

The Delaware Swim Team Team Handbook 2025-2026



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Mission Statement

- **Building champions in life, one stroke at a time.**
- The coaching staff believes that the following concepts are of great value to our student athletes. As an organization, the Delaware Swim Team coaching staff will strive to:
 - Develop proper stroke technique at an early age
 - Teach and emphasize good sportsmanship
 - Increase self esteem and motivation, encourage hard work, goal setting and goal achievement
 - Instill the values of dedication, commitment, and team loyalty
 - Encourage swimmers to strive for excellence at each level of our program
 - Provide an environment for our swimmers to reach their maximum potential



Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to explain to new members just what the Delaware Swim Team (DST) is and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers, year after year. It should be read by all families so that they may become familiar with important facts and rules of the team.

Welcome!

Welcome to the Delaware Swim Team! We look forward to working with your swimmer(s) as all of us progress through our swimming/coaching careers. Our team is a year-round, developmental and competitive swimming team offering instruction, training, and competition to young people of all ages and abilities. Our swim team is owned by Michael Ramone and Lisa Ramone who have been involved in the world of swimming since 1977.

The Delaware Swim Team has established itself as the top team in Delaware as well as one of the top teams in the Middle Atlantic LSC. The team competes in local, regional, and national competitions sanctioned by USA Swimming, the national governing body for amateur swimming in this country.

This handbook will help familiarize you with all facets of the Delaware Swim Team program and with competitive swimming in general. As you look through the following pages you will be introduced to our history, philosophy, team policies, and to the basic information concerning your day-to-day participation in the DST program. It is our hope that this handbook will help you better understand and enjoy your family's participation with our program.



Team Philosophy

Delaware Swim Team views swimming as an important part of the overall development of a young boy or girl. Besides the most obvious benefit of physical conditioning, swimming fosters the personal discipline required to persevere, the confidence building of progress in competition, the social growth from travel, learning to accept winning and losing with equal grace, and the sense of values gained from competing as both an individual and a team member.

The Delaware Swim Team program strives to instill in young swimmers an understanding of, and appreciation for, such concepts as high self-esteem, personal accountability, constructive self- motivation, goal-setting, and goal achievement as their ideas relate to their success in training and in competition. It is our belief that the process of achieving is as significant as realizing the achievement itself. At each level of the DST program, swimmers are instructed to strive for excellence.

Excellence in this sense represents the achievement of that level at which each swimmer knows that they have done their utmost to become the best they are capable of becoming. This philosophy is consistent throughout the program in every swimmer, novice through Olympian. We want every swimmer to swim to the best of their own ability and seek the opportunity to attain the level of excellence to which their desire and ability will move them. We believe swimmers and their parents alike should enjoy swimming and remember it as a positive experience.



Long Range Objectives

PERSONAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- To provide an opportunity for young people in the Delaware area to engage in a wholesome, life saving, lifetime sport and recreational activity.
- To promote physical fitness and encourage proper conditioning and health habits.
- To provide opportunities for healthy social, emotional, and educational development, and to encourage peer and family participation.
- To foster the development of high self-esteem and help cultivate positive self-images.

COMPETITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- To create an environment in which the desire for self-improvement and goal achievement motivates the individual to fully develop their natural abilities and help others to do likewise.
- To provide opportunities to learn the values of hard work, dedication, self-discipline, and perseverance.
- To promote the ideals of honesty, integrity, good sportsmanship, and team loyalty.
- To provide quality instruction, training, and competition at all peer and ability levels.

STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

- Participate in the direction and management of Middle Atlantic Swimming and to further the growth and development of competitive swimming in the state.



Coaches' Bill of Rights

1. Each coach is a professional and has a right to be treated with respect by all swimmers, parents, and other coaches.
2. Each coach has a right to expect the full support of all parents in the DST program.
3. Each coach has a right to establish training programs which are safe and which will meet the needs and goals of the swimmers, head coach, and DST.
4. Each coach has a right to be free from unnecessary interruption from parents during training sessions or meets.
5. Each coach has a right to be compensated fairly for his or her services considering the financial abilities of DST.

Coaches' Responsibilities

The coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Delaware Swim Team coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for youngsters that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself--"to be the best you can be." Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each individual.
2. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the DST coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets DST swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also makes the final decision concerning which events a swimmer is entered into.
4. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. (It is the parent's job to offer love and understanding regardless of their swimmer's performance.)
5. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff.
6. Each coach has a responsibility to constantly be aware of the swimmers' safety and wellbeing.
7. Each coach has a responsibility to be a positive role model for the swimmers.
8. Each coach has a responsibility to be a technical expert on the sport of swimming.
9. Each coach has a responsibility to help construct a vision for the athlete of what is possible in the sport of swimming and the path each swimmer will need to follow to achieve that goal.

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The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the DST program. It is the swimmer's and parents' responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.



Competitive Program

13 & Over programs

Blue, Yellow, Green, Gold, Big Dawgs

12 & Under programs

Super Dawgs, Mighty Dawgs, Wonder Dawgs, Mini Mutts, Pups

Keep Your Feet Wet Program

High School Prep

Dash

Splash

Summer Clinics



Keep Your Feet Wet Programs

The bridge between part-time swimming and full-time swimming, this program is designed to introduce summer or lessons-only swimmers to year-round swimmers. We also offer programs to prepare swimmers for high school and summer seasons. The program is designed to build mechanics and an understanding of competitive swimming concepts.

High School Prep (September through mid-November)

This program is designed to prepare High School age swimmers for the upcoming scholastic season. Coaches begin the season with a strong focus on stroke mechanics, and gradually complement that instruction with a progressive training program. The group can accommodate all levels of skill development, individual commitment, and offers a fall sports/activity friendly practice schedule.

Splash and Dash Racing League (September through May)

The Splash & Dash groups allow swimmers the opportunity to continue the fun of summer league throughout the year. Both groups offer a chance for your child to learn and improve in all 4 strokes with individual attention from highly qualified coaches. Swimmers gain confidence while having fun with swimming. These groups can be a stepping stone from lessons or summer league to year round competitive swimming.

The Splash & Dash groups provide two levels of instruction to meet the swimmer where they are individually to help them achieve their goals. The groups will focus on all the skills required to improve their swimming skills including Stroke Mechanics, Starts, Turns & Endurance.

We offer our Splash & Dash group instruction to meet the swimmer where they are individually to help them prepare to have the best chance to RACE and WIN with their Summer League club.

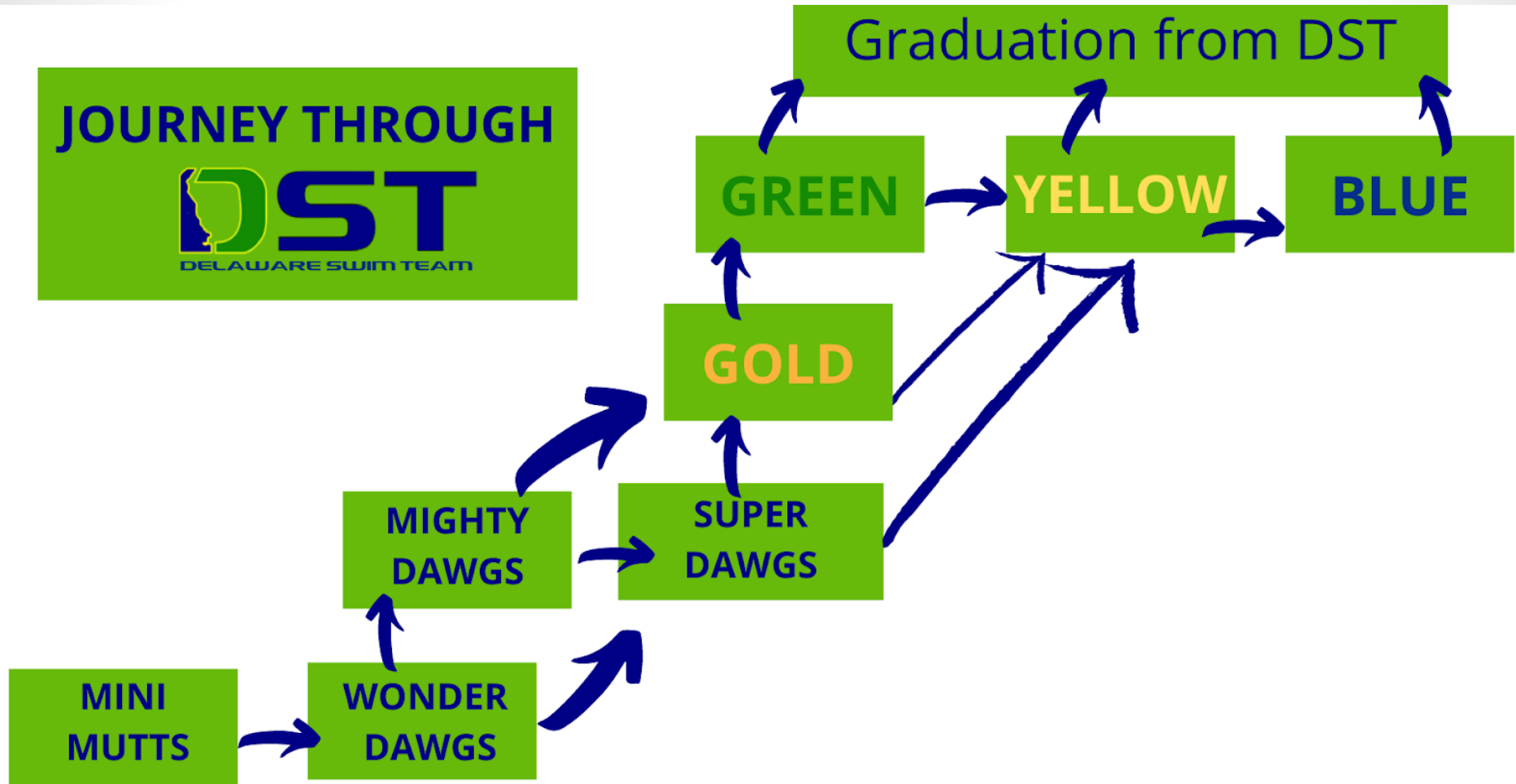
Summer Splash & Dash Clinics (June through July)

Summer Splash & Dash Clinics will be offered throughout the summer to help swimmers stay sharp and continue to improve their racing skills and mechanics.

These groups may all be offered at more or fewer practice locations, based on demand or enrollment.



Competitive Programs



Competitive Program Overview

DIVISIONS	GROUPS	PURPOSE	RELATIONSHIP	WORKING ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM
Senior Division				
Ages: 15 & up # Practices/wk: 6-8 Practice Durations: 90-180 minutes	Blue Yellow Green Big Dawgs	“Compete to Excel” – DST athletes continue to learn and be taught progressively as well as take ownership to put it all together for the purpose of “excelling” towards their career goals.	Swimmer Led-Coach Directed & Parent Supported Value Drivers: Partner – Empower – Celebrate	Mastery of racing skills & strategy. Character ownership, strength development. Exposure to a variety of camp & champ experiences (team to national level). Performance prep (nutrition-rest recovery-psychology)
13-14 Division				
Ages: 13-14 # Practices/wk: 5-8 Practice Durations: 90-120 minutes	Yellow Gold Big Dawgs	“Practice to Compete” – DST athletes will be taught progressive skills, drills, & technique in a variety of ways to prepare them for not only the present but also the senior level. They will learn race strategies, build upon practice habits & skill development to use in meets. Also, swimmers will learn “outside” the pool habits & decision-making will have an effect on meets as much as the “day to day” work they put into practices. DST athletes will compete at the local, state, regional level & potentially nationally as well.	Coach & Swimmer Led – Parent Supported Value Drivers: Support – Serve – Layered Commitment	Progression of racing skills & strategy. Character ownership, strength development. Exposure to a variety of camp & championship experiences (team to national level). Performance preparation (nutrition-rest-recovery-mental edge).



Competitive Program Overview

10-12 Division				
Ages: 10*-12 # Practices/wk: 4-6 Practice Durations: 90-105 minutes	Super Dawgs* (10-12) Mighty Dawgs (11-12)	“Learn to Practice” – DST athletes will progress from the fundamental skills & technique taught in the 10 & under divisions and continue to build towards an advanced level of learning. They will also start understanding how to implement learned skills & technique into “practice sets”. This will be useful to increase their skill level at meets as well as for long-term development in the sport of swimming. DST athletes will compete at local, state, and regional levels.	Coach Led – Parent & Swimmer Supported Value Drivers: Support – Serve – Layered Commitment	Foundational skills & technique. Character development. Kinesthetic awareness. Exposure to camps & championship format (team & LSC/regional level); nutrition.
10 & Under Division				
Ages: 10 & under # Practice/wk: 2-5 Practice Durations: 60-75 minutes	Wonder Dawgs (9-10) Mini Mutts (8 and under) Pups (5-6)	“FUN”damentals – To teach DST athletes entering the sport of competitive swimming a great foundation of skill development & technique in a style that can be FUN & FRUITFUL for long term growth in the sport of swimming. DST athletes & parents are introduced to competitive meets with the thought in mind of “family” friendly atmosphere & grow into championship meets.	Parent – Coach Led Value Drivers: Invest – Connect – Ignite	Foundational skills & technique. Athletic development/character. Education/intro to competition.

** By invitation only*

These groups may all be offered at more or fewer practice locations, based on demand or enrollment.

Coaching Staff and Team Programs - Section B



Swimmer Bill of Rights

Swimmers have a right to:

1. Be treated with respect and to be free of verbal or physical abuse from a coach or another swimmer.
2. Expect that his or her coach, after being made aware of a limiting physical condition, will not ask the swimmer to perform or train in a manner that the coach knows will be harmful to the swimmer.
3. Expect that all practices, both in and out of the water, will be conducted in a safe manner so that the swimmer will not be exposed to unnecessary risk.
4. Know that his or her coach cares about them as a person/individual as well as an athlete.
5. Be positively encouraged to do better, to be congratulated on a good performance, and to be criticized constructively when improvement is needed and attainable.
6. Expect practice to be challenging and that, overall, competition will be rewarding.
7. Set his or her own swimming goals with his or her coach, and to change these goals as circumstances arise.

Swimmer Training Responsibilities

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases so does his/her responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be Senior Swimming bound. As swimmers improve this is a deep commitment that requires great effort on all parts. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her parents, and most importantly to themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for a 100% effort each time they come to practice.

Swimmers have the following responsibilities:

1. To treat his or her coach with respect at all times and to use proper channels to address any problems or complaints.
2. To adhere to the coach's rules governing training sessions and to focus on the training program.
3. To take his or her commitment to swimming seriously at whatever his or her training level may be.
4. To support Delaware Swim Team, fellow swimmers, and his or her coach by encouragement and attendance at practice and meets.
5. To make the minimum number of training sessions set by the coach and strive for the recommended attendance percentage.
6. To train and race as hard as he or she can. Swimmers will be required to bring specified training accessories (i.e., goggles, flippers, etc.) to workouts. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure these items are properly adjusted and that spares are readily available. Equipment adjustment and repair will not be accepted as excuse to miss part of a training session.



Safe Sport for Athletes

USA Swimming has a mandate in place, in accordance with Safe Sport, in order to protect minor athletes. This mandate is called the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP). This new policy affects every athlete, coach, trainer, and employee at the Delaware Swim Team. These rules are meant to protect all DST athletes, and while we have always focused on DST providing a safe environment for our athletes of all ages, our goal for this policy is to comply with the requirement of Safe Sport and MAAPP.

1. Coaches and trainers should not text and/or call minor athletes however if communication by these methods are necessary the coach/trainer will copy the minor athlete's parent a. If a minor athlete texts their coach, the coach will include the parent on the response to the minor athlete
2. Our recommended form of communication with our coaches is through email.
 - a. Should cc administrator, as well as the athlete's legal guardian
3. If a parent or athlete requests a meeting with a coach, it must be held at a DST Facility (Pike Creek or New Castle)
 - a. Outside meeting places are not permitted
 - b. Doors must remain open and unlocked
 - c. If the meeting is only with the athlete, another DST coach or staff member must be present
4. No closed-door meetings between coaches and minor athletes under any circumstances
5. If responding to text or email from a minor athlete, the coach/trainer will include the parent on the communication
6. Coaches are not to be "friends with" or "following" minor athletes on social media, and minor athletes are not be "friends with" or "following" their coaches/trainers on social media
7. Once an athlete has turned 18, graduated high school, and left for college they may connect with their coaches/trainers on social media
8. Coaches (and Chaperones, if applicable) should never be left alone with a minor athlete; there should always be another adult present
 - a. This includes private lessons
 - b. Parents need to pick their athletes up on time after all practices to ensure athletes are never at a DST facility unaccompanied
9. Our coaches are not to ever offer transportation to a minor athlete
10. A coach should never offer a massage or a physical manipulation to an athlete
11. Our preference for physical contact between coaches and athletes is high fives, handshakes, and a pat on the back/shoulder
12. Coaches should never accept personal invitations from parents of DST minor athletes to non-athletic events
 - a. i.e. meals, parties, trips, etc.
 - b. A coach may accept an invitation to an athletic associated event, such as an athlete's college signing



Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP)

The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) covers five areas. These five areas are one-on-one interaction, travel, social media, and electronic communication, locker rooms and changing areas, massage and rubdowns. These five areas will be summarized below, and on the continuing pages.

One-on-One Interaction:

- Any one-on-one interaction between a minor athlete and an adult must occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult
 - Meetings must be in a room where the doors remain open and unlocked
- Individual Training sessions outside of the regular practice schedule between adults and minor athletes are permitted but the training session must be within observable and interruptible distance of another adult

Social Media and Electronic Communication:

- When an adult with authority over a minor athlete communicates with them through text message or email the parent must be included on the communication
 - Includes responses to communications from athletes to adults
- When an adult sends an email to the entire team parents must be copied
- Legal guardians have the right to request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication and the organization must comply with the request
- Adults with authority over minor athletes should not have private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes
 - Existing social media connections with minor athletes need to be immediately discontinued
- Adults with authority over minor athletes should not send private messages through social media platforms



Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP), continued

Travel:

- Applicable Adults (coaches and/or chaperones) must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's legal guardian.
- During team travel, when doing room checks two-deep leadership (two Applicable Adults should be present) and observable and interruptible environments must be maintained.
 - When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete's legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each competition for the minor athlete to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.
 - Minor athletes should be paired to share hotel rooms or other sleeping arrangements with other minor athletes of the same gender and of similar age. When a minor athlete and an adult athlete share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement, the minor athlete's legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each instance for the minor to share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with said adult athlete.
 - Unrelated non-athlete Applicable Adults must not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location (such as AirBnB or Vrbo) with an athlete.
 - Meetings during team travel must be conducted consistent with the One-on-One Interactions section of this Policy (i.e., any such meeting must be observable and interruptible). Meetings must not be conducted in an individual's hotel room or other overnight sleeping location.



Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP), continued

Locker Rooms and Changing Areas:

- Deck changing is prohibited
- Use of any audio or visual recording device, including cell phones, is prohibited in the locker rooms
- Except for athletes on the same team or athletes attending the same competition, at no time are non-related adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room/changing area, except under emergency situations
- DST, as a USA Swimming club, has the right to regularly and randomly monitor use of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with policy. Legal guardians are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas. If guardian does enter locker room or changing areas, it must only be a same-sex legal guardian and the legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance

Massage and Rubdowns:

- Any massage performed on a minor athlete needs to be within an observable and interruptible distance of another adult, and should only be done by a licensed massage therapist
- A coach should never perform a massage on an athlete

If you have any questions or concerns concerning these new policies, please contact us at office@delawareswimteam.com. If you are aware of any violations to this policy, please contact office@delawareswimteam.com.



Team Uniform & Equipment

The Delaware Swim Team is fortunate to be sponsored by TYR. The company provides our team with equipment, coaches' gear, advertising, and more. Our relationship with TYR is dependent on the commitment by our team to wear TYR suits and to try, whenever possible, to use TYR equipment.

It is **mandatory** that all Competitive Program swimmers purchase **official** DST t-shirts and swim cap. Failure to comply may result in a swimmer not being allowed to practice or compete in a meet, even if the swimmer has already signed up for the competition. Please understand that coaches will enforce this requirement.

Swim Meet T-shirt policy (for all team members)

DST t-shirts are available in three different colors: navy, yellow, and green. Please follow this color-coding for all swim meets. All team members must have the three colors of DST t-shirts.

For meets/sessions that are on a Friday: wear navy DST shirt

For meets/sessions that are on a Saturday: wear yellow DST shirt

For meets/sessions that are on a Sunday: wear green DST shirt

For meets/sessions that are 4 days in length or on another day of the week: coaches will indicate which t-shirts to wear prior to the meet

Only authorized DST team t-shirts are permitted to be worn at meets. Homemade t-shirts, pants, jackets, etc. are not allowed at any time at meets. Swimmers are permitted to wear DST jackets or parkas on deck at a swim meet in instances where they would like to stay a bit warmer. Jackets, parkas, bags, warm-ups, t-shirts, shorts, sweatshirts, sweatpants or any other article of clothing that shows the name, slogan, or logo of another team (including summer league teams, high school teams, and the Middle Atlantic Zone team) are not permitted at swim meets at any time.



Practice Attendance Policies

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the coaches' policies regarding practice. These policies are designed to provide the best possible practice environment for all.

1. Each training group has specific attendance suggestions 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 expectation level of the coaches' (that each swimmer attends practices) increases as swimmers move to higher groups.
2. For the safety and protection of the swimmers they should arrive at the pool no more than 10 minutes before the start of practice and be picked up immediately after practice. It is imperative that the swimmers arrive on time so that the coaching staff can efficiently use the allotted time; however it is also extremely important that children not be left unsupervised at the pool prior to or after practice. The coaching staff is NOT responsible for supervising athletes either prior to or following a practice session.
3. Each swimmer should plan to stay the entire practice as each practice is designed to be most beneficial when completed in its entirety and coaches often make announcements at the end of practice. In the event that your child needs to be dismissed early from practice, please notify the coach prior to the beginning of practice.
4. All practice groups are expected to be at their designated starting place with their practice equipment ready to start practice on time.
5. Swimmers must notify their coach if they leave the pool and/or pool deck at any time during the practice.
6. Occasionally some or most of a practice group may be at a meet, in which case your swimmer will be notified of a practice change or cancellation. Such notice will be provided through email, posted on DST website, and/or social media.
7. Swimmers and parents are discouraged from disrupting the coach or other swimmers with unnecessary communication. Emergencies, of course, are an exception.



Practice Code of Conduct for Swimmer and Families

1. Swimmers are expected to support their teammates at practice as well as in competition. Working together as a team benefits all individuals in the group and is an important part of DST. Swimmers are encouraged always to be positive at practice.
2. Swimmers are expected to follow the instructions of the coaching staff at all times.
3. Abusive language, lying, stealing, and/or vandalism will not be tolerated. These behaviors are directly contrary to the objective of DST and may warrant strict disciplinary actions, up to and including expulsion from the team.
4. Swimmers may leave practice early only with the coaches' permission.
5. At the Pike Creek and New Castle sites, swimmers are not permitted in the strength training or other fitness center area unless a member of the coaching staff is present.
6. At other facilities, swimmers are not permitted in areas not directly being used by the swim team.
7. During workouts, the pool deck is for coaches and swimmers only. If you need to speak with the coaches, please call or email them to set up a time to speak.



Observing Practices

While we understand a parent's desire to see their child learn to swim, it is not encouraged that you remain at the pool during practices to observe each time your swimmer is in attendance. **Think about this: you do not sit in their classroom and observe them learning in that environment; it should be the same in this environment.** For New Castle, parents must sit in the lobby area or on the upstairs balcony and cannot approach the side of the pool during the practice or observe from the locker rooms. For Pike Creek, parents should stay behind the glass windows. PS DuPont parents may sit on the bleachers along the wall with the locker rooms and manager's rooms.

We respectfully request that you do not interfere with the practice and remain a bystander without making any verbal or non-verbal contact with your swimmer during the practice. Our highly trained coaches know the best way to instruct your child and parental guidance is not necessary during this time. Due to insurance regulations, parents are not allowed on the pool deck. Also, no video taping of any sort by parents during practices is allowed, in accordance with other children's privacy rights.

1. Parents are not allowed on the pool deck to observe practice. If you are on the pool deck (or observing the pool from the locker rooms) you will be asked to leave. Insurance does not cover you observing practice from the pool deck. Parents are ONLY allowed on the pool deck in the following instances:

a) An emergency situation. We will come to get you if this occurs.

b) At PS DuPont, where there is only pool deck access to watch practices, parents must stay in the designated spectator areas.

2. It is not good for the development of the swimmer for parents to be intently watching every lap of every practice. There are other areas of our sites where you can sit out of the view of your swimmer so that they can develop on their own. You can also join the DSFC and utilize that during practice times. During practices, parents should have absolutely no communication with their swimmers (unless in the case of an emergency) be it verbal or non-verbal communication.

3. If it becomes apparent to DST coaches that swimmers are continually looking into the stands at their parent during practice, we ask the parent to refrain from attending practices. Swimmers should never train or compete for the approval of their parents, regardless of their age or ability level.

4. Parents observing practices should respect this privilege. Any conduct in the balcony deemed detrimental to any aspect of the DST program by the coaching staff will cause the parent to lose the privilege of observing practices.

5. Parents should not engage coaches in any conversation or discussion on the pool deck or during practice time unless a meeting has been pre-arranged.



Evolution of the Athlete – Parent – Coach Relationship

Ages 10 & under



Coach

+



Parent(s)

lead the



Swimmer

Ages 11-12



Coach

+



Parent(s)

+



Swimmer

=

work
together

Ages 13-14



Coach

+



Swimmer

work
together
while



Parent(s)

support

Ages 15 & over



Swimmer

drives the
vision



Coach

+



Parent(s)

support



Parents... Your Athlete Needs YOU

A successful swimming program requires understanding and cooperation among the coaches, swimmers, and parents. This relationship can be critical to your child's successful development on the team.

The coaching staff understands your commitment to your child. Many of the coaches are also mothers and fathers. The coaches understand that you will always be looking out for your child's best interests. While the coaches are also committed to ensuring that your child's best interests are served, their responsibility is to serve each athlete on the team. Your perspective and the coaches' perspective may differ when it comes to your child's development. Patience, understanding, and most importantly, **communication** are the cornerstones of this relationship. With this in mind, please review and consider the following guidelines.

1. Individuals learn at different rates and in different ways. Some athletes will quickly pick up a skill while others may require more time to learn the same skill. Please be patient with your child and his/her development. Direct any questions to the coach.
2. Progress is rarely immediate. New team members will always go through a period of adaptation, no matter their age, that may impede immediate progress. This could be caused by greater training demands, a stronger emphasis on technique, or simply nerves. Patience, trust, and communication among coaches, swimmers, and parents will help any struggling swimmer through such a period.
3. Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmer's career. Plateaus can be both in competition and training. A plateau signifies the swimmer has mastered lower-order skills, but they are not yet sufficiently ready 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 momentary delay in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance to approach their personal potential.
4. Swimmers ten years and younger are the most inconsistent swimmers. This can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and swimmers alike! We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.
5. Parents must realize that slow development of the 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 we must learn to handle as youngsters prepare us for the larger ones we are certain to experience as adults.



6. It is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. **It is the parents' job to supply love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the young athlete feel good about him or herself.**

7. Parents' attitudes often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about his/her parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your child to practice and meets, volunteering, team events, meetings, etc. – don't look at these functions as chores.

8. If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, contact the coach. Criticizing the coach in front of the child undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support that is necessary for maximum success.

9. 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.

10. Children should swim because he/she wants to. It is natural to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.

11. The etymology of the word "competition" goes back to two Latin words: "com" and "pet ere," which means "together to strive." Close competition provides two great services for the athlete: it brings out the best in him/her and shows where improvement is needed.

12. 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. For this reason, parents are allowed to watch practice only from the designated watching area. They are **NOT** permitted to participate or instruct. **Parents who attempt to coach their child during a practice may be asked to leave the area.**

Please leave all coaching to the coaching staff. If you have questions about technique or coaching strategies, we encourage you to arrange a time (NOT during practice) to speak to your child's coach.

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 disappointments. Every child 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.



Guide to be a Good Swim Parent

The parent's primary role is that of unconditional love and support for their swimmer. There are many ways to fulfill this role:

1. The first is to remind your child that you love them, no matter how they perform either at practice or at a meet.
 - Support your child's goals by first allowing them to make goals of their own in consultation with their coach.
 - Remember that this is your son's or daughter's childhood and not your own: Recognize their dreams and support their ambitions, but don't create them for the child.
 - Make sure that your child is having fun! If this isn't fun, then why do it? If they are not having fun, find out why or ask the coach to find out why.
 - Do not let your child's performance affect your attitude towards them. If your child swims poorly it will not make them feel better to see disappointment in their parents. Before they race encourage them to have fun and after they race tell them you love them. Simple words can have a drastic impact on a child's outlook.
 - Understand that swimming can be daunting, especially to new swimmers or younger swimmers. A fifty meter pool looks awfully long to an eight year old! If your child is afraid to swim an event remind them that the coach would only suggest it or enter them in it because they *believe* in your child.
2. It is imperative that your swimmer believe you support the coach, *even when you disagree with him/her*.
 - Disagreements are natural and when they exist everyone wants resolution, but there is a time and a place to discuss disagreements. The pool deck is not the place to argue or confront the coach about any disagreement. All coaches are available away from the pool deck and will respond to either email or telephone calls.
 - During practice a coach's attention must be focused on the group. If you wish to meet in person with your child's coach please schedule a time to do so; do not arrive at practice assuming that either the coach will be available to meet with you or that it is the appropriate time and place to meet.
 - Support the coach by understanding they do have a life outside of the pool. This sport requires long hours of work. Respect the coach's desire to go home to his/her family after practice.
3. Be punctual for practice and meets and plan for your child to spend the entire practice at the pool. It is disruptive to have a child arrive late or leave early. It also diminishes the value of teaching a child the value of commitment.



4. Support the team at practice, at away meets, and at home.

- Supporting the team means everything from making sure your child wears team apparel at meets to volunteering your own time at any of our home meets. Do not leave it to others to do this work. Our team extends beyond the coaches and swimmers and we need everyone's involvement to be successful.
- Supporting the team also means being a positive influence at any meet from the sidelines. There are often instances where parents from opposing teams do not get along, which only creates more tension for the child. We want each swimmer to be a good sport, which means we need our parents to be good sports.
- In order to support the team one must be an active member, beyond just dropping your child off before practice and picking them up afterwards
 - Attend parents meetings
 - Volunteer at meets
 - Become an official
 - Make donations for meets
 - Pay all bills promptly and in full

5. Do not coach from the sidelines or stands.

- Leave the racing strategies to the coach.
- Allow the coach to discuss technical issues with the swimmer and do not second-guess them either with or in front of your child. If you have questions please discuss it with the coach.
- Do not compare your child to anyone else on the team. Your child is unique, wonderful, and full of potential. Remember that everyone achieves potential in different ways and at different times.
- Don't time your child from the stands. There are enough timing devices around at meets and at practice. When a parent times from the stands it simply adds pressure on the child.

6. Do not criticize officials. Most times officials are parents just like you, committed to their children and committed to their sport. All officials are volunteers, and even pay out-of-pocket to get certified as an official.

7. Winning is **NOT** everything. The most important things a child can do in a race are:

- Have fun!
- Try to employ the coach's technical instructions and racing strategy.
- Try to repeat the good qualities of the race, and improve on the poor qualities of the race.
- Give their best effort and RACE!
- Congratulate the other competitors no matter what the outcome.

8. Encourage healthy eating. Make smart eating decisions for your child and for yourself. Your children will emulate the people they respect and love most, their parents. Allow their desire to swim to make a positive influence on your own life and health by using it as another reason to make good eating decisions.



Volunteerism

To ensure that The Delaware Swim Team (DST) swimmers have the opportunity to participate in team activities, swim meets, and USA Swimming sanctioned competitions, as well as supplement operating expenses, DST must host several swim meets throughout the year. All team affiliated events are staffed totally by parent volunteers and cannot run without family participation. DST is very fortunate to have an incredible group of very committed members who have volunteered generously, however it did become necessary to implement a Volunteer Point System policy to ensure that **ALL** families participate.

A family's willingness to volunteer will have a great impact on their child's athletic experience and love for the sport of swimming. Regardless of whether or not a swimmer actually participates in a meet, it is the positive experience of being involved in the whole TEAM event that will give each athlete the support and fellowship offered by being a valuable member of DST.

Volunteer Positions

Certified Positions:

1. Referee/Starter
2. Stroke and Turn official
3. Computer Hytek/SST Operator - manages the timing system as well as Hytek Meet Manager system
4. Meet Director - organizer and coordinator of all meet activities
5. Administrative Official (AO) - one who works directly with the Meet Referee and supervises/directs the following positions on the dry side of the meet: Entry and Registration Personnel, Clerk of Course, Timing System Operator, Scoring Personnel, Timing Judge, Meet Management Software (Hy-tek, Touchpad, etc.) Operator

Non-Certified Positions:

1. Announcer – announces events, heats, and notifications during the sessions
2. Colorado System Operator – Operates the Colorado Timing System on the pool deck
3. Hospitality – Provide drinks and meals for Coaches, Officials, as well as hand out water and snacks to volunteers working on pool deck
4. Meet/Safety Marshal – Supervise the pool decks, keep area behind starting blocks and officials stands clear of non-athletes, direct spectators to proper restrooms
5. Head Timer – supervises timers and runners. Ensures that all timers and their watches are functioning properly throughout the meet, replacing timers or watches when necessary.
6. Timer – Start and stop watch as a back-up to the timing system, record watch time
7. Runner – shuttle material (e.g., seed cards, results) from station to station during the meet.
8. Admissions – Collect admission fees
9. Volunteer Coordinator – Greet and assist volunteers to sign in, hand out and collect badges
10. Awards – Organizes, labels and distributes awards.



Volunteer Service Obligatory Policy Summary

Located at the end of this handbook is **APPENDIX D; “Service Point Obligation Policy.”** Please carefully read this form as members are required to agree to this contract during online registration. This service point system applies ONLY to families with at least one swimmer in a Competitive Program group.

The competitive swim group a swimmer participates in will determine the total number of Volunteer Points the swimmer’s family will be responsible for providing at DST sponsored swim meets.

FAMILIES WITH MULTIPLE SWIMMERS: Families with more than one swimmer will be required to fulfill the obligation for the highest point group that their swimmer belongs; then five additional points for each additional child on the team, with a maximum of 40 points required.

*Unfulfilled service points will be billed at a rate of \$25/hour by July 1st 2026.

Below are the required number of volunteer points each family is required to earn during the season. Our team’s billing system tracks them as "hours", although they are not necessarily hourly based.

Pups/ Mini Mutts/ Wonder Dawgs/ Mighty Dawgs/ Super Dawgs: 15 Points

Big Dawgs/ Gold/ Green/ Yellow/ Blue: 7 Points

*If a swimmer changes groups the family will be responsible for the new group’s Service Points responsibilities.

*Volunteers from Delaware Swim Team may be required at away meets by the meet host. Usually championship meets (Senior Champs, Silver Champs, etc) will require volunteers from Delaware Swim Team. Parents who volunteer for a position that DST is required to fill will earn 2 service points if conditions are met (see Appendix D).

*All families participating in home meets must have a parent (or representative) volunteer. Even if your family has fulfilled all required hours, you must still volunteer if your swimmer is participating in a home meet.

If volunteer spots remain unfilled 48 hours before that meet, the staff will assign participating families volunteer jobs and it is their obligation to satisfy this requirement



Meet Worker Requirements

- 1) Person completing the work must be at least 15 years of age.
- 2) If someone outside of your family is completing a session requirement, you must notify team administration so your account can be properly credited. This can best be done online, in the “Job Sign-up” function, seen below.
- 3) You must sign up to work the session via the “Job Sign-up” function on our website at least 3 days prior to the first day of the meet. Failure to do so does not relinquish you from your working obligation. Anyone who signs up to work less than 3 days prior to the start of the meet may only receive half credit for the sessions they work at that meet. (This is being done so that we have our workers set and ready to go well in advance of the meet and so that we do not have to send out multiple emails reminding everyone to sign up and/or make phone calls.)

How to Sign Up to Volunteer

Each event is posted on www.delawareswimteam.com under the Events tab. Look for “Job Sign Up” under the date of the event. When clicked the user is directed to a page that offers the different jobs available, with various time slots to sign up for.

KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR SERVICE POINTS:

In the days following a meet all volunteer sign in sheets will be compared to the online sign up and corresponding points will be credited to each member's Service Point account. All volunteers must sign in at the swim meet before beginning their position to ensure that they receive the correct amount of points. A member can log into their DST account after the meet to see their updated status. Service points are usually added to an account within 5-10 days of the completion of the meet.



BECOME A USA SWIMMING OFFICIAL!

USA Swimming Officials are parent volunteers who are committed to supporting and observing swimming by ensuring fair and equitable competition. These officials are required in order to have a “legal” sanctioned meet. (Meets in which the swimmer’s time for their event is recognized by USA Swimming for meet qualifications such as Winter Nationals, Championship meets, Junior Olympic or any meet which requires a time standard for an event.)

Delaware Swim Team and Middle Atlantic are always looking for new volunteers to join the ranks. Being an official is a great way to serve your club and support swimming in the LSC. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! Swim meets are vital for DST’s swimmers and we cannot run a safe, fair and equitable meet without certified officials. Becoming a part of the DST official’s team is a great way to serve the swimming community. As most clubs, we rely on our own parents/guardians/volunteers to provide the majority of officials to oversee our meets.

Adults that become officials and register through Delaware Swim Team are eligible for compensation. See Appendix I for details.

Five Reasons to Become an Official:

1. You’ll be working with the greatest group of volunteers in all sports.
2. You’ll be close to the action. The bleachers aren’t comfortable anyway!
3. High satisfaction.
4. It’s a great way to meet future Olympians—unless you already have one in your home.
5. Great food in hospitality and you can’t beat the price!

How Do I Become an Official? To become a certified official one must complete the following:

1. Create an online account with USA Swimming, if you have not created an account for yourself already when registering your swimmer with USA Swimming. Accounts should be made at hub.usaswimming.org.
2. Register with USA Swimming as a Non-Athlete Member. This should be done in your USA Swimming account. Memberships run annually; anyone joining after September 1 will have a valid membership through the following calendar year (i.e. about 15 months later). Having a non-athlete membership will allow you to complete the Athlete Protection Training and the online certification tests.
3. Complete these three courses in your USA Swimming account: Coaches/Officials Background Check, Athlete Protection Training, and Concussion Protocol Training. These can be found in the Education tab of your USA Swimming account, through the Course Catalog. You will see a green “Passed” indicator when a course is completed.
4. Apprentice with a certified official at least four (4) sessions. This can only be done once the preceding steps are completed. For Stroke & Turn judges, these sessions may include up to two (2) dual meet and/or Mini meet sessions. You may receive apprentice credit for up to two sessions per meet regardless of total number of sessions observed. The Middle Atlantic LSC may advise an apprentice official to apprentice for more sessions,
5. Complete the appropriate USA Swimming online tests: “Foundations of Officiating”, followed by “Stroke & Turn Certification” or “Administrative Official Certification”, whichever is relevant to your apprenticeship. These courses can be taken any time between attending the clinic and completing the required apprentice sessions, but it is recommended that the relevant Certification course be taken after apprenticing, so the official can use knowledge gained on the pool deck during the test.



Communication

Team Website – www.DelawareSwimTeam.com DST's website is kept up to date daily and maintained by the team's webmaster and coaches. ALL information can ultimately be found on the website and any new or important updates will be on the HOME page, listed as "News."

The website host, Team Unify, also serves as the account and billing system for all of the team members. Members are able to log into their accounts to view meet entries, service points balance/history, swimmer's times, and all billing activity. Group-specific and general team emails are sent via Team Unify. The website and database are NOT to be used for unrelated activities.

Coach/Staff Email – Emailing is a preferred method of communication unless the issue is an emergency or extremely sensitive, requiring a direct phone call. The coaches' emails can be found on the team website. It is a coach's personal prerogative to give out their cell phone number. In the event you utilize this form of communication, please be considerate of both their personal time and life outside of the pool. Believe it or not, they are real people with families and feelings just like you!

Announcements – It is most common for the Senior level groups to be made aware of all things swimming through direct announcements by their Head and/or Assistant Coach. The expectations for our Senior swimmers is to pay attention, retain, and communicate to their parents any and all team information.

Push Notifications – Immediate or emergency announcements may be sent out via push notifications via Team Unify's "On Deck" app. Parents who have downloaded the On Deck app can set up their account to receive push notifications through the app, or text messages through the app.

Facebook – News, articles, pictures may be posted through our Facebook page.

Please note that we will give you information on emergency closings as soon as it is given to us. Sometimes facilities make a decision on closing a building or altering hours due to inclement weather or the threat of inclement weather very close to our practice times. This is all in the interest of safety and due to timing of the weather event causing the cancellations or changes.

We will do our absolute best to let you know what is going on as soon as possible. Most often we are at the whim of the sites and can only present information when it has been given to us.



The “How To”s of Healthy Communication

If any member, parent or swimmer, has questions or concerns, the lines of communication with every coach is open. It is best to communicate with the coach most involved with your child’s program.

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but in fact, this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach:

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that 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 good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or a training group that can range in size from 20-200 members. Often, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short term inconvenience.
3. If your child swims for a lead coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask that the head age group coach or head coach join the dialogue as a third party.
4. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

Discussions with the coaching staff ARE NOT/WILL NOT be held during practice or meets.



Types of Fees

Coaching Dues: The training fees are based on the program group in which a swimmer is enrolled.

Annual DST Registration Fee: There is a \$200 annual DST registration fee for each swimmer in any Competitive Program group. This includes the team administrative & booster fees, DST silicone swim caps (2), DST team t-shirts (3), DST team TYR swim suit (1), DST stickers (2), and group underwater video sessions (TBD).

USA Swimming Registration Fee: This will provide insurance coverage during swim practice & meets and establish the swimmer's amateur status as a competitive swimmer. This fee varies based on group membership. **THIS FEE IS MANDATORY FOR ALL DST SWIMMERS and MUST BE COMPLETED** via the USA Swimming website [usaswimming.org] (see Program Pricing page for more info).

Meet Entry Fee: A swimmer is charged for each event they swim in at a meet. Typically, the cost is \$10 per individual event. If relays are offered, swimmers that race will be billed $\frac{1}{4}$ the cost of the relay entry fee. There may also be a facility surcharge per swimmer by the host team.

Meet Coaching Fees: Coaching fees will be applied to each swimmer's account, in which the swimmer participates in a meet, in the amount of: \$15.00 for all DST hosted or co-hosted swim meets; \$40.00 for USA Swimming-sanctioned "away" swim meets in the Middle Atlantic LSC; or \$50.00 for USA Swimming-sanctioned "away" swim meets outside the Middle Atlantic LSC. (Meet announcements indicate which LSC a meet is in and/or is sanctioned by.)

Team Travel: When team members travel as a group, the total costs of transportation, accommodation, and meals are split between the swimmers. This fee is due prior to leaving for the meet. A separate confirmation form will be sent home or emailed to the swimmers' guardians for payment.

Unfulfilled Service Points: Volunteer service points unfulfilled by the end of the 2025-2026 season will be billed at \$25/point not completed.

Late Fees: If a member's account is not paid by the 15th of the current month an extra fee will be applied to the account. Also, if a family takes more than 30 days to register after the swimmer's first practice, an extra fee will be applied to the account.

Insufficient Funds/Declined Credit Card: A fee of \$30 will be applied to the account.

MA Travel Assistance: Some meets qualify for MA reimbursements. These requests are made by the club to our LSC and the club will distribute the reimbursements once received. The club will retain 20% of each reimbursement to cover part of the coaches' travel costs.



Team Billing

All DST billing is entered and processed through our website and the Team Unify system.

1. Please register online at www.delawareswimteam.com. The system will create an account for you with the email address you provide at registration. This account gives a member access to their billing summaries, invoices, charges, and payments, as well as other valuable information on their swimmer's progress.
2. Members are required to enter a Bank Card or Credit Card on file that will automatically be processed for the account balance and any new fees on the first of each month.
3. As long as an account remains in good standing, members may "charge" items sold in the Swim Office to their DST account (T-shirts, caps, car magnets) with the expectation that their account will be paid in full on the first of the following month.

Fee	Amount
DST account balance not paid by 15 th of each month	\$10.00
Credit Card declined/ expired	\$30.00
Contract Cancellation	\$25.00
More than 30 days to register after beginning practices	\$30.00



Fee Structure

If you have any questions about billing or your DST account please contact the administrative staff at office@delawareswimteam.com

2025-2026 COMPETITIVE GROUPS			
PROGRAM PRICING			
(annual DST registration fee = \$200)*			
*does NOT include REQUIRED USA Swimming Registration			
PRACTICE GROUP	AGES	MONTHLY PAYMENT (\$)	FULL YEAR PAID IN FULL DISCOUNT (\$)
SENIORS			
BLUE	15 & UP	310	3240
YELLOW	13 & UP	270	2825
GREEN	15 & UP	250	2615
GOLD	13 – 14	235	2460
BIG DAWGS	13 – 16	220	2300
AGE GROUP			
SUPER DAWGS	10 - 12	210	2200
MIGHTY DAWGS	11 - 12	195	2040
WONDER DAWGS	9 – 10	170	1780
MINI MUTTS	7 – 8	160	1675
PUPS	5 – 6	150	1570



Fee Structure

If you have any questions about billing or your DST account please contact the administrative staff at office@delawareswimteam.com

2025-2026 KEEP YOUR FEET WET			
PROGRAM PRICING			
(annual DST KYFW registration fee = \$50)			
PRACTICE GROUP	PROGRAM DATES	PROGRAM COST (\$)	MONTHLY PAYMENT
HIGH SCHOOL	9/8/2025 – 11/16/2025	400	N/A
PREP			
SPLASH	9/8/2025 – 5/21/2026	N/A	125
DASH	9/8/2025 – 5/21/2026	N/A	150
SUMMER SPLASH & DASH CLINICS			
SPLASH & DASH	BEGINNING June 2026	TBD	N/A
RACING CLINICS		(per session)	



Program Notes

1. For your convenience, we have established a monthly payment schedule. All payments will be automatically withdrawn from a checking account or charged to a credit card.
2. Delaware Swim Team offers varied contract lengths:
Competitive Team Programs – Monthly (September-July); Full Year with Discount (September-July)
Keep Your Feet Wet Programs – Monthly (September-May); Summer Clinics (June-July)
3. At registration, in addition to the annual team registration fee, the initial monthly payment of each contract is required.
4. Contracts may be modified. A written/email request must be turned into DST's office, no less than 30 days prior to the final date. A \$25.00 cancellation fee will be assessed upon contract termination.
5. PS DuPont & University of Delaware (Summer Only) practices are subject to change based on pool availability, inclement weather, and school district schedules and closings.
6. Satellite location commitments are based upon the number of registered swimmers needed for each given facility.
7. Practice schedules may be modified throughout the season based on seasonal training cycles or group size. Practice locations may be added based on availability from the university or school district.
8. There is a \$25.00 contract cancellation fee per swimmer.



Swim Meets

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

The Delaware Swim Team engages in a multi-level competition program with USA Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities.

1. We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if our swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to past performances, they are encouraged to do better. The individuals' improvement is our primary objective.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance to improved performance. Respect for officials, congratulations to competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behavior praised and rewarded by the DST coaching staff.
3. Swimmers are taught to be realistic, yet set challenging goals for meets and to relate these goals to practice and direct their training efforts.
4. Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmers to explore their potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming.

AGE GROUPS

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by USA Swimming: 8 & Under, 9-10 (sometimes 10 & U), 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and Senior. The Senior classification includes registered swimmers of any age between 9-18 who has achieved the qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmers age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmers age for the entire meet.



Swim Meets

MOTIVATIONAL TIMES

Within each age-group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. These times are designed to help age group swimmers to better understand their times and to set realistic goal times for their future. The classifications are "C", "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA", and "AAAA". The times required for each ability level are published each year by USA Swimming Inc. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke. An example: a "C" breaststroke time, a "B" freestyle time, and an "AA" backstroke time. Some swim meets set certain qualification standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification.

These can be found in our website www.delawareswimteam.com.

TYPES OR LEVEL OF SWIM MEETS

A/BB/C Meets - Swim meet with 3 divisions. This type of meet includes every ability level of swimmer from novice to very experienced.

Invitational Meets –These competitions may be open to any USA Swimming registered team from anywhere in the United States, while others may be limited to only teams that are specifically invited. These types of meets typically range from 1 to 3 days and can feature a prelim-final format or just timed finals.

Middle Atlantic Junior Championships - Junior Champs are held twice a year: March in a 25-yard pool, and July in a 50-meter pool. Participants must be 14 years old or younger and have achieved at least one qualifying time to participate in an individual event. Junior Champs is the fastest 14 & under competition in which our team participates. A meet of similar qualifying times and competition is sometimes chosen.

Eastern Zone Age Group Championships (Zones) - Held at the end of the winter and summer seasons for select age group and senior swimmers for LSCs within that zone. "Zones" are the zonal championship meets for age group. At Zones, Middle Atlantic compiles a team of its fastest age group swimmers to compete against other LSCs in the same zone, and these swimmers compete under MA (not DST).



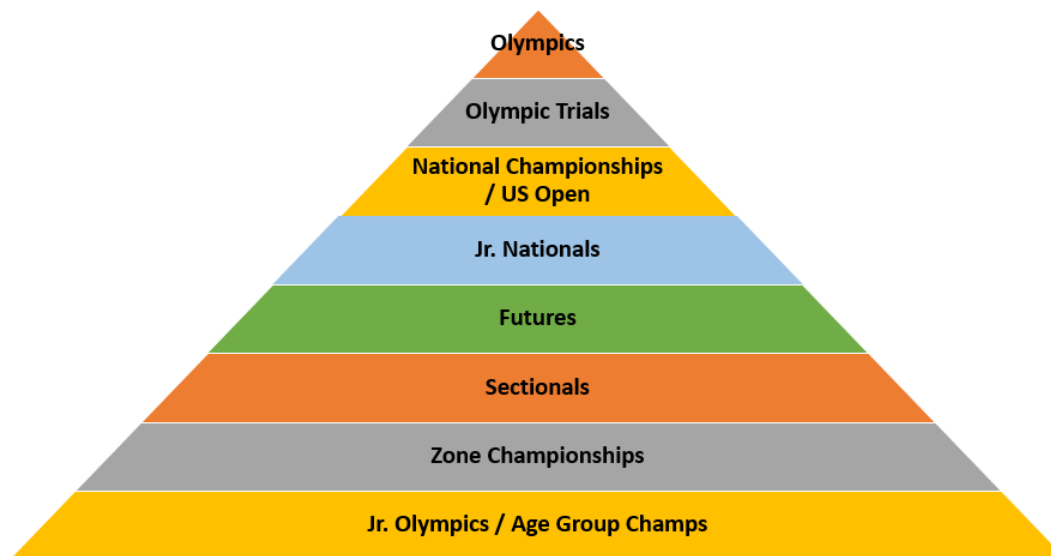
Swim Meets, continued

Middle Atlantic Senior Champs – Similar to Junior Champs, Senior Championships are held twice a year as well. Senior Championships are **only** open to MA registered swimmers. This competition features teams from across the region and represents a season-ending championship meet for many of our athletes.

Eastern Zone Sectionals – This meet is held twice a year. In the Spring there are two separate sectional meets held, one in LCM and one in SCY. In the Summer there is only one Sectional. Swimmers compete against swimmers of the Eastern Zone only.

Junior National Championships - This is the highest level meet for 18 & under swimmers in the United States. A short course championship is typically held in December with a long course championship held in August. This is a very competitive and exciting team meet. Any swimmer with a qualifying time for this meet is encouraged to attend.

National Championships (Senior Nationals) – Other than the Olympics Trials and World Championships, each of which is held once every four years, the highest level of competition for our senior swimmers is the US National Championships. Swimmers meeting the national time standards travel to various cities in the US to compete against America's best swimmers. This meet often serves as a selection meet for athletes striving to make US National teams, such as the Pan American Team, World University Games, an



Swim Meets

MEET SCHEDULE

The Competitive Program meet schedule is normally posted on our website at the beginning of each swim year. The 2025-2026 meet schedule will be available after the administrative staff determines a course of action to protect the health and safety of the swimmers in a meet environment.

1. The meet schedule is established with the expectation that swimmers will attend every meet available at their classification level, both locally and out of town. We do not schedule a meet unless we feel it is important to participate.
2. The coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning meets DST swimmers will attend.
3. All DST swimmers in Competitive Program groups, regardless of age or ability level, will train with the intention of competing in a season-ending championship meet. We highly encourage all athletes to make the commitment to participate at the highest level meet for which they have achieved qualifying times.

HOW TO ENTER A SWIMMER INTO A MEET

The meet entry process typically begins online at www.DelawareSwimTeam.com. Each DST family has a user-name and password to access their personal account. Once logged into the website, simply click on the **EVENTS** tab and click the “Edit Commitment” under the meet date. Certain championship meets require that the coaching staff utilize USA Swimming [Online Meet Entry](#) system.

The coaching staff will designate a meet sign-up deadline. We ask that ALL SWIMMERS and PARENTS abide by this deadline. The deadline is established to provide the coaches an opportunity to review the meet entry for any mistakes or potential changes. In the event a swimmer forgets to enter a meet in which they should participate please notify the coach immediately. If space is available and the meet director is willing, a late entry may be permitted, but there are no guarantees. The fee is usually double the normal entry fee and must be paid to the meet administrator on the pool deck by the swimmer.

ULTIMATELY THE DST COACHING STAFF RESERVES THE RIGHT, AT ALL TIMES, TO CHOOSE A SWIMMER’S MEET EVENTS. The coaching staff is best equipped to understand the competitive needs of the athletes and will make all decisions based on what is in the athlete’s best interests.



Swim Meets

ENTRY FEES AND SURCHARGES

Each event/race a swimmer enters at a swim meet carries an entry fee, also known as meet fee. Swim meets sanctioned by Middle Atlantic in accordance with the governing rules of USA Swimming, may determine the amount that may be charged for each event. This fee can range from \$10 to \$15 per race. In addition to the meet fee for each individual event, the hosting team may require a surcharge or facility fee for each swimmer participating in the meet.

Meet entry fees and surcharges are due to the hosting team prior to the start of the swim meet. DST will charge the swimmers' account once the team entry and payment has been sent to the hosting team. There will be NO refunds for meet fees for any reason.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR AT A SWIM MEET

1. Athletes and parents alike should wear DST apparel to represent our team. Please let your actions reflect your pride in *your team*.
2. As a matter of courtesy to the officials and meet host, it is strongly encouraged that swimmers and parents stay off the deck and out of the competition area unless they are competing or serving in an official capacity.
3. Similarly, as a matter of courtesy, all questions swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
4. As a matter of respect to the facility and meet host, leave the team area and the pool in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of each session of the meet.
5. Please consult with the coaching staff prior to scratching an event or deck-entering an event. The coaching staff will always make the final decision on any scratches or deck-entries.
6. Swimmers who qualify for championship finals in prelim-finals meets are expected to compete in the finals. ALWAYS consult your coach if, for some reason, a swimmer would like to scratch from a final.
7. Swimmers are expected to offer encouragement and support to all members of the team. Positive comments and team spirit are beneficial to everybody. **Negative thoughts and comments should be kept to yourself.**



Swim Meets

SWIM MEET PROCEDURES

1. Review the **Meet Announcement** found by clicking the Events tab, name of the swim meet attending, and the Meet Info link. The who, what, and where of any meet will be found in the pages of the *Meet Announcement*.
2. Verify your swimmer's meet entries prior to the meet and report any mistakes to your primary coach or the administrative staff.
3. The warm up schedule will be emailed or posted. The time shown is the time swimmers have to be on pool deck ready to do team warm up and/or feet should enter the water, therefore plan ahead! It is important that swimmers and parents alike understand that a good warm-up is an essential part of a successful performance. All warm-up rules must be adhered to such as, feet first entry, circle swimming, etc.
4. Swimmers should sit in the designated team area with their teammates, wearing the mandatory team shirts, cap, and uniform. Parents are recommended to pack healthy snacks for their swimmers along with plenty of WATER for hydrating.
5. It is recommended that parents purchase or acquire a *Heat Sheet* and verify the event, heat, and lane in which your swimmer is signed up. Each swimmer will be responsible for knowing which events they are swimming and report to the blocks on time and prepared.
6. Before a swimmer reports to the blocks prior to their race they must confer with a member of the coaching staff to discuss strategy and goals.
7. At the conclusion of each race, the swimmer should ask the lane timer for their watch time, and then warm down per the coach's instructions. Following warm down, the swimmer should report to the coach to discuss the race. It is the swimmer's responsibility to approach the coach for feedback about the race; the coach(es) on deck have a primary obligation to watch the races taking place, over tracking down a swimmer to give feedback.
8. Between races, swimmers are asked to stay in the designated team area to rest and stay warm. All energy should be focused on racing.
9. As the official results are posted, please record your time, in the event there is a mistake.
10. It is very important that the athlete check with the coaching staff prior to leaving the swim meet. Swimmers will often be counted upon to participate in relays which are generally the last events of a session. If a swimmer leaves without notifying the coach the result could be three other swimmers losing their chance to compete.



Appendix A – Terms and Conditions for Participation

1. The DST Registration Fee is not refundable and must be paid prior to new swimmers joining the team. USA Swimming Registration will be completed directly via the USA Swimming website by the account holder for each swimmer.
2. Accounts carrying a balance past the 15th of each month will be charged a \$10.00 late fee. If the balance remains unpaid by the 15th of the following month the swimmer will not be allowed to swim until the balance of the account is paid in full.
3. Any payments returned for insufficient funds or credit cards declined will be charged a \$30.00 fee to that member's account.
4. In the event a swimmer is placed into a new group, they are then responsible for that group's monthly coaching fees.
5. Meet entry fees, office item charges, meet coaching fees, and team travel are in addition to the monthly dues. Nonpayment of any of these fees will also necessitate non-participation for the swimmer(s) until payment is made.
6. Should a swimmer decide to discontinue participation in the program with DST, the monthly dues for the month of which he/she swims any portion thereof, and any outstanding fees, are considered an obligation to DST, and are payable upon termination of participation, including but not limited to unfulfilled Service Points. There is a \$25.00 contract cancellation fee per swimmer.
7. Each parent, guardian, and swimmer is responsible for reading and understanding the contents of the Delaware Swim Team Handbook.
8. Each parent, guardian, and swimmer will be required to read and abide by the "Parents Code of Conduct," "Service Hours Obligation Policy," and "Swimmers Code of Conduct." Failure to comply with the appendices of the team handbook may result in penalty fees and/or expulsion from the Delaware Swim Team.

I understand and agree to the above terms and conditions of the Delaware Swim Team in exchange for the privilege of my child(ren) to participate in the activities and swim program.

Checking the box for this Handbook, through the registration process for the 2025-2026 season, will stand as agreement to the above conditions.



Appendix B – Swimmer Code of Conduct

1. The Delaware Swim Team rules are to be followed at all times, in all facilities.
2. The consumption or purchase of alcohol, smoking or chewing tobacco, or use of any other illegal drug or substance of any kind is prohibited. Any team member found or suspected to be in the presence of others (regardless of team affiliation) partaking in any of the above activities will be subject to expulsion from the Delaware Swim Team.
3. Disrespectful, indiscreet or destructive behavior will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of each swimmer to make every effort to avoid guilt by association with such activities at any time.
4. Use of proper language is expected at all times. Profane, abusive, and disrespectful language is not permitted.
5. All athletes are expected to treat team members, coaches, staff, and competitors with respect, support, and kindness.
6. Any person guilty of thievery, on and off of a DST site, will be subject to expulsion from the team.
7. Each swimmer is responsible for replacing accidentally lost or damaged equipment.
8. Each swimmer must have the required team gear: swim bag, warm up clothes, T-shirts, caps, suits and practice equipment as determined by the DST coaches at the beginning of each swim year.
9. All athletes are expected to abide by the dress code determined by the coaching staff of the Delaware Swim Team at all practices, competitions, and during team travel.
10. Be on time and prepared for each practice, competition, and team event.
11. ALWAYS represent the team positively in your behavior, appearance, and sportsmanship.

To achieve our goals, we must work together as a team. Those who cannot follow the rules stated above will not be welcome as part of our program. Failure to comply with these codes of conduct may result in financial penalties, suspension or dismissal from the Delaware Swim Team.

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Appendix C – Parent Code of Conduct

1. Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of *Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment and Hard Work*.
2. Do not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meet (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on pool deck.
3. Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting oneself in a matter that earns the respect of your child, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets and practices.
4. Maintain self-control at all times. Know your role.
 - a. Swimmers - Swim
 - b. Coaches - Coach
 - c. Officials - Officiate
 - d. Parents - Parent
5. Criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
6. Enjoy involvement with the Delaware Swim Team by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communication and actions.
7. During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by a meet official are directed to a member of our coaching staff. Parents may address USA Swimming Officials via the coaching staff ONLY.

To achieve our goals, we must work together as a team. Those who cannot follow the rules stated above will not be welcome as part of our program. Failure to comply with these codes of conduct may result in suspension or dismissal from the Delaware Swim Team.

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Appendix D – Service Point Obligation Policy

The intent of this policy is NOT to raise money, but to ensure that Delaware Swim Team (DST) swimmers have the opportunity to participate in competition as well as emphasize how very important it is that as members of a team, the volunteer effort required is shared equally among its members. DST is very fortunate to have a group of very committed parents who have volunteered unconditionally; however, those families not doing their fair share during events critically jeopardize the smooth management and operation of these events. We need help from everyone to continue to provide the service that the swimming community has come to expect as well as support the mission and vision of our team.

MINIMUM SERVICE POINTS OBLIGATION PER GROUP

Pups/ Mini Mutts/ Wonder Dawgs/ Mighty Dawgs/ Super Dawgs: 15 Points
Big Dawgs/ Gold/ Green/ Yellow/ Blue: 7 Points

*Most home meet sessions are worth 5 points. Some sessions may be worth 6 or 7 points, based on heightened importance for volunteers at that session. Sessions at away meets where DST are required to fill positions will be worth 2 points, when criteria detailed in this appendix (page 47) are met.

Unfulfilled service hours will be billed at a rate of \$25 per hour on July 1, 2026.

HOW TO SIGN UP FOR SERVICE HOURS

Go to www.DelawareSwimTeam.com click the **EVENTS** tab and under each listed event date click on the **Job sign up** link.

KEEPING TRACK OF VOLUNTEER HOURS:

Points will be available for sign-up around 10 days prior to a DST hosted event and will be tracked through our online Team Unify system. It is necessary however that you **SIGN IN** at the control table at each event. The sign in sheets are used as verification that a person has indeed worked the hours they sign up for.

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Appendix D – Service Points Earned At Away Meets

VOLUNTEERING AT AWAY MEETS

With an increasing number of host teams requiring volunteers from visiting teams, and with most championship meets requiring volunteers from each participating team, Delaware Swim Team is awarding volunteer service points to volunteers who fill volunteer positions assigned to Delaware Swim Team.

Volunteer positions assigned to Delaware Swim Team by meet hosts are worth 2 volunteer service points. Assigned volunteer positions are worth 2 points to better encourage DST members to fill these assigned positions. These positions are worth only 2 service points because families should be volunteering at DST-hosted meets first and foremost.

In order to receive 2 volunteer service points, a DST member must do the following:

1. Sign up to volunteer for a particular volunteer position at least 24 hours before the start of the meet. If a sign-up link is provided, this is the only way to sign up for the volunteer position.
2. Let the administrative staff know, at least 24 hours before the meet starts, that you will be fulfilling a required volunteer position at the swim meet.
3. Make sure that the coaching staff at the swim meet can confirm that you were present at the meet and filled the volunteer position that the team was assigned.

When the these criteria are met and the coaching staff at the meet lets the administrative staff know that you were present for the volunteer position, 2 volunteer service points will be awarded.

Volunteer service points will not be awarded at away meets in these instances:

- Delaware Swim Team is not required to provide volunteers.
- A DST member fills a volunteer position when Delaware Swim Team is specifically not required to provide a volunteer. If a host team asks the crowd at large for volunteers, and a DST member takes one of the volunteer positions, this is an unassigned volunteer position and is being filled by the DST member on their own accord.
- A DST member does not follow the preceding protocol for letting the administrative and coaching staff of your intention to fill an assigned position.
- A DST member signs up to fill an assigned volunteer position and does not actually work the volunteer position.
- A DST member does not work the volunteer position in its entirety, and has to be replaced by another volunteer.

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Appendix D – Additional Service Point Information

1. **FAMILIES WITH MULTIPLE SWIMMERS:** Service Point Obligations for families with multiple swimmers are based upon the swimmer participating in the highest point level group. 5 points per additional swimmer will be added to the account, after the swimmer with the highest service point obligation is taken into account.
2. **VOLUNTEER POINTS AND GROUP CHANGES:** If a swimmer changes groups during the year, the family will be responsible for the new group's Service Points requirements for the remainder of the season.
3. **SWIMMERS THAT DO NOT COMPETE IN MEETS:** Regardless of whether or not your swimmer participates in swim meets, the family with a Competitive Program swimmer is still responsible for their Service Point obligation to the team.
4. **SWIMMERS THAT DEACTIVATE OR "TAKE A BREAK":** will still be responsible for the assigned service points and will be billed the financial difference at deactivation. Transfers will not be granted until accounts are settled.
5. **VOLUNTEER HOURS AT AWAY MEETS:** There may be occasions where DST is required to supply volunteers at away and championship meets. These volunteer hours will count as 2 points per position assigned to Delaware Swim Team, as stated on the preceding page.
6. Family members, relatives, neighbors, and friends (aged 15+) are all welcome to volunteer at our swim meets and events, and these people may contribute to your service point commitment.
7. Community Service credit is available for anyone who volunteers and needs to earn community service hours.
8. All families participating in home meets must have a parent (or representative) volunteer. Even if your family has fulfilled all required hours, you must still volunteer if your swimmer is participating in a home meet.

To achieve our goals, we must work together as a team. Those who cannot follow the rules stated above will not be welcome as part of our program. Failure to comply with these codes of conduct may result in suspension or dismissal from Delaware Swim Team.

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Appendix E – Team Travel Commitment Policy

The Delaware Swim Team participates in competitions for which the team provides a **Team Travel** service. Athletes who elect to **Team Travel** to any of these competitions will be under the direct supervision of the DST coaching staff and any designated chaperones from the time the team departs for the competition until the time the team returns from the competition.

This **Team Travel** service will come at a cost to those who elect to participate. This cost will always cover travel (flight, bus, and/or rental car) and hotel accommodations. It may also cover food expenses and any related meet fees. When coordinating **Team Travel**, the DST coaching staff will:

- Arrange *all* travel and hotel accommodations
- Provide a **Team Travel Commitment Form**
- Provide a commitment date by which all athletes who wish to **Team Travel** must turn in the **Team Travel Commitment Form** to the coaching staff
- Provide the estimated cost of **Team Travel** in advance of the competition
- Provide a final cost once all expenses have been finalized

Delaware Swim Team members who elect to **Team Travel** will be required to pay all **Team Travel** expenses by the date provided on the **Team Travel Commitment Form**. Delaware Swim Team members will have the benefit of having all **Team Travel** costs charged to the credit card associated with their DST account.

Delaware Swim Team members who qualify for meets such as Junior/Senior Nationals after the **Team Travel Commitment Form** due date will be given the option to **Team Travel** understanding that they may incur additional costs because of higher travel expenses.

Any Delaware Swim Team members who wish to utilize the **Team Travel** service but cannot pay the full expense by the designated date must make written arrangements with DST office before turning in the **Team Travel Commitment Form**.

Some competitions qualify for Athlete Support funding from Middle Atlantic. Only athletes who have been members of Middle Atlantic for more than one year may qualify for Athlete Support. The club will retain 20% of each reimbursement to cover part of the coaches' travel costs.

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Appendix F – Swimmers on USA Swimming Flex Memberships

Swimmers registering for USA Swimming Flex memberships are eligible to do two (2) non-championship home meets within the Middle Atlantic LSC, as stated by USA Swimming. In addition to the restrictions in place by USA Swimming and the Middle Atlantic LSC, Delaware Swim Team has the following restrictions in place for swimmers on a USA Swimming Flex Membership:

REGARDING MEMBERSHIP

- USA Swimming Flex Memberships are only available to swimmers 12 years old and younger in the Keep Your Feet Wet (KYFW) Programs. Swimmers 13 years and older in any KYFW Program and all Competitive Program swimmers must have the full USA Swimming membership.
- If a swimmer switches from a KYFW Program to a Competitive Program, the swimmer must upgrade to a full USA Swimming membership at the time of switching to that Competitive Program group.
- Delaware Swim Team swimmers who wish to participate in a third USA Swimming meet and/or a USA Swimming championship meet hosted by the Middle Atlantic LSC, per USA Swimming's rules; or wishes to participate in an "away" meet that Delaware Swim Team is attending, must switch to a Competitive Program group before meet entries are submitted to the meet host.

REGARDING MEETS

- Swimmers who are on a USA Swimming Flex membership can only participate in non-championship meets hosted by Delaware Swim Team.
- As per Middle Atlantic LSC's rules, if a swimmer wishes to participate in a third USA Swimming meet in the 2024-2025 season, and/or wishes to participate in a USA Swimming championship meet held by Middle Atlantic LSC, the swimmer must upgrade to the full USA Swimming membership. Third swim meets and championship meets are only available to swimmers on a full USA Swimming membership.
- Swimmers who wish to participate in an "away" meet must upgrade to a full USA Swimming membership, and at the same time must switch to a Competitive Program group. Away meets are only available to Delaware Swim Team swimmers on a full USA Swimming membership.

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Appendix G – Reimbursement for DST Officials

There are two levels of reimbursement for adults who get certified or are certified as officials and register with USA Swimming as a Delaware Swim Team official.

All officials previously registered with USA Swimming as non-athlete members of Delaware Swim Team will have their USA Swimming memberships renewed by Delaware Swim Team. New officials who cannot have any USA Swimming non-athlete membership renewed will have their registration fee reimbursed. This fee can be reimbursed either as a credit to the family's Delaware Swim Team account, or possibly as a check.

In addition to USA Swimming non-athlete membership automatically covered or reimbursed by Delaware Swim Team, and volunteer service points awarded in full at the end of the season, are the two levels of reimbursement:

The first level of reimbursement is to not only have the USA Swimming non-athlete registration covered by Delaware Swim Team, but also to receive a \$200 credit in the family's Delaware Swim Team account. The \$200 credit can only be used in the Delaware Swim Team account and must be used within the account before August 1, 2026.

The first level of reimbursement will be achieved when:

- An official works six (6) meet sessions throughout the 2025-2026 season, at Delaware Swim Team-hosted meets.
- At least one (1) of the six meet sessions worked is at a Delaware Swim Team-hosted mini session (8 & Unders).

The second level of reimbursement is to not only have the aforementioned first level of reimbursement, but also to receive an additional \$150 credit in the family's Delaware Swim Team account. The \$150 credit can only be used in the Delaware Swim Team account, and must be used within the account before August 1, 2026.

The third level of reimbursement will be achieved when:

- An official works a total of nine (9) meet sessions throughout the 2025-2026 season, at Delaware Swim Team-hosted meets.
- At least one (1) of the nine meet sessions worked is at a Delaware Swim Team-hosted mini meet.

All levels of reimbursement will be available to both returning officials, and new officials.

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Appendix G

