

**Welcome to the
Takoma Park All Stars
Swim Team
Handbook**



Founding Member



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Welcome to Takoma Park All Stars Swim Team

We are proud of our history and excited about our future. We hope you enjoy being a part of our team.

This Handbook has been compiled to provide information about the Takoma Park All Stars Team (TPDC), Prince-Mont Swim League (PMSL), as well as, the roles and responsibilities of our team families.

The emphasis of the TPDC Swim Team is for each swimmer to improve his or her best times. Although it is human nature to compete against each another, we encourage swimmers to measure their successes by improving their personal best times. By this measure, all swimmers can be successful.

Our overall objectives are 1) to teach correct competitive stroke technique, 2) to encourage each swimmer to improve according to his/her capability and most importantly, 3) to have fun!

To register with the TPDC, you must complete the Registration Form (available on our website), pay summer fees, complete meet attendance document and attend the Parent Meeting. Forms must be returned prior to swimmers attending practice.

Your time is also required. Please read our Volunteer Policy.

ELIGIBILITY

TPDC swim team membership is available to all swimmers who meet the following criteria.

- Are age 5 -18 on or before May 31st. Verification of birthday may be required.
- Swimmer must be able to swim one length of the pool
- Swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend at least one practice per week.

PRINCE-MONT SWIM LEAGUE

The TPDC Swim Team is a founding member of the Prince-Mont Swim League (PMSL). PMSL is composed of teams located primarily in Prince George's County with a few teams from Montgomery County, as well as, the District of Columbia.

The League is divided into six (6) divisions, letter A – F (A being the highest). There are six (6) teams in each division. Each team will compete in five (5) dual meets, as well as the Divisional Meet, followed by the All Star Meet.

The Divisional Meet is the final A division meet of the season. Each team from the division competes against each other. Swimmers are chosen for this based on the fastest times for each event from swims during the five dual meets.

The All Star Meet is the final meet of the season. Participation is based upon individual results from each Divisional Meet. This is not a team scored meet.

To ensure fair and friendly competition and that all USA Swimming Rules and Regulations are uniformly enforced, PMSL requires all Referees, Starters and Stroke and Turn Officials to be trained and certified. This training is offered under the League's training sessions in April, May and at a final annual meeting in early June.

Each team must provide one (1) Starter/Referee and two (2) Stroke and Turn Officials at every PMSL sponsored meet. The PMSL handbook also designates what additional positions are required of each team depending on who is the host or visiting team. Failure to meet this could jeopardize the results of the meet.

USA Swimming Certification is accepted by PMSL. Please provide a copy of your credentials to the Meet Manager and the PMSL Officials Chair.

TPDC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The TPDC Executive Committee manages the day to day to operations of the team. Executive Committee members include a President and League Representative, Alternate League Representative, Team Registrar, Treasurer, Secretary, Meet Manager and Data Manager. The committee serves two year terms on a rotating basis. Each family is allowed one vote during annual elections. The committee recruits parent volunteers to serve as committee chairs for various team events, including but not limited to, Concessions, Volunteer Coordinator, Team Social Events, Banquet and Awards Committee. We encourage parents to get involved.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. All registration forms and accompanying fees, must be completed in full with parent(s) signature before any child can participate (practice or compete in meets).

2. Parents/Guardians should understand that the Takoma Park Swim Team is NOT a recreational swim team and that all swimmers are expected to swim competitively in meets.
3. Parents/Guardians understand that the commitment for the TPDC Swim Team is for the current summer swim season. Exceptions to this policy are as follows:
 - Arrangements shared with the coaches preferably via email
 - Withdrawal from the program
4. Parents must notify coaching staff by 7:30 pm on the Tuesday evening prior to each meet if swimmer will not participate in a scheduled meet via TeamUnify.
5. Parents must notify coaching staff if swimmer is going to be out of practice for more than one week.
6. Parents are advised to attend practice with their swimmer and must agree to pick up all swimmers immediately after practice. TPDC staff members are NOT responsible for swimmers once practice is over.
7. Parents must ensure that swimmers are at all times suited up and ready for all practices, warm-up sessions and meets prior to walking on deck. There is to be no changing on the deck.
8. Parents must ensure that swimmers wear team uniforms at all meets or when representing the team.
9. Parents should address all questions or concerns about practice times, meet entries and meet participation to the TPDC coaching staff.
10. Parents are expected to volunteer in some capacity during the season.
11. Parents should not leave any minor (swimmer, sibling, family member, etc.) unattended at the pool or meet site. Coaches are only responsible for the swimmers during their assigned practice time and until the conclusion of the meet.
12. Parents shall make pre-arranged transportation to and from all practices and meets for their swimmers. Coaches are not responsible for transporting swimmers to/from meets and/or practice.
13. Unsportsman like conduct toward any parent, child, coach and/or official; as well as abusive, disruptive, degrading, disrespectful, threatening or bullying behavior by any parent, guardian or swimmer will result in immediate expulsion of the swimmer from the team. THERE IS NO EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE!

TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

All information, news and updates are sent out via e-mail. Important dates and times will also be posted on the team website.

TEAM SUITS

Team suits are required at all swim meets. As with any uniform, the team suits should be used for competition only. Daily use for recreational swimming or in practice will greatly reduce the life of the suit. With proper care, a team suit can easily last two or more seasons.

Team Suits, shirts and caps are provided as part of registration.

Additional team gear is available from the team vendor and can be purchased directly. A portion of sales benefits the team.

TIME TRIALS

Time Trials will be held prior to the first Dual Meet. Times for each swimmer are recorded. This information is used to determine the line-up for the first Dual Meet. Times are also used as a benchmark for each swimmer to evaluate their progress throughout the season.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

Swim practices will be held at the times listed in the informational emails and on the web site. Swimmers will be assigned a swim group by the coaching staff. New swimmers must be assessed to determine the appropriate swim group.

Lane placement and order of swimmers is determined by the Coaching Staff.

The swim coaches must be free to focus on the swimmers. We ask that parents refrain from approaching the coaches during practice and meets. Parents should feel free to discuss concerns with coaching staff before or after practice or meets or to arrange a meeting time.

MEET DESCRIPTIONS

TPDC competes in all PMSL sponsored meets. These are dual meets, which means one team competes against another. These meets are held on Saturday mornings. These meets are conducted with strict adherence to league rules and are scored team events. A Prince Mont handbook will be distributed to all families. We encourage you to become familiar with its contents.

Participation in dual meets is limited to the six (6) swimmers in each event, except Freestyle, when nine (9) swimmers can attend. On occasion, the competing team will agree that there may be extra heats in some events allowing additional swimmers the opportunity to participate in the dual meet. The roster for each meet will be sent via email on the Friday before the meet with reminders about the Saturday meet. As a team sport, swimmer selection is based on competitive advantage for the team. League rules limit each swimmer to no more than three individual events plus one relay event per meet, OR two individual events and two relays.

As time and schedules permit, the team may participate in PMSL team sponsored meets to include relay meets or mini meets(meets for 8 and under swimmers).

High spirits and friendly rivalry have always accompanied meets. Even if your child does not swim, all swimmers are encouraged to come and join in the fun.

MEET ATTENDANCE

While all swimmers are expected to attend every meet, we understand that they may not always be possible. Information about swimmer attendance is critical in determining the weekly meet line up. Swimmers attending the meet are asked to remain for the **ENTIRE** meet to support the team even once he/she is done swimming. Early departure needs should be communicated to the coaching staff by the Friday prior to the meet or at the beginning of the meet. Team members who depart without communication to the coaching staff may not be able to swim in the next meet.

As part of registration, families are asked to complete a Meet Attendance document to indicate whether a swimmer will be available for the meet.

Dual Meets

By **9pm each Tuesday** prior to a dual meet, families are asked to notify the coach and team data manager if there will be changes to the original Meet Attendance submission. All swimmers who have not completed the Meet Attendance document or have not indicated a change to the original "available" submission will be entered into the meet. It is **very important** that swimmers scheduled to swim attend the meet or notify the coach about an unexpected absence. Substitution rules are defined by the PMSL handbook and not having planned swimmers can affect the results for the team.

Divisional Meet

The coach will determine the divisional entries (swimmers must have swam in a minimum of two dual meets to be eligible) on the afternoon following Dual Meet #5. Changes to the original Meet Attendance submission must be communicated to the coach and team data manager by **9 pm Tuesday prior to Dual Meet #5**. A meet entry line up will be submitted for family review after submission to the league and any substitutions required at that time will result in a fee for the team or no team swimmer representation in a given event.

All Star Meet

All Star meet participation is determined by the league. Teams are provided two opportunities to notify the league if a swimmer who has achieved All Star eligibility cannot participate. An email with swimmers who have attained eligibility will be sent when received. Families are asked to respond by the given deadline to assure accurate entry. Swimmers designated as alternates should plan to attend the meet in case the opportunity to swim becomes available. The coaching staff will notify swimmers who might swim eligible relays so he/she can also attend the meet.

SWIM TEAM EVENTS

A large part of our team is having fun, so we do a few things to increase our team spirit.

Picture Day: All team members are asked to come for the team picture.

Black and Gold Meet: All team members are invited to participate in a fun meet with parents, coaches and TPDC Alumni swimming against current swim team members and swimmers serving as the officials.

Pop and Shake: All team members are invited to enjoy popcorn and drinks after practice.

Awards Banquet: The annual award banquet is held at the conclusion of each season. This is usually held after the All Star Meet.

Team and Pool Records: TPDC Swim Team maintains a list of team and pool records. **Team records** represent the fastest time swum by a TPDC Swim Team member. **Pool records** represent the fastest time swum at TPDC home pool (can be held by members of opposing teams as well as TPDC team members).

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Did you know it takes approximately 53 people to run a swim meet? Not counting coaches and swimmers? So who are these people? *Parents*. Swimming is a family participation sport.

As an incentive to fill our many available volunteer positions, there is a "returned if earned" Volunteer Fee of \$65 for each swim family. The number of volunteer points that must be worked for a refund is a minimum of 10 points. You may earn points at meets (as a timer, runner, stroke and turn judge, concessions, etc.) or as an event coordinator (for family fun day, the team banquet, etc.). Check out the Volunteer page to review list of volunteer opportunities.

We will be utilizing TeamUnify for volunteer opportunities, as well as, concession donations. You should expect to see the volunteer or donation information by the Tuesday before each week's meet. Only participation in events listed on Sign-up Genius will be credited toward your Family Participation obligation.

We are asking that each family to donate at least two (2) **NON-PERISHABLE** items for concessions. Please be considerate of other families and do not sign-up for the same item twice.

Volunteers must sign-in upon arrival. In the event, a family cannot make the event for which they signed up; they must notify either the Volunteer Coordinator or Meet Manager by 8 pm the night before the event.

For those donating to our concession efforts, please put your name on all donations.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS VOLUNTEER POLICY WILL RESULT IN YOUR \$50 FEE NOT BEING RETURNED TO YOU BY THE END OF THE SEASON.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The following reflect some of the volunteer opportunities available during meets. Please see the team web site for other opportunities.

Head Judge/Scorer – primary duty is to compile the roster of qualified competitors and to review the time sheets at the conclusion of each event and forward the results to the Hy-tek operator.

Head Timer – primary duty is to monitor the Timers on deck, as well as, time each event so that, in case of an issue with any Timer, the Head Timer can set up to complete the timing process.

Timer – primary duty is to ensure accurate timing and recording of each event finish – Manual and Semi-Automatic timing equipment is used. Manual Equipment is the use of a stop watch that is manual starter and stopped by a Timer. Semi-Automatic Equipment is the use of an electronic timing system that starts the stop watch when the starting horn and light are initiated and the watch is stopped manually by the Timer.

Clerk of Course – primary duty is to assemble the competitors in accordance with the order of events and arranging heats as set forth by the official program. The Clerk of Course also manages the flow of competitors on the deck.

Sweep Judge – primary duty is to observe the finish of each event and record the winner of the final heat. Sweep Judge decision is final, in the case of a tie.

Ribbon Writer – primary duty is to ensure that all ribbons are awarded to the appropriate competitors, based upon the official results presented by the Head Scorer.

Runner – primary duty is to assist the deck officials with the proper flow of information, specifically, the posting of final event results.

Deck Crew – primary duty is to assist with the set-up and tear down of all equipment during home meets.

Concessions – primary duty is to assist with the sale of concessions during each home meet. There are 2 areas within this area. 1) Donating the items for sale and 2) volunteering at the Concession Stand.

The Referee, Starter and Stroke and Turn Officials have the primary responsibility to ensure that all swimmers have uniformed and fair competitive conditions. Therefore, these duties must all be certified by the Prince-Mont Swim League.

Referee – The Referee is the final arbiter of all issues arising during the meet. The Referee oversees all officials both on and off the deck. Home Team supplies the Referee.

Starter – primary duty is to manage the conditions of each event start. The Starter is also the second in the chain of responsibility, behind the Referee. The Starter also coordinates with the Head Timer, Data Manager, Clerk of Course, Timers and Place Judges.

Stroke and Turn Judge – primary duty is to ensure that each competitor performs the appropriate technique. The Stroke and Turn Judge has the authority to disqualify a competitor if that swimmer is not using the correct technique, which would give them an unfair advantage over the other competitors.

AWARDS

Dual Meets

Place Ribbons are awarded for each meet. Prince Mont requires ribbons to be awarded up to sixth place. Many teams provide place ribbons beyond that. For TPDC home meets, the following ribbons are awarded:

- Heat award ribbons given to the winner of each heat of an event
- Place ribbons up to 8th place
- Participation ribbons for all competing swimmers 10 and under.

Divisional Meet – Place ribbons are given out.

All Star Meet – Plaques are given out to 8th place and ribbons for ninth – sixteenth place.

Team Banquet

In addition to the awards distributed for meet participation, swimmers are also given team participation awards, awards in recognition of league, team and pool records and coaches' awards as applicable.