridaswimming.org

Florida Swimming maintains a website containing information specific to the organization. You will find information on swim meets, time standards for LSC championship meets, agendas and minutes for LSC meetings, forms needed for registration, as well as education articles, most of which are also found on USA Swimming's website.

Suits, Equipment and Team Apparel

All suits, equipment, and team apparel that is required or suggested is listed on the SPA website.

Suits

SPA is sponsored by SPEEDO and all suits worn in practices and meets must be SPEEDO suits unless the Head Coach approves wearing a different manufacturer's suit. All swimmers should wear the SPA Team Suit for all meets unless the swimmers are permitted to wear technical suits, which is typically for championship meets. Our team supplier is Kiefer Aquatics. They will usually schedule team outfitting days specifically for SPA, bringing all the appropriate items to the pool for families to purchase. They also bring a variety of sizes of SPA suits and equipment to each of our meets and you may call them in advance to make sure they will have the suit or equipment you wish to purchase at the meet. They also are the supplier to many other teams and will be present at many of the 'away' meets.

Ordering from Kiefer Aquatics

Call: 1-800-888-8843, tell them you are with SPA to place your order or follow the link on our website under Team Gear.

Swimsuit Rules

USA Swimming and FINA (the international organization governing the sport of swimming) have promulgated rules regarding swimsuits and what may be worn in sanctioned meets. Approved suits will have a 'stamp' indicating such approval on the outside of the suit, visible for officials. In addition to material, the rules specify that males may not wear a suit which extends below the knee or above the waist. Females may not wear a suit which extends below the knee or past the shoulder. Only one suit may be worn, and suits must be a single piece.

Technical Suits

You will see many older or advanced swimmers wearing 'technical suits', particularly at championship meets. These suits have been developed to take advantage of advanced materials and workmanship. They are expensive and should not be purchased without prior consultation with Coach Lewis.

Parkas

While we live in Florida, the weather does get cold in the winter. Warm clothing going to and from the pool and at meets is essential. Most swimmers purchase swim parkas to be worn on such occasions. These may be purchased from Kiefer Aquatics and information is available on our website.

Caps and Goggles

Team caps may be purchased from Coach Lewis during the week or at meets. Caps may be made from either latex or silicone and have SPA on either side. These caps must be worn at our meets. During practice, any cap may be worn.

Goggles are dependent on the swimmer and what he/she feels comfortable with wearing. There are many different brands and styles. You can consult with a coach or the vendor as well as your child to determine which pair of goggles is preferred.

Practice Equipment

As each swimmer progresses, they will begin using other pieces of equipment during practice and dryland. Most of this equipment is supplied by the team. All swimmers will use kickboards during practices. As they move to higher levels, fins, various hand paddles, fulcrum paddles, pull buoys, and snorkels will be introduced. Snorkels and fins are not supplied by the team. The preferred equipment list and team pricing is available on our website and purchased through Kiefer Aquatics. Mesh equipment bags may be purchased to hold your equipment and may be left at the pool in the rear area so they do not have to be brought back and forth to the pool.

Team Apparel

Most of our team apparel is SPEEDO product to be ordered through Kiefer Aquatics. A list of items with team pricing is available on the SPA website.

Glossary

Aggregate Time – times achieved by 4 swimmers in individual events which are added together to arrive at a provable relay time

Alternate – In a prelim/finals meet, after the finalists have been determined, the next two fastest swimmers are designated first (fastest of the two) and second alternates. Should a finalist swimmer fail to appear for finals, the alternates are called to take that position in finals.

Anchor – The final swimmer in a relay.

Backstroke – One of the competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is the first stroke in a Medley Relay and second stroke in the Individual Medley races.

Bell Lap – The last lap in a distance event. A bell or buzzer is sounded to indicate this lap to the lead swimmer.

Blocks – The starting platforms located at the end of each lane. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be mounted permanently or temporarily.

Breaststroke – One of the competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is the second stroke in a Medley Relay and the third stroke in the Individual Medley races.

Butterfly – Also called Fly, Butterfly is one of the competitive racing strokes. It is the third stroke in a Medley Relay and the first stroke in the Individual Medley races.

Button – The manual Timing System stopping device that records a back-up time in the event the touchpad fails. The button is wired to the deck terminal block. There is usually one button per lane although in some instances there are two. It is the timer's responsibility to push the button when the swimmer finishes the race.

Carbohydrates – The main source of food energy used by athletes.

Championship Finals – Also called "A" Finals is the heat which determines the event winner and placement of subsequent swimmers. Usually Finals consists of the fastest heat of swimmers in an event at a prelim/finals meet.

Check-In – The procedure required before a swimmer can swim a deck-seeded event. Sometimes referred to as Positive Check-In, the swimmer or his/her coach must mark their name on a list provided by the meet host.

Circle Seeding – A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a Prelims/Finals event. The fastest 18 – 30 (depending on number of lanes) are seeded in the last three heats with the fastest swimmers placed in the inside lanes.

Clerks – Parents working in the team area assisting primarily young or inexperienced swimmer such that they get to the blocks for their events.

Colorado – A brand of Electronic Timing System

Concessions – Selling food, drinks, and other items to spectators and swimmers. Parents are required to work the concessions stand at meets.

Consolation Finals – Also called "B" Finals, the next fastest heat of swimmers in a prelim/finals meet who qualify to return to the Finals session. Consolation Finals are the second fastest heat.

Cut – A qualifying time standard to enter a meet or event.

Deck – The area around the pool reserved for swimmers, officials, coaches and other authorized individuals. No one but USAS members and authorized volunteers may be on the deck during a meet.

Deck Entry – An entry made on the day of the meet during a time specified in the meet information letter rather than prior to the meet.

Deck Referee – The head official on deck during a meet. The Deck Referee calls the swimmers to the blocks and monitors the swimmers and the deck area.

Deck Seeded – Some events are not seeded until the day of the meet because of check-in requirements. Such events are considered deck seeded.

Dehydration – The abnormal depletion of body fluids. Dehydration is the most common cause of cramps and nausea in swimmers.

Disqualified (DQ'd) – When a rules infraction is noted by an official, the swimmer's performance is not counted and the swimmer is disqualified. A disqualification is shown by the official raising one arm with an open hand above his/her head.

Draw – Random selection by chance

Dropped Time – When a swimmer goes faster than his/her previous personal best, they are said to have dropped time.

Early Take-off – During a relay, when the swimmer on the block leaves the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.

Entry – Individual, relay or team roster that has entered a meet or event.

Entry Fees – The amount that is charged per event per swimmer or relay. These fees vary from meet to meet.

Entry Limit – Each meet will usually have a limit as to the number of swimmers that may be entered into the meet. Once the entry limit is reached, the meet will be closed and any subsequent entries are returned.

Electronic Timing – An electronic timing system usually has touchpads in the water at the end of each lane, a junction 'box' with cables, buttons for back-up timing and a computer console that stores and prints the results of each heat. Some are connected to a scoreboard which displays swimmers' times.

Eligible – The status of a swimmer that they are registered and have met all requirements to swim in an event or meet.

False Start – After a swimmer has set, they must remain still until the starting signal is given. If they do not, they will be disqualified for making a false start. False starts require the confirmation of BOTH Starter and Deck Referee. Extenuating circumstances may lead to the False Start being disallowed by the Deck Referee.

FINA – The Federation Internationale De Natation. The international organization which makes rules for and hosts international competitions.

Finals Session– Finals is the session swimmers return to after qualifying during the Preliminaries (prelims) Session.

Fine – Some violations of the rules, particularly regarding sportsmanship, may result in a monetary penalty to the swimmer or team.

Format – The type of swim meet being conducted including the order of events.

Freestyle – Technically not a stroke, freestyle indicates that any stroke may be used with the following exceptions: in a Medley Relay or an Individual Medley, the last leg is designated as the freestyle leg however the swimmer may NOT employ the Breaststroke, Backstroke or Butterfly strokes. Most swimmers utilize what was known as the Australian Crawl in freestyle.

Gallery – The viewing area for spectators during a swim meet is called the gallery.

Goals – Short and long-term targets swimmers have set to achieve.

Heats – When there are too many swimmers entered in an event to all swim at the same time, the event is divided into heats based on entry times of the swimmers.

Heat Sheet – Meet program that lists each event by number and each heat with swimmers' names and lane assignments.

High Point – At some meets, points are awarded based on the finish of events. These points are added at the end of the meet and the individual with the most points in an age group and gender is considered High Point winner.

Hospitality – At most swim meets, the host team provides food, drinks and snacks to coaches, officials and workers.

Individual Medley (IM) – An event where one swimmer swims equal lengths of four different strokes. The order of strokes is Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle.

Interval – A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest during a training session.

Invitational – A type of meet that requires a club to request an invitation to attend the meet.

Lane – The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim.

Lane Lines – Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.

Lap – One length of the course although it sometimes may also mean down and back the course (2 lengths).

Lap Counter – Large numbered cards used during freestyle events of 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the turn end of the course opposite the start end. The numbers are only odd with the final lap being indicated with a solid bright orange or red card.

Leg – The part of a relay event swum by one team member or a single stroke in an IM.

Length – The distance from one end of the pool to the other end (25 yards, 25 meters, or 50 meters)

Local Swim Committee (LSC) – The local administrative division of USA Swimming with certain geographical boundaries within a Section.

Meet Director – The individual in charge of the administrative matters of a meet (Dry side).

Meet Marshal – Individual who controls the spectators, team areas, and warm-up/warm-down lanes at a swim meet.

Meet Referee – The USA Swimming certified individual in charge of matters governed by USA Swimming rules and regulations.

Mile – Refers to the 1500 Meter and 1650 Yard events, both of which are actually shorter than a mile.

Non-Conforming Time – A short course time submitted to qualify for a long course meet or conversely, a long course time submitted to qualify for a short course meet.

NT – No Time, an indication the swimmer has not recorded a time in an event or failed to provide a time for seeding in an event.

Officials – USA Swimming certifies officials to conduct swim meets. These are the individuals you see with either navy blue shorts or khaki shorts and white shirts stationed around the pool.

Preliminaries (Prelims) Session – Preliminaries is the session that all swimmers who are entered in a swim meet participate in with the goal of being fast enough to swim again at the Finals Session.

Scratch – To withdraw from a race. Usually used in reference to individuals having qualified for Finals. Most meets have scratch deadlines and rules which can result in a swimmer being barred from their next event or even the rest of the meet if they are not followed.

Seed – Assign swimmers to specific heats and lanes based on their entry or preliminary times.

Split – The time for a specific portion of a race shorter than the total distance. For example, in the 500 Freestyle, splits may be taken for the first 100 Yards and 200 Yards.

Starter – The USA Swimming certified official who brings the swimmers on the blocks to set and initiates the starting signal for the race.

Stroke Judge – The USA Swimming certified official whose responsibility is observing that the different stroke rules are followed during a race and reporting a disqualification if an infraction is observed. They may be walking along the sides of the pool, or this position may be combined with Turn Judge and stationed at either end of the pool.

Swim-Off – When two or more swimmers finish a preliminary race with the same time, the swimmers may swim the distance/stroke again to break the tie.

Taper – A period of time in training before an important meet where the training shifts and may ease.

Timed Finals – Competition in which swimmers only compete in heats and results are based on the times swum during those heats.

Timer – An individual who are responsible for starting a watch at the beginning of a race and stopping the watch when the swimmer finishes, recording that time and also pressing the button for back-up times.

Time Trial – Event where the swimmer is strictly swimming for time and not placement.

Touch Pad – The ‘plate’ connected by wire to the timing system touched by the swimmers when they finish the race.

Turn Judge – The USA Swimming certified official whose responsibility is observing that the rules regarding turns are followed and reporting a disqualification if an infraction is observed. This position may be combined with the Stroke Judge. Turn Judges are located at both ends of the pool.

Unattached – A swimmer who is allowed to compete but does not represent a club or team.

USA Swimming Number – A 14-part number assigned when you join USA Swimming. It consists of the first three letters of the first name, the middle initial, the first four letters of the last name followed by the month, day, and year of the swimmer's birth. This number is required for entry in a USA Swimming sanctioned meet.

Warm-down – After a race, swimmers will go to the warm-down pool to swim several laps to help the body get rid of the lactic acid build-up in the muscles.

Warm-up – The swimming a swimmer does prior to a race to loosen the muscles in preparation for the race.