



Life Time Swim Team (LIFE) Team Handbook

Welcome to Life Time Swim Team! We are so excited to have you join the swim team. This informational packet was created by the LIFE team as a guide to help you navigate through all of the things you'll need to know to get you and your swimmer(s) off to a great start.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact any of the LIFE coaching or management team. Again, welcome to LIFE – we wish you and your swimmer(s) the best of luck!

Team Philosophy

Each swimmer is encouraged to pursue their goals and ability. The sport of swimming is something that each person can take with them for life. We want each swimmer to learn qualities such as: dedication, determination, time management, goal setting, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Life Time Swim Team Vision

Our team is a year-round competitive USA Swimming team offering high quality, professional coaching and technique instruction for all ages and abilities. Our team's goal is to promote a lifetime of wellness through swimming in a safe and inclusive environment.

Mission Statement and Objectives:

- To provide excellence in professional coaching and programs to develop individuals to the best of their abilities to compete at the highest levels.
- To provide an atmosphere that inspires swimmers to achieve their maximum potential through a strong work ethic, discipline, self-motivation and self-esteem.
- To develop team unity where everyone encourages and takes pride in each other at all levels of competition.
- To instill a lifelong love of swimming through enjoyment and accomplishment at all levels of swimming.

Sport of Swimming

The four competitive strokes are butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle. In addition to those events, there is the individual medley (IM) event, which features all four strokes in one race in the order previously listed. There are also relay events that consist of four swimmers. There are freestyle relays, where all four swimmers swim freestyle; and there are medley relays, where each of the four swimmers swims one of the four strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle.



Our swimmers compete in different age groups and meets depending on their achievement level and how old they are on the FIRST DAY OF THE MEET. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and Senior (or Open, which is open to any age swimmer). Local meets may also feature events for 8 and under swimmers.

Meets are conducted in one of the three “courses” (pool sizes). A short course pool is either 25 yards (SCY) or 25 meters (SCM). A long course pool is 50 meters (LCM). The short course season goes from September to March and the long course season goes from April through August. The international standard used in the Olympics is 50 meters (LCM). The NCAA College Championships are conducted in SCY or SCM. All world records are accomplished in 25 meter and 50-meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for 25 yards, 25 meters and 50 meters.

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that swimmers do not get an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer. The technical rules for each stroke may be found in the publication “USA Swimming Rules and Regulations” on the USA Swimming website.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming is the national governing body for swimming in the United States. It was founded in 1980 as a result of the 1978 Congressional Amateur Sports Act. Swimming is now governed by USA Swimming rather than being one of the many sports under the AAU umbrella. USA Swimming is composed of 60 swimming associations (Local Swim Committees or LSC’s). Our local LSC is referred to as New Jersey Swimming (NJ) with more than 7,000 registered swimmers. As a USA registered athlete, swimmers will be given a unique identification number, which will follow them throughout their swimming career.

USA Swimming offers a variety of programs that are geared to all levels of swimmers, from youngsters learning to swim to world-class athletes. The USA Swimming Age Group program is designed to benefit younger athletes in the early stages of their competitive swimming careers while preparing them for Senior, College, National, and International Level swimming. Age Group Swimmers participate in local, Regional, and National level meets and various championships. Regionally, Zone Meets are held in four areas of the country at the end of each short course and long course season. The swimmers progress from local Age Group Championships to Senior Championships, to Zone Championships and/or Sectional Championships, to Junior or Senior Nationals, and then on to various International Championship meets. The local championship meets begin to prepare our swimmers for the national championships and beyond. The Senior National Championships and specially conducted trials are used to select swimmers for the United States National team including the Pan-American, Pan Pacific, Olympic Games, World Championships, and other international competitions.

***** USA Swimming Registration is required for ALL High School Prep, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Senior Team members *****



Swim Level Information and Swimmer Progression

Life Time Swim Team

Developmental 1

Designed for the swimmer who has completed swim lessons and is looking to continue fine-tuning their technique and increase their yardage. 1:10 coach-to-swimmer ratio. Practice expectation: 2x/week.

Age: 5 and up

Practice: 2x/week @ 45min

Focus: Drills/ Technique (90%), Endurance (10%), Increase kick strength and ability across all 4 strokes

Meet Attendance: Region specific

Goals: Healthy Way of Life, Stroke improvement, Enjoyment, Ability to move to Developmental 2 or Bronze

Equipment: Cap, Goggles, Competition appropriate one-piece suit (F) or jammer (M), Water bottle

Requirements: Complete 601, 50 free, 50 back, 25 breast, 25 fly, working toward legal technique

Developmental 2

Designed for the swimmer who has completed Developmental 1 and is looking to reinforce legal technique, turns, and finishes, and increase their yardage. 1:10 coach-to-swimmer ratio. Practice expectation: 2x/week.

Age: 5 and up

Practice: 2x/week @ 45-60min

Focus: Drills/ Technique (85%), Endurance (15%), Reinforce legal technique, turns, and finishes

Meet Attendance: Region specific

Goals: Healthy Way of Life, Stroke improvement, Enjoyment, Ability to move to Bronze, Legal technique, Familiarity with swimming terminology

Equipment: Cap, Goggles, Competition appropriate one-piece suit (F) or jammer (M), Water bottle

Requirements: Complete Developmental 1, 50 free, 50 back, 25 breast, 25 fly, Legal free and back, Working toward legal fly and breast

Bronze

Designed for the swimmer who has completed Developmental 2 (or has completed a tryout with one of our skilled coaches) and is looking to continue to progress technique and endurance. USA Swim Meet participation is introduced at this level. 1:15 coach-to-swimmer ratio. Practice expectation: 3x/week.

Age: 6 and up

Practice: 3x/week @ 60min

Focus: Drills/ Technique (80%), Endurance (20%)

Meet Attendance: Expected

Goals: Ability to move to Silver, Legal technique, continue to progress technique and endurance, Knowledge of how to use the pace clock

Equipment: Cap, Goggles, Competition appropriate one-piece suit (F) or jammer (M), Water bottle, Kickboard, Fins, Pull buoy

Requirements: National Test Set Standards



Silver

Designed for the dedicated swimmer who has completed Bronze (or has completed a tryout with one of our skilled coaches) and is looking to continue to refine their stroke and technique. USA Swim Meet participation is expected at this level. 1:20 coach-to-swimmer ratio. Practice expectation: 4x/week.

Age: 9 and up

Practice: 4x/week @ 75-90min

Focus: Refining strokes and techniques, Competition based

Meet Attendance: Expected

Goals: Ability to move to Gold, Attendance based (4-5 days/week unless otherwise agreed upon)

Equipment: Cap, Goggles, Competition appropriate one-piece suit (F) or jammer (M), Water bottle, Kickboard, Fins, Pull buoy

Requirements: National Test Set Standards

Gold

Designed for the competitive swimmer who has completed Silver (or has completed a tryout with one of our skilled coaches) and is looking to continue to refine their stroke and technique. USA Swim Meet participation is expected at this level. 1:25 coach-to-swimmer ratio. Practice expectation: 5x/week.

Age: 11 and up

Practice: 5x/week @ 90-120min; Dryland at least 3x/week

Focus: Refining strokes and techniques, Competition based

Meet Attendance: Expected

Goals: Ability to move to Senior, Attendance based, Work toward Section/JO/State meet cuts

Equipment: Cap, Goggles, Competition appropriate one-piece suit (F) or jammer (M), Water bottle, Kickboard, Fins, Pull buoy, Paddles

Requirements: National Test Set Standards

Senior

Designed for the competitive swimmer who has completed Gold (or has completed a tryout with one of our skilled coaches) and is looking to continue to refine their stroke and technique. USA Swim Meet participation is expected at this level. 1:30 coach-to-swimmer ratio. Practice expectation: 6x/week.

Age: 12 and up

Practice: 6x/week @ 120min; Dryland at least 3x/week

Focus: Refining strokes and techniques, Competition based

Meet Attendance: Expected

Goals: Attendance based, Work toward Section/JO/State meet cuts

Equipment: Cap, Goggles, Competition appropriate one-piece suit (F) or jammer (M), Water bottle, Kickboard, Fins, Pull buoy, Paddles

Requirements: National Test Set Standards

Annual Swim Team Fee:

All Swim Team Members will be charged annually a swim team fee. This fee is charged to your Life Time account in October or upon joining the team



Coaches' Responsibilities

The Coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The LIFE coaching staff is dedicated to providing a quality competitive program for each swimmer. Therefore, the coaches must retain control in matters relating to training and competition.

1. The Coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on age, demonstrated merit, and coaches' recommendation. Coaches reserve the right to place a swimmer in a more challenging group when it is in the best interest of the swimmer.
2. Responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the LIFE coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on current techniques and coaching philosophy and are geared to the goals of that group.
3. The coaching staff will make the final decision regarding which meets swimmers will attend and which events a swimmer will compete in. Please see the **Meet Entry** section for more information.
4. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. The coaches will be solely responsible for offering racing strategies, technical instruction, and constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. All relay teams will be determined by the coaches.
5. All team communication will come from the coaches via the Team Unify website.

Swimmers Behavior Expectations

1. Workout and Meet Attendance

Each training group has either specific attendance goals or a mandatory number of practices a swimmer must attend. It is the swimmers and parents' responsibility to familiarize themselves with their specific group's attendance goals.

Please arrive to each practice on time and ready to swim. Equipment should be ready to go before practice starts.

2. Appropriate Practice Apparel

All swimmers should be wearing a swimming suit appropriate for training; no shorts or shirts are permitted during practice. It is recommended that all swimmers wear caps. Should the swimmer choose to wear a cap, it is preferred to be a LIFE swim cap.

3. Listen and follow the coaches' instructions

4. Follow Pool Rules

5. Be courteous and respectful to other patrons of the pool, your teammates, and your coaches

6. Strive to become a better athlete at each practice

7. Encourage your teammates toward excellence

8. Be a team "builder", not a team "divider"



Parent Expectations

1. Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer their time to help with the development of the team through swim meet assistance, setting up, timers referee, meet official, etc. end of season banquet, or other team activities that require planning, set up and clean up.
2. Parents are welcome to observe workouts; however, they are asked to stay in the designated seating areas at the pool.
3. Please drop off your child and refrain from coaching your child from the side or the chairs. Each swimmer needs to focus on one coach and should never be distracted during practice with presumed helpful behaviors by parents. Parents should support their children by encouraging them during races, after races, and at home after practice. Please talk with the coach before or after practice via phone, email, text message, etc.
4. Videotaping, pictures, or other distracting behaviors during practice is NOT permitted at any time. Video and pictures are allowed at swim meets if you disable your flash and do not stand in front of other coaches, safety marshals, timers, or officials. This is based on USA Swimming rules and regulations and MUST be adhered to at all times.
5. Never approach meet management, officials, or safety marshals during a swim meet. Communicate all suggestions and questions to LIFE swim coaches only.
6. Parents need to show respect to all parents, coaches, swimmers/athletes, competitors, teams, officials, directors, board members, and patrons of Life Time at all times.
7. Parents are not to "friend" any youth (Under age 18) swimmers on Facebook or Twitter or any other social media as restricted by law. This does not include your own children. Privacy and safety are very important for all swimmers and needs to be respected through best practice.
8. Please do not attempt to engage the coaching staff in conversation while they are on-deck during practice. This is distracting for both the coaches and swimmers. If you need to talk with a coach, please either call/text a coach, email a coach, or wait and plan a meeting time with a coach after practice is over and the kids are away from the pool. Communicate via email, text, or voicemail if you need to set up a specific time to talk with the coach. Coaches are typically available 15minutes before or after practice, or in between practices, if another coach is available to get the next group started.
9. Please talk with the coaches about any suggestions or concerns you have for improvement outside of swim meets and practice times.
We encourage communication to create positive swimming experiences.
10. Parents must keep their accounts with USA Swimming and Life Time in good standing. Please make payments on time each month and keep us informed of your new address, phone number, email, etc.

Parent Cooperation and Communication

Cooperation and communication between parents and coaches is a vital part of a successful program. If a parent disagrees with a coach, the problem must be resolved privately between the two. A parent's critical comments directed at the coach in the presence of a swimmer may have a negative impact on the confidence the swimmer has in the coach. Also, it should be emphasized that confusion will result if the swimmer has two "coaches" (Parent and Coach). The results are almost always better if parents restrict their input to support and encouragement, and let the coach provide technical instruction. Coaches always welcome input from parents and will make themselves available outside of workouts and competition.



Training Equipment

1. Swimmers are required to bring specific training equipment to each practice. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure that equipment is present and ready for use at each practice.
2. Please refer to the Equipment List located on the Team Unify website for specifics about equipment.

Swim Meet Sign-up

The LIFE coaching staff wants to ensure that the first meet you attend is a great experience for you and your swimmer. As a new LIFE member, you should receive access to the Team Unify website to register your swimmer(s) in upcoming swim meets. As swim meet registrations approach, you will receive an informational e-mail requesting you to commit, or not commit your swimmer in the upcoming meet. If you have any questions, please contact your coach and they will assist you in this process.

Swim Meet Checklist

Below are some of the items you should bring with you to every event:

- 2 goggles (just in case a strap breaks)
- 2-3 towels (you'll want to keep your swimmer warm in-between events)
- Spare swim cap
- Sharpie, Pen/Pencil, and Highlighter (these are for the parents)
- \$5 - \$10 (for meet program)
- Change of clothes for after the meet (most venues provide showers for your swimmer(s))
- Sweats/Towel-pants/Bathrobe (optional)
- Blanket (optional)
- Games or cards (some meets will have a large number of swimmers so keeping your swimmer occupied during down time is always a good idea)
- Your swimmer(s) will burn a lot of energy throughout the day so bring snacks that will help them re-fuel. Below are a few suggestions:
 - Water, water, water
 - Fruit
 - Bagels
 - Energy bars/Gatorade

Most venues provide a concession stand but it is always a good idea to bring snacks you know your swimmer(s) will actually eat.



What to expect at a Swim Meet

1. Team Uniform

Swimmers are required to wear approved LIFE apparel to swim meets. If swimmers do not arrive with the proper apparel, they may not be allowed to compete.

Competitive Uniform Requirements

- LIFE Team Cap
- LIFE Team T-Shirt
- LIFE Team Suit

It is very important that each swimmer is a recognizable LIFE swimmer.

2. Warmups

- Swimmers should arrive at the competition pool at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the warmup session unless otherwise noted.
- Warm-ups will be conducted by the coaches. Parents should not be involved in the warmup process.
- Swimmers are expected to warm up with the team unless excused by the coach.
- It is important that swimmers and parents understand that warm up is an essential part of a successful performance.

3. Team Area

It is customary for us to have a “team area” and for swimmers to sit together as a group. This helps to foster team unity and create a team atmosphere. Also, it allows the coaches to help the younger swimmers be ready for their events on time.

4. Before and After Each Race

Swimmers are asked to meet with their coach before and at the conclusion of each race they swim. This allows the coach an opportunity to discuss the race, as well as offer constructive comments regarding splits, stroke technique, race strategy, etc. If a warm down area is available, swimmers should warm down after each race.

5. Parent Participation at Meets

- Timing is a great way to help the LIFE community. This important part of each meet is actually quite easy and fun. Timers help run the meet. While helping, you get a lot of benefits. You get the best view of the swimmers, you will interact with parents of swimmers on other teams, and you will share the positive attitude towards swimming on the pool deck during the meets.
- Parents must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times during swim meets.
- As a courtesy to officials and the host team, parents should remain off the pool deck during a meet unless serving in an official capacity.
- Similarly, parents are asked to refer all questions and concerns regarding meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet with the coach. The coach will pursue the concern through the appropriate channels



6. Meet Fees

Parents are responsible for paying for all swim meet fees that their swimmer incurs. This includes event fees, facility/athlete surcharge and the Life Time surcharge for each meet. Parents forfeit any meet fees if a swimmer is scratched or does not show up for the meet in which they have already been committed and entries have been submitted to the hosting team. Once the team submits the payment all financial responsibilities are final.

7. Dismissal

Swimmers can leave after swimming all their events, and after checking in with their coach.

Tracking Events

On the Team Unify website under the Events/Meet tab, you can pull up meet information and view the meet details such as location, warm-up times, etc. This is usually provided as a link within the Swim Meet summary.

To help you and your swimmer(s) remember what events they are swimming, when (what heat) they are swimming, and where (what lane) they are swimming, it is a good idea to write your swimmer's information on their arm or leg with a Sharpie. This is something most kids look forward to – writing on themselves without getting into trouble.

Parents can download the Meet Mobile app to their mobile device. In this app you can search for meets and view heat/Lanes and unofficial results.

Safe Sport

USA Swimming is committed to fostering a fun, healthy, and safe environment for all its members, and in 2010, it formally implemented a comprehensive Safe Sport program to respond to and prevent instances of abuse and misconduct within the sport of swimming. Since then USA Swimming Safe Sport has worked tirelessly to educate members, put policies in place, and empower LSCs and clubs to create the best possible environments for all members.

To deal with a Safe Sport concern, contact USA Swimming at (719) 866-4578

Contact the U.S. Center for Safe Sport to make a report. Call 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233) or use the [online reporting form](https://www.uscenterforsafesport.org/) or find more information at <http://www.uscenterforsafesport.org/>

Text anonymous tips to 888-270-SWIM (7946)

Please refer to the Safe Sport tab on the Life Time Metro Team website for all USA Swimming/Life Time policy's



