



# Swim Parent Handbook

Effective September 2015

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to explain to members what the Lyons Aquatics is all about 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 Club.

## WHY SWIM?

The United States Swimming (USA) age group swimming program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health by teaching healthy fitness habits.

### Physical Development

Swimming is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth by many physicians and pediatricians. Why do doctors like it so much?

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swimming teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills.
- Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all of the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.
- Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.
- Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's.

## **Intellectual Development**

The great value of swimming as a sport is that it prepares a child for life. The total swimming experience is made up of people, attitudes, beliefs, work habits, fitness, health, winning and losing, and so much more. Swimming is a cross section of lifetime experiences. It can provide many learning situations. One learns to deal with success and failure. One learns teamwork and discipline.

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop a plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally, their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self-image.

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE**

The Lyons Aquatics Club is known throughout Illinois for its year-round swim, dive and water polo programs. We offer a guided age-group youth program for children age 6 and up, from the beginning swimmer to the most competitive and skilled swimmer. When a young person becomes a member of the Lyons Aquatics, he/she learns the values of sportsmanship and team work. Swimming, through Lyons Aquatics, provides physical, emotional, and intellectual skills that will last a lifetime.

The Vision:

By challenging the swimmers on a daily basis in both mind and body, we strive to take swimmers further than they thought they could ever go. We expect excellence in all aspects of life, not just in the water. We inspire our athletes to achieve their dreams through hard work, dedication and perseverance.

The Mission:

The purpose of the Club is to develop the abilities of community members in all aspects of aquatic sports by providing quality instruction, opportunities for competition, an atmosphere that fosters respect for oneself and others, good sportsmanship, and personal excellence.

## **TEAM PHILOSOPHY**

The coaching staff of the Lyons Aquatics Club desires to teach your athlete how to become a technically better, more efficient, faster swimmer in the pool. Outside of the pool, we hope that your athlete learns much more. Some of the lessons that our coaches promote are: 1) long term goal setting; 2) setting intermediate goals as your swimmer works towards that long term goal; 3) commitment and a strong work ethic; 4) the ability

to learn how to deal with success and failure; and 5) perseverance, dedication, and courage to give one's best effort. Many young people don't always learn these valuable life lessons. We make it a point to teach our swimmers these and many more lessons that they can apply to their school and future work endeavors.

## **UNITED STATES SWIMMING**

United States Swimming (USA) is the National Governing Body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States. At its headquarters office, located at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA staff interact with 59 Local Swimming Committees (LSC's), athletes, coaches and volunteers at all levels to provide a variety of services to 220,000 registered athletes, 20,000 non-athletes and 2,500 swim clubs.

As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is charged with the responsibility to formulate rules, conduct national championships, disseminate safety and sports medicine information, select competitors to represent this country in international competitions, insure the development of its member clubs and age group swimmers. Athletes, once registered, are members of USA Swimming and receive both liability and secondary medical insurance coverage.

The Lyons Aquatics Club is a member of USA Swimming. Membership benefits include USA Rules and Regulations, membership certificate and certificate insurance. Clubs joining USA Swimming have liability insurance coverage for approved insured activities. USA Swimming is the ruling body of sanctioned swimming meets in the United States. USA meets are designed to protect the swimmer, provide fair and equitable conditions of competition, and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain an unfair advantage over another.

For additional information about United States Swimming or assistance, contact:

USA Swimming National Headquarters  
One Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
[www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

## **CLUB EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**

The USA Swimming Club Excellence Swimming Program is a voluntary program that identifies and recognizes USA Swimming member teams for their commitment to excellence in operation, performance, and for their support of the sport and USA Swimming. This program strives to meet the following objectives:

- Promote the development of comprehensive age group and senior swimming programs.

- Provide ways that USA Swimming can better assist, encourage, and motivate our member clubs to strive for the highest ideals of development and performance;
- Encourage USA Swimming's most successful clubs and professional coaches to become leaders in the sport through involvement in local and/or national governance.

This program's goal is to embrace leadership and excellence in up to 200 of USA Swimming's top member clubs. The program provides funding and support to the clubs and recognizes the club development system as integral to achieving excellence.

### **What factors are involved in the Program?**

All clubs participating in the Club Excellence program must meet the following four application requirements:

- Provide documentation of Professional/Organizational components.
- Complete the USA Swimming Club Profile and Facility Information.
- Participate in periodic "best practices" data collection/surveys.
- Submit the required Performance Eligibility and Performance Scoring information.

### **What are the levels?**

Clubs will qualify as Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medal Clubs.

- Up to 16 clubs will qualify for the Gold level.
- Clubs ranked up to #100 (that are not Gold level) will qualify for the Silver Level.
- Clubs ranked #101 and lower (that are not Gold or Silver level) will qualify for the Bronze.

The Lyons Aquatics has proudly been awarded a Bronze Medal Club.

## **HISTORY**

The Lyons Swim Club was established in 1964. More than 5,000 swimmers have swum for the club. The Club has produced hundreds of champions, age group state records, high school All-Americans, regional, and national qualifiers and Olympic Trial qualifiers.

Currently, our team size has grown to 400-425 swimmers ranging in age from 6 to 21 years. By utilizing the two high school pools and facilities, we have the ability to produce state, zone and national level qualifiers.

## **COACHING STAFF**

Nothing has a greater influence on the quality of children's sports than the excellence of the coach. The Lyons Aquatics staff are member coaches of the American Swimming

Coaches Association (ASCA), have access to the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport in the United States. Certified coaches in U.S. Swimming programs possess training and experience in the physiology and psychology of adolescent development. Our coaching staff provides the assurance that the time your children spend in swimming will be quality time. See the website for Coach's profiles.

## COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

The Lyons Aquatics 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.

- The coaches are responsible for placing youngsters in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each swimmer. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach.
- Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rest with the Lyons Aquatics Club coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group. At any point in time if you have questions regarding season planning or practice planning, please email the lead coach and he or she will be happy to set up an appointment to address your questions with you.
- The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets the Lyons Aquatics swimmers may attend, and which events they will swim.
- 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 youngster's performance.)
- The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff! Some of the considerations that the staff will look at when determining who will swim on a relay are:
  - A swimmer's personal best time in the event.
  - Best times to date throughout the season.
  - Times achieved during the current meet.
  - Performances at the meet.
  - Each swimmer's training background, practice attendance, and intensity at practice leading up to the meet.
  - Coaches may “split” relays in order to get more points for the team.

Regardless of which relay a swimmer swims on, they are expected to give 100% effort. Relays are tremendously important to our team in all scored meets because they are worth

more points than individual events. Swimmers who are determined to not be a team player will be removed from the relay and replaced.

## **TEAM LEVELS**

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

In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, we also establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible with respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. Unfortunately, this is not always the most convenient approach to take, but it is always the most productive.

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

Each group has some general age and ability guidelines. These ages may vary and the coaching staff may make changes based on what is best for each individual swimmer. Once a swimmer has demonstrated proficient skill level and an increase in commitment, a member of the coaching staff will notify the swimmer and parents that they are ready to move to the next practice group within our team.

Please note that throughout the training expectations, yardage numbers will not be given as we stress technique and quality work over counting yards.

### **National Team – Senior Group**

Attendance Expectations – Swimmers in this group are expected to attend every single practice offered. Should a swimmer need to miss, the Head Coach should be notified. Excessive absences will result in removal from the group.

Training Expectations – Placement in this group is determined by the Head Coach. The National team is for the committed athlete, and continues to focus on all aspects of swimming, including technique, psychology, nutrition, and race strategy, in addition to its heavy training load and dry land exercises. Swimmers in this group train in preparation for the Illinois Swimming Championships, USA Sectionals, and Jr. and Senior Nationals. Swimmers should know all of their times and pace times for this group as training is dependent upon that knowledge

Competition Expectations – Swimmers are expected to attend all competitions deemed critical by the Head Coach, along with the highest level of competition that the swimmer qualifies for..

### **High School – Conditioning Group**

Attendance Expectations – Swimmers in this level are encouraged to attend as many practices as possible. They should attend at least three per week at a minimum.

Training Expectations - This group is designed for the athlete who participates in many sports or activities, and those who want to maintain conditioning and technique work for their high school swimming season. This group is also intended for the 13 & over swimmer who does not qualify for the National Team but is intent on improving their practice skills in an effort to move into the national team

Competition Expectations – Swimmers should attend as many meets as possible

### **Gold – Advanced Age Group**

The Gold group is designed for those swimmers between the ages of 11-14.

Attendance Expectations - Swimmers will have six practices a week ranging from 1.5-2 hours. The swimmers are expected to attend a minimum of five practices a week, with a goal of 100%.

Training Expectations - This group is for those swimmers who swim as their main sport and who are mature enough to handle a large portion of the National team's training. Technique is stressed, as is continuing to build upon the skills and training that the athlete learned at the Silver level.

Competition Expectations – These swimmers will attend all meets on the schedule, and have a goal of achieving numerous Age Group state cuts, as well as a desire to achieve higher standards..

### **Silver – Primary Age Group**

The Silver group is designed for those swimmers between the ages of 10-13.

Attendance Expectations – Attendance should be as close to 100% as possible. This group will have five practices a week, and a minimum attendance of 4 per week is expected.

Training Expectations – Technique work will be done at this level. By this point in the swimmer's career, they should have very solid stroke technique, and will need minor adjustments at this point. The level of aerobic and anaerobic training will increase as this level should have their sights set on making Regionals at the lowest, with many qualifying for the Age Group State meet.

Competition Expectations – Swimmers are expected to compete in as many meets as possible, and attend the highest level of competition that they qualify for.

### **Bronze - Fitness Group**

The Bronze group is designed mainly for those swimmers between the ages of 10-14.

Attendance Expectations – Swimmers in this group will have four practices a week, with a hope that they can attend at least three.

Training Expectations – Technique and a building of aerobic base will be stressed at this level. Swimmers in this group may have some swimming experience, but will not yet have the skill set to train at a higher level. This group will help fill the swimmer's tool box in the hopes that they can go on and be ready for the next level of our club.

Competition Expectations – Competition at this level is not necessarily stressed. We would like them to swim in both or our hosted meets, the Hinsdale invite, and the TOPS/Lyons Dual.

### **Blue – Preparatory Age Group**

The Blue group is designed for competitive advancement through training, stroke and skill refinement and team commitment for athletes 8-11. All swimmers must meet certain physical developmental and skill levels.

Attendance Expectations – The swimmers will typically have five practices a week ranging from 1-1.25 hours. The minimum amount of practices attended should be no less than three, with four being preferred.

Training Expectations – While technique and fun are still a focus at this level of skill development, swimmers will be expected to increase the intensity of practice, and increase the efficiency of their stroke. Race strategy will be a component of training as swimmers will learn to handle some of the longer events for their age group. Goal setting will also begin to be a focus of this group as well.

Competition Expectations – Swimmers in this group will be expected to attend as many meets as possible, including travel meets should they qualify. The more meets the swimmers are able to attend, the better prepared they will be later in their development as the fear and anxiety of competing lessen.

### **Red – Beginning Age Group**

This group will be introduced to what it means to be on a swim team. Swimmers will already know the basics of stroke mechanics, starts and flip turns at this point. Swimmers are looking to advance their knowledge to all four strokes. This group will be mainly advanced 8 & unders, with some 9 year olds.

Attendance Expectations – There are four one hour practices during the week. For best results, we would like the swimmers to attend at least three a week as often as possible.

Training Expectations - Technique will be heavily stressed during this phase of the athlete's development, along with making swimming and training fun. Kicking will be emphasized as that is the base from which strong strokes develop. It is hoped that the athlete will be legal in all four strokes, and that they will be able to complete a legal 100 IM by the end of the season.

Competition Expectations – Athletes in Red are expected to attend as many meets as possible. There is typically one every two to three weeks. Athletes are not expected to attend travel meets at this point in their development, but should the parent and athlete desire to, they should talk with the Lead Coach.

### **White – Developmental/Pre-Team**

This is our developmental/pre-team group, where both fun and technique are the focus. Athletes ranging in age from 6 to 9 with little or no previous swim team experience will be placed here.

Attendance Expectations – There are typically two practices a week, which the swimmers are expected to attend both.

Training Expectations – The training will consist of mainly technique work, along with stroke familiarization. Swimmers should already understand freestyle and backstroke, and will be introduced to breaststroke and butterfly as well.

Competition Expectations – Swimmers will compete in two to three meets during the season, including an intersquad meet in October and a dual meet in February. A select number of swimmers will be asked to participate in our final hosted meet of the year, also held in February.

### **Masters**

This is our group for swimmers that are typically out of college and still have the desire to train and sometimes even compete. This group is also for those looking to train for triathlons, open water swims or just general conditioning. They meet three times a week, twice in the evening, and early Saturday morning.

## **TRAINING SESSIONS**

Training sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed to progress through the levels of swimming on our team. Training schedules are designed to provide the time that is necessary for a swimmer to accomplish their goals and therefore it is important that each swimmer try to attend as many practices as possible in order to derive the full benefits of the program.

## **WHERE DO WE PRACTICE?**

Our competitive swimming groups practice at Lyons Township High School, North and South campuses.

## **PRACTICE AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the coach's policies regarding practice. These policies have been developed over many years and are designed to provide the best possible practice for all.

- As a general rule, the least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success. The club does, however, encourage younger

swimmers to participate in other activities in addition to swimming. The expectation level to attend practices increases as the swimmer moves to higher levels within our team.

- For the swimmers' protection, they should arrive on the pool grounds **NO EARLIER** than 15 minutes prior to their workout. Swimmers should be ready to begin practice 5 minutes prior to the start of practice. They should also be picked up **NO LATER THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER PRACTICE IS OVER!** The coaching staff would like to get home to their families at a reasonable time. Please make sure you pick up on time.
- If you need to use the bathroom do it before or after the start or end of a set. Too many people getting out during a set causes significant disruption for the rest of the swimmers in the pool.
- During practice sessions, swimmers are never to leave the pool area without the coach's permission.
- The Lyons Aquatics has an obligation to act as guests while at each pool (both swimmers and parents). Every team member needs to do everything possible to respect this privilege, as this is not only a reflection of the individual, but also the team. Damage to properties at the pool sites may result in the swimmer being asked to leave the team permanently.
- Before and after practice swimmers are expected to behave appropriately in the locker rooms. This means no picking on younger swimmers by older swimmers. This behavior will not be tolerated!
- Parents are allowed to observe practice from a specific location designated by the coaching staff. Please be considerate and keep conversations at a low volume. If smaller children are attending practice, these children must stay in the designated area, and are the sole responsibility of their parents. Do not try to communicate with any swimmer from the observation area. This is not only distracting, but can also be distracting to the entire team as well as the coach.
- Feel free to talk to the coaches before or after practice sessions. Talking to them during practice time can be a distraction to all swimmers in the pool. Let the coach do their job. There will be time before and after practice to ask questions.

## **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

The lead coach for your swimmer should be notified immediately of any illness or injury. If a swimmer will be unable to swim for a period of three weeks or more due to illness or injury, you can request a refund for that time. In order to receive a refund you must provide a note from your doctor.

## **SWIMMERS 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 will be required to bring specified training equipment to each practice session. It is the swimmers responsibility to make sure these items are properly adjusted and that spares are readily available. If possible, please bring an extra pair of goggles to practice. The coaches can't afford to spend 5 – 10 minutes fixing goggles during practice time. Listed below is the required training equipment needed by each swimmer in each training group. Please note that all equipment should be labeled with your swimmer's name. Also, it is the swimmer's responsibility to pick up the pool deck of all equipment at the end of each training session. We cannot be responsible for any equipment left at the pool.

### **National, High School, Gold, Silver Groups**

- Pull buoy
- Hand paddles (Speedo stroke makers II)
- Training fins
- Snorkel
- Kick Board
- Old pair of shoes
- Mesh bag

### **Bronze, Blue, Red Groups**

- Pull buoy
- Kick Board
- Training fins
- Mesh bag

### **White Group**

- Kick Board
- Training fins
- Mesh bag

## **CODE OF CONDUCT: ATHLETES AND PARENTS**

All members of the team, whether parents or swimmers, must continue to protect and improve the excellent reputation the team has throughout the surrounding communities, and the state.

### **Athlete Code of Conduct**

- I. Lyons Aquatics Club (LAC) strives to promote the following opportunities for its members:
  - A. The development of basic and advanced swimming skills;
  - B. The enhancement of physical and mental abilities through individual effort and teamwork;
  - C. An environment which supports and encourages all members of the club, regardless of age or ability; and
  - D. An atmosphere that encourages friendships and social activities among the swimmers, players, divers, parents and coaches.
  
- II. As a member of Lyons Aquatics Club, each athlete will be expected to conduct himself/herself in accordance with the following provisions at practices, meets, social activities and all other occasions where the member is representing the club:
  - A. All LAC members shall exhibit good sportsmanship in and out of the pool;
  - B. All LAC members shall follow the coaches, officials and other administrator's rules and instructions at all times;
  - C. All LAC members shall behave in a responsible manner, including not using or possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, or other banned substances;
  - D. All LAC members shall respect and take care of all property and facilities whether the property belongs to the member, a teammate, opponent or any other person;
  - E. Bullying (as defined in the USA Swimming Code of Conduct Section 304.3.7) by any LAC member is prohibited;
  - F. All LAC members shall not use profane language or be disrespectful to any other person;
  - G. No form of photography or videotaping of any kind (including cell phones and social media) shall be allowed in locker rooms; and
  - H. All LAC members shall not participate in horseplay, running on deck, or any other activity that would create a danger to themselves or others.
  
- III. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct will result in the following disciplinary actions:
  - A. A disciplinary letter will be sent home which explains the misconduct. Prior to the member returning to practice and/or competition, the disciplinary letter must be signed by the member's parent/guardian and returned to the Head Coach.
  - B. In the event of repetitive and/or excessive misconduct, the Head Coach, the coaching staff and/or the Board reserve the right to decide upon and enforce an appropriate consequence for the member's misconduct.
  - C. If the Board believes that suspension or expulsion from the club is an appropriate consequence based on the member's misconduct, the member's parents/guardians, the member, and the Head Coach must meet with the board to discuss the misconduct prior to the suspension or expulsion being enforced. Any expelled swimmer will not receive a refund.
  
- IV. The Board's decisions are final.

The LAC Board and coaching staff endorse and support this Code of Conduct. Any questions concerning the policy or actions that result from this Code of Conduct shall be directed to the Board.

**Parent Code of Conduct**

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects the “six pillars of character.” (Arizona Sports Summit Accord)

I therefore agree:

- 1) I will remember that children participate to have fun and that swimming/ playing water polo/diving is for youth, not adults.
- 2) I will teach my child that doing one’s best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a race or his/her performance.
- 3) I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard and make my child feel like a winner every time.
- 4) I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all swimmers/players/divers, coaches, officials, and spectators at every meet, practice or other swimming event.
- 5) I will demand that my child treat other swimmers/players/divers, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
- 6) I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- 7) I will respect the officials and their authority during meets and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches on the pool deck (from the stands during practice or meets), and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- 8) I will resolve conflicts with other parents, coaching staff and board members in an open and amicable manner. I will keep communication open with all parties involved.
- 9) I will wait 24 hours when voicing a complaint from an incident before bringing it to the attention of the coach, club official or administrator to provide a cooling off time for all involved.
- 10) I will drop off my child no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of practice. I will make every effort to have my child at practice on time. I will pick them up from practice no later than 15 minutes after practice has ended.

I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Parental meet suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by Lyons Aquatics Club.
- 2) Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or board of directors.
- 3) Written warning.
- 4) Parental season suspension.

## PARENTS ... YOUR ATHLETE NEEDS YOU

To have a successful swimming program there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your youngster makes depends to a great extent on the strength of this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join the Lyons Aquatics and acquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning Lyons Aquatics parent.

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children's athletics. The following guidelines will help your child reach his/her full potential as an athlete.

- **The coach is the Coach!** We want your swimmer to discuss with his/her coach as soon as possible any questions or concerns regarding swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and oftentimes insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact your child's lead coach. If the lead coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask the Head Coach to join the dialogue. If your concern is not satisfactorily resolved after that discussion, you may submit your problem, concern or complaint to the Lyons Aquatics Club Board of Directors by email at [lyonsswimboard@gmail.com](mailto:lyonsswimboard@gmail.com)
- **Best kind of parent:** The coach's job is to motivate and constructively criticize the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition.
- **Ten and Under:** Ten and under swimmers are the most inconsistent swimmers and this can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and the swimmer alike! Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer joins the Lyons Aquatics Club, there may be a brief period in which his/her swimming slows down. This is the result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims.
- **Not every time:** Even the very best swimmer will have meets where they do not swim their best times. These "plateaus" are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season, times should improve. Please be supportive of these "poor" meets. Due to heavy training, the older swimmers may have only two or three meets a year for which they will be rested, tapered, and ready to swim fast. Remember that improvement doesn't always mean swimming faster!
- **Be patient:** Give your swimmer all the support they need. Step back and take a look at the big picture. Our program is designed to teach young swimmers good technique and efficiency in the water. Our goal is to keep young swimmers happy and having

fun while learning about how to be a better swimmer. The focus of our program is one of long-term, continued development. Continue to believe that the coaching staff always keeps the best interest of your child in mind. Swimmers will not swim lifetime best times in every meet. Be patient and allow your swimmer to relax and progress as athletes and people. Let your swimmer enjoy the competitive experience!

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Please make every effort to have your swimmers at practice and meets on time. Realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. Encourage good diet and sleeping habits. They will serve your child well.

- The greatest contribution you can make to your swimmer's progress is to be a loving, supportive parent. Please see the various articles regarding recommendations for parents of athletes. They offer some very useful and sound advice on communicating with your swimmer.
- To provide or make arrangements for transportation to and from practice and meets. The swimmer should arrive approximately 10 –15 minutes prior to the start of practice or warm-up session of a meet.
- To pay dues to the team in a timely manner.
- To participate in team functions. There will be many volunteer positions available to parents who wish to be involved in the coordination of team functions.
- To stay away from gossip and rumors. If you don't understand something, please ask a coach.
- Parents and swimmers share the responsibility of knowing all information as published by email or on the website.
- Please sign up for meets on the website on time. Don't make extra work for the coaches by trying to enter a meet late. If you do not sign up on time, your swimmer may not be able to swim in the meet.
- Coaches must be notified if a swimmer is not able to participate in a meet or part of a meet. If a swimmer has signed up for a meet, is scheduled to swim in a relay, he/she is responsible for the cost of the entry of that relay team if the team must be scratched due to their absence.

## COMMUNICATION

Web page. Our website is updated on a daily basis, and serves to be our team's main source of communication to parents and swimmers. The address is [www.lyonsaquatics.com](http://www.lyonsaquatics.com). The website is the place to check for all up to date information on meets, practices, fundraisers, etc.

Email. Most of our team's communication with families is via email. Please make sure your account has your correct email address at all times.

## **PROBLEMS WITH THE COACH?**

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. This approach does not allow disagreements to be resolved and often results in new problems being created. Please allow our coaches to attempt to address your concerns by promptly and directly communicating your concerns or complaints to them. This approach will benefit everyone and will give the coaches an opportunity to make improvements if necessary. Listed below are some guidelines for parents raising some difficult issues with a coach:

- 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.
- Listen to the coach. Generally, coaches are very patient with the progress of young swimmers. PLEASE DO NOT misinterpret coaches' patience as non-caring or incompetence. Parents who want to push their children cannot understand the coach who seems to be holding their children back. In reality, most coaches see the larger view of the child's swimming career and are planning a long and steady road of progressively more difficult tasks and satisfying achievement. Coaches do not have all the answers, but their success is dependent upon keeping children in the program for the long term.
- Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or training group that can range in size from 10 – 100 members. On occasion, 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.
- If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact your child's lead coach. If the lead coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask the Head Coach to join the dialogue. If your concern is not satisfactorily resolved after that discussion, you may submit your problem, concern or complaint to the Lyon's Swim Club parent Board of Directors by email at lyonsswimboard@gmail.com.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

## FEE STRUCTURE

**Swim Fees are non-refundable!** Refunds are NOT issued! If your swimmer cannot swim due to injury, please refer to the Injury and Illness section.

You are responsible for all charges you incur during the session. All families will be required to keep a credit card on file with the team. If your account goes past due, your account will be charged a late fee directly from our website billing program. Your credit card will not be charged if you call the office to make payment arrangements and the payment arrangements are followed. If you make payment arrangements, but fail to follow through with these arrangements, your credit card will be charged.

Please refer to our current registration form for our fee schedule.

## UNITED STATES SWIMMING FEES

All Lyons Swim Club swimmers are required to have a current United States of America Swimming (USA) membership. This membership not only supports swimming throughout the country, it also provides very important accident and medical insurance for every swimmer and every club.

Each swimmer is covered at any organized practice of the Lyons Aquatics Club and every competition that is USA Swimming sanctioned.

All members, coaches, and swimmers of the Lyons Aquatics Club must be members of United States Swimming. You must be a member of USA Swimming even if your swimmer does not plan on competing. The membership is purchased annually and the money paid for the membership is non-refundable. The membership is transferable, however. If you move, you can transfer your membership from Lyons to your new USA Swimming team.

The current 2015 USA swimming fees are \$60.

## HOME MEET PARTICIPATION

The following procedures are required by all member families of the Lyons Aquatics Club.

Our meets hosted by the Club require many workers to be run efficiently. Therefore, each family will be required to volunteer for one session per swimmer. A session usually lasts about 4 – 5 hours. You do not need to know anything about swimming to volunteer. In addition, there are some opportunities to volunteer either before or after (rather than during) the meet. Volunteer positions are filled on a first come, first serve basis through our website, usually about 2 weeks before a hosted meet.

A complete accounting of time volunteered will be kept reviewed by the Board of Directors. If a family fails to meet their commitment, the Board will impose a \$200 fee.

If a family is signed up to work at a swim meet and does not show up, there will be a \$200 charge added to your account and you will not be able to make up that missed session(s) at a future meet. If you cannot work at the meet, it is your responsibility to find someone to work for you and also let the meet director know who will be there in your place.

In addition to providing an opportunity for our swimmers to compete, swim meets are an important source of revenue for our team. Since everyone shares in the benefits (in the form of lower swim fees) the Board has felt it necessary to implement these requirements.

## **TEAM GEAR**

The team colors are blue and gold. One of the two required items to wear is a team swim cap. A latex cap is available from the coaching staff. Swimmers may also purchase personalized (recommended) silicone caps for themselves. While not everyone might wear a cap during a meet, if you do wear a cap it must be a team cap. If a swimmer comes to a swim meet without a team cap, they will be required to get one from the coaching staff.

The team suit should be worn for all competitions. For swimmers that wish to purchase a performance racing suit for the end of the season meets, you may do so as long as it is an age appropriate suit. Most of the performance suits are geared toward older swimmers. Typically, younger swimmers do not have the proper body to fit a suit correctly. Also, many of these suits are only good for about 4-6 races, and are rather expensive. If you have any questions about what suit to purchase for your swimmer, please check with your coach prior to making the purchase.

Check out the Sea Lions store on the website for suits, caps and other Lyons Aquatics Spirit Wear.

## **COMPETITIVE STROKES**

The four competitive strokes are 1) freestyle; 2) backstroke; 3) breaststroke; and 4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age-group. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes swim by one swimmer called the individual medley. A relay is a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle (medley relay).

## **SWIM SEASONS**

The swim year is divided into two seasons. The winter, or “short course” season, runs from mid-September to mid-March. The meets are held in a 25 yard pool. The spring/summer, or “long course” season, runs from early April to early August. Meets during the summer are generally held in 50 meter pools.

## **COMPETITION ... AND THE WINNER IS ...**

The Lyons Aquatics staff does not see the first place person as the only winner. We'd rather look to see who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics: good sportsmanship, concentration, listening skills, and working toward goals.

Sports are not an end in itself, but a vehicle we use to teach children life skills and how to reach their potential. We use sport as organized play to demonstrate and measure one's abilities. Seen in that light, winning without learning is not the Lyons Aquatics Club's desired intention. In competition, the important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most seconds. The real critical measure is who learned the most from the competitive experience.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records, and other material benefits. They will, however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, and enhanced self-image. These are the things that make a swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to their peak potential and to contribute to the world they live in.

## **LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT**

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by United States Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 8 and Under, 10 and Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and Senior. The Senior classification includes any age registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmer's age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmer's age for the entire meet.

Within each age group beginning at 10 and Under, there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin a "C" swimmer. As they improve, they advance from "C", to "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA", and ultimately "AAAA". The times required for each ability level are published each year by United States Swimming. This permits fair, yet challenging competition on all levels.

In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke. 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. See the website for the time USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming time standards.

## **TYPES OR LEVELS OF SWIM MEETS**

Most USS meets are held over the period of a weekend and are broken up into several sessions. The Friday evening session typically offers longer events for all age groups.

Most meets hold a morning and afternoon session on both Saturday and Sunday. Usually 2 age groups participate in the morning session and the remaining age groups participate in the afternoon. This prevents a swimmer from being at the meet all day.

- Dual Meets: Meets that the Lyons Swim Team sometimes competes in. These meets have no qualifying time standards and everyone from our team is encouraged to participate. These meets are swum against just one other team. Sometimes our team will compete with two other teams, called a triangular meet.
- Non-Qualification Meets: Meets that have not qualification time standards that need to be met in order to compete. Anyone from our team can compete in these meets.
- Qualification Meets: Meets that require each athlete to meet some sort of qualification time standard in order to enter the meet.
- Prelim / Final Meets: Most championship meets and qualification meets are held in a preliminary and final format. All swimmers compete in the morning or afternoon session of the meet called preliminaries. The fastest six, eight, twelve, or sixteen swimmers qualify to come back and compete again in the evening session, called finals.
- Regional Meet: Towards the end of each season, a Regional Championship meet is conducted. Illinois Swimming Inc. sets qualifying time standards for entrance into this meet.
- State Championship Meet: At the end of each season, winter short-course and summer long-course, a State Championship meet is conducted. Illinois Swimming Inc. sets qualifying time standards for entrance into the meet.
- Zone Championships: After the State Championships are held in the summer, a swimmer may qualify to participate in the Central Zone Championships by swimming a national “AAA” time. This is an all-star meet where swimmers compete as a member of the Illinois Zone team competing against other states from the Midwest.
- USS National Championships (Senior Nationals): Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held every four years, the highest level of competition for our senior swimmers is the USS National Championships. Lyons swimmers meeting the national qualifying time standards travel to various cities throughout the U.S. to compete against America’s best swimmers. Swimmers can qualify for national teams that represent the U.S. in international competition by their performance at Senior Nationals.

## MEET SCHEDULE

Each season’s meet schedule is posted on the website at the outset of the season. The meet schedule has been established with the expectation that swimmers will attend every meet available at their classification level. We do not schedule a meet unless we feel it is

important to participate. However, it is not mandatory to attend meets. You may also choose to enter your swimmer only one day of a two or three-day meet.

Occasionally, a host team's meet may be "full" and they may give reserving teams the opportunity to cut back their reservation by a certain percentage or drop out of the meet altogether. Please be aware that we may have to cut back swims from everyone that reserved swims for a particular meet that is full.

The coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning meets that Lyons swimmers may attend.

**Team effort meets** - Team championship meets are either indicated on the meet schedule or talked about in meetings. Since the coaching staff places the most emphasis on these meets, Lyons swimmers who are qualified, are highly encouraged to attend. The Illinois Age Group and Senior Championships are always considered "Team effort meets". If the coaching staff selects your swimmer to go to the meet to swim relays, we highly encourage your swimmer to attend. Swimmers competing only on relays need to get valuable experience swimming at this level. Also, remember that a relay needs four swimmers to make it work. Don't let down your teammates!

## MEET ENTRY PROCEDURE

You must also register your swimmer for each meet on our website, [www.lyonsaquatics.com](http://www.lyonsaquatics.com). You must have a username and password for our website to have access to the online meet sign up. If you do not, please contact Janet Moeller, [rules3k@aol.com](mailto:rules3k@aol.com).

Check out the meet packets linked on the sign up page. The meet packets identify when different age group are scheduled.

Entry deadlines are four to five weeks in advance of the meet and it is important that you enter on time. Late sign up is not always available and could mean that your swimmer is left out of the meet.

Meet information is available on our website. Exact starting times and meet timeline is usually available the week leading up to the meet.

## PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

Lyons Aquatics engages in a multilevel competition program with United States Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy:

- We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in

comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.

- Sportsmanlike behavior is as important as improved performance. All the coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has both a “good” and “bad” swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, **encouragement to teammates**, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised by the Lyons Aquatics coaching staff.
- A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.
- Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging, goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice to direct their training efforts.
- Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his/her potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. Oftentimes, a swimmer's “best” stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

## **EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS...BUT, WERE AFRAID TO ASK**

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your child's coach.

### **Before the Meet Starts**

- Arrive at the pool at least 15-20 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. Normally, warm ups are 1 hour before the expected starting time of the session. This time will be listed on the meet entry sheets and the meet participation sheets.
- Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags, and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
- Find the check-in place (called Positive Check-In) as your swimmer will need to check themselves in. If you don't check in, you will be scratched from your events. Check for special posted instructions in the area.

- Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmers' bodies are just like cars. On a cold day, he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed up before he/she can go all out. As a team policy, coaches reserve the right to scratch a swimmer from a relay that they were scheduled to compete on if the swimmer is late or missed warm-ups without notifying a coach prior to the meet.
- After a warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just settles in.
- Write each event number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number for which to listen.
- According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions 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.
- Admission and Heat sheets. Generally, you pay an admission to be a spectator at a swim meet. A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for several dollars per session. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. Only times from a USA Swimming sanctioned meet will be used.

### **Meet Starts**

- It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
  - A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "Clerk of the Course" or behind the starting blocks. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggles. The people running the clerk of the course will seat them according to their heat and lane. The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order.
  - You can usually expect at least 4 – 10 heats of each event.
- The swimmer swims their race.
- After each swim:

- He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) for his/her time.
  - He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will ask him/her their time and discuss the swim with each swimmer.
  - Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims: positive comments or praise, suggestions for improvement and positive comments.
- Things you, as the parent, can do after each swim:
- Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.
  - The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again at the clerk of course.
- When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents get to go home. However, you check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there. (The coaches speak from experience on this issue.)

### **What Happens If Your Child Has A Disappointing Swim**

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things. Don't dwell on the negative things done during the race!! If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer onto something good or positive. If you spend too much time worrying about a bad race, it will definitely affect your next race!!

### **What To Take To the Meet**

- **Most important:** SWIM SUIT and TEAM CAP – and goggles (2 pairs if you have them).
- **Sharpie Pen.** To write your event #, heat # and lane # on the swimmer's hands.
- **Towels.** Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
- **Something to sit on.** Examples - sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
- **Sweat suits - bring one.** Each swimmer needs to stay warm in between races.

- **Games.** Travel games, playing cards, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
- **Food.** Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. Some suggestions for items to bring are: drinks (fruit juices, sport drinks, or best of all water), snacks (granola bars, fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, sandwiches, etc.).
- Once you have attended one or two meets, this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other Lyons parent for help or information!
- These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to “race” and see how much he/she has improved from all of the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

### **Special Parent’s Note**

Sessions often run 4 hours, not including warm-ups. The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! Also, the bleachers normally have no backs; you may want to consider a bleacher seat with a back.

## **VERY BASIC SWIMMING RULES**

### **Starts**

The swimmers are not allowed a false start. If they jump the start and the starter thinks they are trying to get an advantage (whether intentional or not, it does not matter), they will be taken out of the race. On all freestyle, breaststroke and butterfly starts, the swimmers must start with their feet at an equal distance from the front of the starting block. Then on the command “take your marks” the swimmer will step forward and assume their starting position. On backstroke starts, the swimmer should enter the water on the starter’s command and immediately position their feet on the wall. All backstroke swimmers in USS sanctioned meets must start with their toes below the surface of the water.

### **Turns and Finishes**

- **Freestyle:** feet must touch the wall on the turn. A swimmer may finish with any body part touching the wall (we usually recommend the fingers or hand).
- **Backstroke:** A swimmer may turn over on their stomach immediately prior to turning. Once the swimmer begins to turn towards the stomach, they may take one freestyle arm pull. The swimmer must begin the flip turn before finishing the arm pull. The swimmer must push off on their back. At the finish, a swimmer may not roll onto their stomach until after they have touched the wall, and must finish with some part of their body above the surface of the water.

- Breaststroke: A swimmer must touch the wall with both hands at the same time. A swimmer may push off the wall and do one pull down and a breaststroke kick prior to breaking the surface.
- Butterfly: A swimmer must touch the wall with both hands at the same time. The swimmer may dolphin kick underwater prior to beginning to swim as long as the swimmer surfaces before 15 meters.

## CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS

One of our team goals is to qualify as many swimmers as possible for the Championship meet(s). Whether attendance is REQUIRED or OPTIONAL, the Championship meet is a special experience an extremely important in the athlete's development.

As our season progresses, all of the swimmers get excited and motivated to make a "State cut". Unfortunately, some of the swimmers do not have the consistent practice habits nor the USS meet experience to make the cut, yet, through an extremely psyched swim and a lot of desire, they do the time. Because they don't have the practices and meet experience, the swimmer will probably not repeat the time at the Championship meet.

As an Age Group swimmer, our swimmers are taught that they swim faster at the Championship meet than at any other time during the season. They are prepared for this; they are taught this/ we practice this. If a young swimmer goes to the Championship meet and is not properly prepared, the experience is negative and can affect other championships later in his/her swimming career. We, as coaches, believe that the honor of competing in a championship meet is earned through consistent practice habits and competitive experience at USS swim meets. There's a big difference between "wanting" to go to the championships and "deserving" to be at the championships. Talent plays a supporting role to commitment.

To ensure that all swimmers are properly prepared for their championships:

- Meet attendance and participation throughout the entire season is important. USS meets offer the experience necessary for the championship.
- Practice habits must be within our recommendations for the group the swimmer trains with. "Consistency" is the key word.

The State Championship is not the ultimate goal. It is a seasonal goal that should lead to Zones, Junior and Senior Nationals, and beyond. Making the "cut off time" is simply a requirement to attend the meet. The goal is to be as prepared as possible and perform to the best of one's ability at the meet. Sometimes swimmers get the "end" and the "means" mixed up.

Swimmers are a special people and deserve to have positive experiences as rewards for their dedication and commitment. Let's make sure that parents, swimmers, and coaches, are laying the foundation for the best possible experience at the Championship meet.

## PRELIMS AND FINALS MEETS

## Meet Format

In a preliminaries and finals meet format, the object of the preliminary swim is to qualify for the evening final session. If a swimmer places among the top 8 (in an 8 lane pool) after his/her morning swim, they then qualify to swim in the Championship finals in the evening session. Some meets also swim a Consolation final or a Bonus final. If a swimmer places from 9<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> place from preliminaries, he/she qualifies to swim in the Consolation finals in the evening session, and 17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> place will swim in the Bonus finals. In the evening finals session, the Bonus heat is swum first followed by the Consolation final which is immediately followed by the Championship final. During the prelims, the results are usually posted within ½ hour of the conclusion of the event. If a swimmer does not wish to swim in a final swim he or she may “scratch” the event and not be penalized. This must take place within ½ hour of the posting of the preliminary results. Therefore, within approximately 1 hour of the end of an event, a swimmer should know if they have made finals. A swimmer should never leave the meet without making sure if they are a finalist or an alternate. United States Swimming rules dictate that if a swimmer makes a finals event and fails to show up, they are barred from participating in the remainder of the meet (individual events and relays). Alternates (the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> place swimmers) should check with his/her coach about attending finals.

Note: The coaching staff expects that all swimmers participating in a preliminary session of a scored meet must be available to compete in the evening finals session, unless some extenuating circumstances occur.

## Circle Seeding

Used only in the prelims of Championship meets with events that have “prelims and finals”. This affects only the top 24 seeded swimmers (8 lane pool) or the top 18 seeded swimmers (6 lane pool) which compete in the last 3 heats. All other heats are regular seeding. Circle seeding goes like this in an 8 lane pool: The fastest seeded swimmer will be in the last heat in lane 4. The second fastest swimmer will be in the second to last heat in lane 4. The third fastest swimmer will be in the third to last heat in lane 4. The fourth fastest will be in the last heat in lane 5 and so on. For an event with 44 swimmers, the seeding would look like this: # = swimmer’s seed in prelims.

Lanes:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Heat 1			#43	#41	#42	#44		
Heat 2	#39	#37	#35	#33	#34	#36	#38	#40
Heat 3	#31	#29	#27	#25	#26	#28	#30	#32
Heat 4	#21	#15	#9	#3	#6	#12	#18	#24
Heat 5	#20	#14	#8	#2	#5	#11	#17	#23
Heat 6	#19	#13	#7	#1	#4	#10	#16	#22

The finals are seeded like a regular meet as are any events that are swum as timed finals. Some events such as relays, distance freestyles and other events are most often held on Friday evening as timed finals sessions.

## Awards and Placing

The swimmers who participate in the championship finals receive awards as listed in the meet information. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals often do not receive awards, but do score points for the team. One very important thing: once a swimmer has made the championship final, the worst they can place is 8<sup>th</sup> (in an 8 lane pool); regardless of how slow they may swim in finals. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals may place no better than 9<sup>th</sup> (the winner of the heat, in an 8 lane pool) regardless of how fast they swim. It has been known to happen that the winner of the consolation finals swims a time that would have placed him/her 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> in the championship finals, but the highest he/she can score is 9<sup>th</sup>. That is why it is important to swim very fast in the morning prelims session to make the championship finals. If a swimmer is disqualified in finals, they do not score points or get awards, however, a non-finals swimmer cannot be moved up to score. The place simply is not awarded. Alternates occasionally get to swim and can score the same as any other swimmer.

### **Receiving Awards in Public**

Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary for swimmers to be prompt and to cooperate fully with the presentations. A team uniform is to be worn when accepting the award. It is also customary for Lyons swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and receive the same with poise and a “thank you”. Good sportsmanship is essential. If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmer to remain until the shooting is complete, being sure to cooperate with the photographer. Do not ham it up! The picture may be special to someone else. The image a swimmer presents is a direct reflection of the team.

### **OUT OF TOWN MEETS**

Trips to meets in other cities become an important aspect of a swimmer’s career while advancing through the age group ranks. Lyons Aquatics Club has established the following policies for the safety of the swimmer and peace-of-mind of parents:

- Parents are to be responsible for arranging transportation and lodging to away meets, with the exception of some special competitions so designated.
- Any swimmer riding in a car is responsible to the parent/driver for his/her behavior and is expected to adhere to the Lyons Aquatics Club “Code of Conduct” at all times.
- A medical release and emergency telephone number should be given to the parent/driver with whom your swimmer is riding in case emergency medical treatment is required.
- An appropriate contribution is expected from each passenger in a car to the driver/owner to help defray gasoline and related expenses.
- Travel Meet fees will be assessed to recover some costs for Coaches expenses attending the meet. The fees vary based on: 1) the number of Lyons athletes in the meet, 2) the number of coaches needed to cover the meet, 3) the duration of the meet (number of nights/days) and 4) the transportation costs. The Travel Meet fees will range from \$20 to \$200 per swimmer per meet.

## NUTRITION

Everything you do influences your performance, but your food choices have the most effect due to the long term and short term benefits. A proper diet, including proper selection of foods, will help your training and performance while also achieving a healthy lifestyle once you stop competing.

To help ensure a balanced diet, remember that there are no magical nutrition remedies. So forget the fads and eat a variety of wholesome foods from the four food groups – dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables, and grains. Foods in these groups provide protein, fat carbohydrate, fiber and all the necessary vitamins and minerals. Your ideal diet should include the following percentage of calories:

- Carbohydrate 50-60%
- Fat 20-30%
- Protein 14-18%

This nutrition series is designed to help you better understand good nutrition and to provide guidelines for ideal food choices. Within sports, there are four major periods that nutrition will impact:

- **During Training.** Training represents the period in which athletes spend most of their time. Therefore, this category represents the most critical period. During this time, a diet high in carbohydrates is important. This is important since it is not uncommon for athletes training 4 – 6 hours a day to burn 2500 to 4000 calories a day. The best way to replenish these calories is with a high carbohydrate diet. By being conscious of this and by taking high carbohydrate foods or drink in the first 30 minutes following a workout, you can minimize depletion of energy stores.
- **Pre-Event Nutrition.** The major purpose of the pre-event diet is to ensure sufficient energy and fluid for the athlete. Two to three days before competition, a high carbohydrate diet with plenty of fluids should be emphasized. The pre-event meal should include a light, high carbohydrate meal three to four hours before the event.
- **Nutrition During Competition.** Provided that good nutrition practices were followed during training, middle distance and sprint events will not be limited by nutrition related factors. During a three to four day competition, make sure you consume plenty of fluids and each meal should include high carbohydrate, low fat selections.
- **Nutrition After Competition.** High intensity work will deplete the muscle's energy supplies. Therefore, carbohydrates play an important role after competition to make sure energy stores are maintained.