



TOPS SWIMMING HANDBOOK

2023 – 2024

Mission Statement

TOPS seeks to provide a safe, healthy, positive, and disciplined age group training program for our pre-team to National level swimmers.

Our training environment will enable our athletes to reach their personal level of excellence in competitive swimming.



TOPS Swimming philosophy is rooted in:

TRUST - TOPS swimmers/families trust that coaches will provide the best teaching practices in a training environment that will foster personal growth for each swimmer. TOPS coaches trust that swimmers and families will care about others through their words and actions when representing TOPS.

OPEN COMMUNICATION - TOPS emphasize the need for clear and honest communication during instruction. Any dialogue will be rooted in respect and civility. The coaches expect that TOPS swimmers and families speak kindly to their peers and address any concerns, to the coaches, in a timely and appropriate manner.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY - The coaches are responsible for creating and implementing a training program that will meet the needs of all swimmers. The TOPS swimmer and families are to be responsible for partnering with the coaches and meeting the expectations of the team. Our swimmers take personal responsibility for their success by attending practice, being coachable, and meeting the practice expectations.

SUPPORT - The coaches support the swimmers in their growth as athletes and as people. This support will be echoed through honest feedback, assessment, and attendance to issues pertinent to the swimmer. The TOPS swimmers/families are expected to lend their support, in words and actions, and be a positive presence at practice and meets.

EXPECTATIONS – Supports Mission and Philosophy

TOPS COACH - *Teach and support the swimmers in and out of the water
*Provide guidance before practice and race *Provide feedback during practice and after race *Provide counsel concerning goals and nutrition *Set an example of good behavior and sportsmanship for the athletes *Instruct, supervise, and conduct scheduled practices, appropriate for training levels
*Utilize means to see swimming from different vantage points (employ a multi-sensory approach to aid swimmers) *Choose Invitationals and USA meets for the season *Submit entries for Invitationals and USA meets *Be present at determined USA meets and Invitationals *Maintain a team roster *Compile a team line-up for scheduled meets *Communicate with parents, weekly.
*Maintains certifications and supports Safe Sport Practices.

TOPS PARENT - *Be positive and encourage and support your swimmer *Be aware of TOPS training philosophy. *Be on time for practices/meets/invitationals. *Pick up your child at the designated time after practice. *Keep coaches abreast of any ongoing health issues (e.g. concussion). ***Dr.'s notes must be provided to allow for resumption of practice/competition for concussion or injury.*** *Pay the entry fees for invitationals and USA meets to ensure meet entry. *Express any schedule conflicts, concerns, questions, directly to coaches/and or board member, at an appropriate time, via TOPS email. No other avenue is to be used (e.g. Facebook, Messenger, texting, or private email). *Volunteer at dual meets, Invitationals, and USA meets. *Volunteers are expected to fulfill their volunteer commitment. *Check family folder, e-mail, TOPS swimming website, daily, to stay abreast of information. *Do not approach a coach on deck during practice. Please arrange to speak to him/her after practice. *Allow your swimmer to collect his/her belongings from the deck. *Support and uphold the Safe Sport Practices.

TOPS SWIMMER - *Be on time for practice. *Visit the restroom before practice. *Assist with set up and breakdown of pool equipment. *Notify the coach before practice, If needing to leave practice early, *Each practice lane will work together as a unit. *Quietly sit in the pool area, or in the lobby area outside the pool, while waiting for practice to begin or for your ride. Follow and respect the rules at each practice facility and competition facility. *Respect each person's personal space and belongings. *Wear TOPS spirit wear at dual meets, invitational, and USA meets. HS Swimmers – During HS swim season, attend TWO (2) TOPS PRACTICES PER WEEK. *Support and uphold the Safe Sport Practices.*

IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR TOPS?

To ensure that swimmers have a positive and productive training experience, the following criteria must be met:

8/Under - Perform a legal dive from the side of the pool - Legally able to compete for one length of the pool, without stopping, of two competitive strokes
Practice Expectation: 2 – 3 practices per week

9/10 - Perform a legal dive from the side of the pool/block -Legally compete for 50 yards of two strokes - Legal flip turn. Practice Expectation: 3-4 practices per week

11/12 -Perform a legal dive from the block -Legally compete for 100 yards of two strokes -Legal flip turn. Practice Expectation: 4-5 practices per week

13/14 - Perform a legal dive from the block - Legally compete for 100 yards of two strokes - Legal flip turn. Practice Expectation: 5-6 practice per week

15 and over- Legally perform a dive from the block - Legally compete for 100 yards of two strokes - Legal flip turn. Practice Expectation: 5-6 practices per week.

**It is essential that the above criteria be met to ensure an honest training picture. TOPS is granted limited pool time, at each facility, and our priority is to provide a safe, productive, and educational training environment.*

THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

***TOPS Swimming formed in 2014 and is a USA-member club (TOPS) in Middle Atlantic Swimming (LSC- MA).**

When you register with TOPS, you will begin by paying a one-time registration fee per child. Families with multiple swimmers will receive a per child discount during registration.

As members of these swimming bodies, we are responsible for gathering information concerning each swimmer: address, phone numbers (home and emergency), medical awareness (medical conditions, special needs), insurance, liability waivers, Code of Conduct forms, MAAPP, photo releases, and have read the TOPS Handbook.

All information needs to be current. It is highly recommended that registration and payment, for the given swim season, be made with a credit card through the TOPS website. This user friendly/secure process, will bill your credit card.

Fees are broken down into six monthly payments. Monthly billing begins at registration and families will be billed the first of the month through February 1st (6 months). Credit card payments will be automatically pulled the first of the month.

******High School Swimmers** - ***When HS season begins, it is expected that TOPS swimmers attend **TWO** TOPS practice per week.*

****Hardship Accommodation:** If joining TOPS is cost prohibitive, please contact the Coach Bill Draves (topsswimming@gmail.com), and he will supply the necessary information/process needed to apply for assistance.

USA SWIMMING

TOPS has chosen the USA meets in which we will participate. They are listed in Team Events for swimmers to commit and choose. Swimmers are to choose no more than three events per day. **Events available to swimmers are based on the age that day.**

Swimmers will have the opportunity to swim in chosen USA Short Course (September – April) meets and long course meets (May- August) in the summer.

PLEASE NOTE:

**There is a per event fee for each USA meet. Funds must be available for the event entries to be submitted. If no individual family funds are available, then the swimmer will not be entered into the meet.*

If your swimmer is participating in USA: *Some USA meets require volunteers (timers, runners, etc.). Parents of USA swimmers, attending a meet, are required to volunteer. *For USA swimmers attending distance meets, he/she must provide a timer and a counter for the meet.

*At USA meets, if the coach enters a relay, the final decision will be made the day of the relay concerning who will be in the relay. This is a common practice for USA coaches.

ATTIRE

TOPS Swimming colors are ROYAL BLUE and ORANGE. New swimmers to TOPS will receive a TOPS T-shirt and a TOPS silicone cap.

For competition, silicone caps, with our team name, are to be worn. Extra caps will be available if lost or ripped for a fee of \$10.00.

At practice, swimmers are permitted to wear their TOPS competition caps, or another generic/fun cap. In order to cultivate team unity, we ask that swimmers refrain from wearing previous winter team caps/gear, HS swim team caps/gear, and summer team caps/gear.

Team suits – The team suit color is ROYAL BLUE. Suits can be purchased through Swim Outlet (accessed through TOPS Website), and at Toad Hollow (Paoli, PA).

*The swimmer may choose a style and fit of his/her preference for competition, but it must be a solid royal blue suit.

*No tie back suits (female) are permitted for competition.

Tech Suits- Tech Suits are specifically for rest/taper meets. These special meets are indicated on our USA meet schedule. TOPS follows USA Swimming tech suit requirement. *Swimmers younger than 12 yrs. are not permitted to wear tech suits.*

Spirit Wear- Spirit wear is available on *Swim Outlet* through our affiliate page via our website.

REQUIRED SWIM EQUIPMENT

Below is what each swimmer, as per his/her age group, is to have for practice. There is a direct link to Swim Outlet from the TOPS website. Clicking on that link will take you to our personalized page. There is a list with the direct ability to purchase the required items, as well as, support TOPS Swimming. You can also purchase items at *Toad Hollow* in Paoli, PA.

8/under and 9/10 Equipment Needs - *Goggles- Jr. Vanquisher is a good goggle that should last. Clear lenses are best for indoor swimming. *Kickboard *Training fins *Tennis balls (2) *Mesh Equipment Bag

11/12, 13/14 & Opens Equipment Needs - *Goggles *Kickboard *Training fins *Pull Buoy *Finis Snorkel with valve *Tennis balls (2) *Hans Paddles (*These paddles are not available on Swim Outlet or at Toad Hollow*) *Mesh Equipment bag *Swim Sleeves - **Recommended for 14 and older swimmers, by not mandatory**

Practice Equipment Bag - **The equipment bag should be a mesh bag to hold the required equipment.** All equipment should have the name of the child (each fin, each paddle, snorkel, kickboard, etc.) Some equipment bags have a name tag, which allow for personalization. The swimmer will bring, and take, their equipment bag for each practice. If the swimmer has asthma, we recommend that an inhaler be in their equipment bag for practice.

Swim bag - In each swimmer's bag should be the following: Two pair of goggles (please see the recommended goggles for purchase), Ample room for towels, Sharpie to write events on hand (younger swimmers), Highlighter for heat sheets, Compartment for safe keeping of personal items: glasses, iPods, Phones, etc., Inhaler for those with asthma

RUNNING A SWIM MEET

When we host dual meets, the meet positions, below, are jobs which are manned by parent volunteers during a swim meet.

If you have a child participating in a meet, please expect to work that meet in some capacity.

If you have any questions, please ask a coach or a member of the parent board. We hope you will find a job that you'll enjoy.

DUAL MEET POSITIONS

***If we will participate in a Middle Atlantic Closed Dual meet, the follow positions may need to be filled.**

Starter-Referee - Home meets- **MUST BE CERTIFIED**; referee settles any disputes or judgment calls; starter calls the swimmers to the block, starts them with beep.

Stroke and Turn Judge: One from each team needed at each meet, home and away; **MUST BE CERTIFIED**; watches swimmers for legal strokes and turns.

Console operator: Only at home meets, operates the timing console (registers place and times from the electronic pad and buttons).

Scorer/Meet Manager Operator: One for each team needed at each meet, home and away. At home meets, operates the meet manager computer which interfaces with the timing console and stores the meet results. Makes changes to line-ups and keeps running score.

Place judge: One from each team, home or away, list the order of finish for each event.

Timers: 1-3 for each lane, home and away; backup timers needed for the home meets to time the swimmers in their lane in each event.

Runner: Collects place judge cards and give to head scorer.

Announcer: Needed for each home meet to announce events.

Meet Marshals: 2-4 parents who help line-up the swimmers for their events (8/under, 10/under, 12/under).