

Swim Florida Handbook

Mission Statement:

Swim Florida offers instruction from experienced swim coaches at all levels of recreational and competitive swimming. We will continue to value and support our swimmers at all levels from novice to nationals. We are committed to teach and show by example the value of goal setting, sportsmanship, discipline and hard work. We strive to promote an enjoyable environment to build character, lasting friendships and good health. Our Vision is to be a community team that promotes leadership, academic excellence, and outstanding swimmers.

Group Descriptions:

Novice Group

Generally, 5-8 years old - entry level swimming. This level will discover the basic fundamentals, practice habits, and skills that will serve them in their swimming development.

The primary focus of practice sessions is to expose children to all four competitive strokes through the use of drills, and stroke technique. In addition, swimmers will work to develop basic motor learning skills, balance, and coordination in the water.

Bronze Group

Generally, 8-10 years old - will explore opportunities to continue to build on their fundamentals and skills while testing their skills in a competitive setting. In the daily practice setting, swimmers will experience an increase in all aspects of swimming. They will have increased practice time, which will allow for the beginning of aerobic conditioning combined with continued technique work. Practices are geared for success in all strokes and events. Swimmers will be encouraged to compete in every event the coach feels he/she is ready to swim. Dryland activity is added.

Silver Group

Generally, ages 11-14 years old - swimmers that are beginning an exciting journey as the emphasis changes from primarily teaching to a relatively equal balance of technique work and physiological development. Daily practices will consist of increased aerobic conditioning while the technical skills will still be reinforced. Swimmers will continue to develop all four competitive strokes. Dryland becomes an important part of the practice to help with coordination and athleticism, which will prove valuable in the pool as well.

Gold Group

Generally ages 15-18 years old - swimmers who have progressed out of the SILVER group. The GOLD group is comprised of swimmers who have advanced out of the SILVER group and who have reached High School level age or swimming. This group works to improve speed with the swimmer's competitive strokes. Practices are set by the coach at each pool. Swimmers in this group have reached the highest level in Swim Florida. Swimmers in this group will work with their coach to achieve personal goals which may include District, Regional, State, Sectional, Regional, National and International level competitive swimming.

Quarterly Volunteer requirements

All parents are required to volunteer at swim meets and team functions, you are required to work per quarter, or a 50.00 fee will be added to your account. You will be able to sign up online to work in specific areas.

You may also become a volunteer official; ask when next available classes will be.

Swim Florida Handbook

Practice Behavior

- Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at practices as well as during competition. Working together is important and each member should recognize his/her role in the Swim Florida family.
- Swim Florida swimmers are expected at all times to follow the verbal directions of the coaching staff. At no time will disrespectful attitudes be tolerated.
- Abusive language, lying, stealing, or vandalism will not be tolerated.
- Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach's permission.
- Swimmers are expected to follow the rules and regulations set by the coaching staff.
- Swimmers are expected to follow the practice etiquette established by the group coach. This enables practices to run smoothly and safely.

Practice Schedule

- The practice schedule for each of our practice groups can be found on the Swim Florida website. Go to www.swimflorida.com click calendar tab along the top of the main page, once calendar page viewable access drop menu in top left for respective practice group details. Changes to the practice will be announced at practice or by email or text.

Guidelines for Watching Practice

- Parents are encouraged to watch practice from time to time. Here are some important guidelines when observing practice:
- First, young swimmers want parental approval more than anything in the world. For swimmers

to learn as much as possible during practice, it is imperative that coaches have each swimmer's undivided attention. Please do not communicate with your swimmer during practice and do not compete with the coach for your swimmer's attention.

- Second, we ask that parents do not interrupt the coaches on deck while they are coaching. If you need to communicate with a coach, please do so before or after practice (if they are not coaching another group). Scheduling an appointment with the coach during office hours is ideal.
- Third, our coaches spend a considerable amount of time planning weekly training sessions for each of their practice groups. Every training set or instructional drill has a purpose. One practice and/or practice set often builds on another during each week. If you have not watched all of the practice sessions, you may not understand the purpose of what the swimmers are doing on any given day.
- Finally, please do not try and coach or advise your swimmer based on what you see (or think you don't see) him/her do during practice. Many times when teaching stroke skills, coaches ask their swimmers to do things that may not look correct or actually might be illegal during competition. However, the drills have an important purpose in teaching skills. Swimming a one-arm butterfly stroke or using a flutter kick with breaststroke are examples of drills with a specific purpose.

Swim Florida Handbook

Year-Round Swimming

Short-Course and Long-Course Seasons

Every year is divided into two swimming seasons—short course and long course. Each swimmer at Swim Florida is registered with USA Swimming and allowed to participate in both swimming seasons. The Swim Florida coaching staff encourages all swimmers to continue swimming through both seasons.

The **short course** season usually runs from early September through March. A series of championship meets for all ages and levels of swimmers is conducted from late February through March. These competitions are held in 25-yard pools.

The **long course season** typically runs from April through early August. These competitions are held in 50-meter pools. We strongly encourage our swimmers to swim during the long course season for their long-term development.

Practices are offered throughout the entire year—from the start date of the short course season (at the end of August or early September) until the end of the long course season (end of July or early August).

Competition

In preparing for your swimmer's meets, the following are some basic fundamentals of competition.

- Each swimmer should compete with him/herself. It is more beneficial to improve one's time and/or technique than to win a ribbon or medal.
- In addition to earning best times, the coaches praise swimmers for working on technique and/or racing strategies. Please note that it is

possible that a swimmer won't improve his/her time when s/he tries something new (e.g., flip turns, technique, etc.). However, if a swimmer continues to try a new skill or technique, s/he will improve more in the long run.

- The swimmers are taught to set realistic goals, and as they get older, they are taught to relate performance in practice to their goal times.
- The coaching staff encourages age-group swimmers to swim every event they are eligible for. This helps to promote versatility since swimmers are continuously switching best events as they grow, mature, and change body shapes and sizes.
- Sportsmanship is a MUST at Swim Florida. We expect all swimmers, parents, and coaches to respect the officials, competitors, and the facilities we use. We also want swimmers to encourage and support their teammates.
- SUCCESS = Improving one's own, best self.

How to Enter Swim Meets

- The Swim Florida meet schedule is posted on the website (www.swimflorida.com).
- Meet schedules can often be confusing to determine which particular meets swimmers are eligible to swim. Please direct any questions concerning the meet schedule and your swimmer's eligibility to your swimmer's coach.

Swim Florida Handbook

- Scheduled meets are not required, but are encouraged. The meets are a fun time for swimmers, as well as a way to measure their improvement. Meets also give swimmers a strong incentive to attend practice.
- Swim Florida families receive meet information via email and website posting.

NOTE: Each Swim Florida team member who is eligible to attend a specific meet must log into their TeamUnify account to commit to the swim meet they are eligible to attend. This following process must be done by the listed deadline.

The process to indicate your swimmer will be able to participate in the meet or will participate in any portion of the meet is as follows:

1. Sign-in to your TeamUnify account.
2. Click on the Event tab and find the assigned meet for your child.
3. Click on the **Attend this Event** button for the meet
4. Click on desired athlete you want to commit to the event
5. This will bring you to the Athlete sign up page
6. From here you can commit the Athlete by using the Signup Record and selecting “yes please (swimmer’s name) will attend this event”
7. Always remember to **Save** Changes!

Once the deadline has past, you will NOT be able to commit your swimmer. At this time the entries are processed. Declaring for a meet will turn off on Midnight the day of the deadline.

All meet fees will be handled online with TeamUnify. The following week of **any** meet, meet fees will be posted to your account. The fees will be drafted the same time as when your dues are paid *which is*

the first of every month. This can only be accomplished by setting up credit card or ach payment (which is setup by entering your checking account information). We will *look to* provide notification sometime during the following week of any meet when meet fees have been posted to your Team Unify account.

Please be aware that once meet entries are sent to the meet host, the swimmer’s entry fees have been paid. It is too late to get the fees refunded.

Note: this is not required for Summer League meets.

Everything You Wanted to Know About Swim Meets

Swim meets are a great family experience! They are a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are 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 detailed and specific as possible.

Swim Meet Procedures

- The week before the meet, check the entries for your swimmer, which will be available on your TeamUnify account. If there are any problems with your swimmer’s entries, let your swimmer’s coach know as soon as possible.
- Arrive at the pool ten minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time, and locate the Swim Florida team area where all team members sit. The meet warm-up time is listed in the meet information, as well as on the Swim Florida website. (www.swimflorida.com)
- Obtain a heat sheet, and check to see if your swimmer is properly

Swim Florida Handbook

entered in all events. If there is a mistake, discuss it with your swimmer's coach so corrective action can be taken if appropriate.

- Warm-ups are always conducted by the Swim Florida coaching staff. **It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.** Swimmers' bodies are just like cars on a cold day—they need to get the engine going and warmed-up before they can go all out in a race.
- All Swim Florida swimmers are required to wear the team suit and team cap. Swimmers also are asked to wear their team t-shirts. All other team apparel is optional. However, wearing the complete team uniform promotes team unity and pride.
- Each swimmer is responsible for knowing which events s/he is swimming and for being on time to swim his/her event.
- At the conclusion of each race, the swimmer should ask the lane timers for the stopwatch time. Younger swimmers are expected to go immediately to their coach. Older swimmers should warm down first, if possible, and then see their coach. The coach discusses the race with each swimmer individually and gives positive comments concerning splits, stroke technique, and race strategy.
- Electronic timing is used at most meets. Generally, the official time is the one recorded in the computer when the swimmer touches the touch pad. This time appears on the scoreboard. However, if a swimmer misses the touch pad, or if there is a mechanical failure, various back-up times may be used. The timing and score keeping personnel analyze all

times to determine the official times, which are then posted as final results.

- **NOTE: According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed in the immediate competition venue 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.
- In between races, swimmers are asked to rest and stay warm. All energy should be stored up and used in competition. If swimmers must eat, a light, nutritious snack is recommended as is staying hydrated.
- It is very important that parents and/or swimmers check with the coaching staff prior to leaving the swim meet, making certain that their swimmer has not been placed on a relay.

What to Bring to a Meet

Note: Be sure to put your swimmer's name on all belongings and equipment!

1. Team swimsuit
2. (2) team swim caps
3. (2) pairs of goggles
4. Team t-shirts
5. (2) towels minimum
6. Food—nutritious snacks
7. Water bottle

Once you and your swimmer have attended one or two meets, this will become routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any veteran parent on the team for help or for information.

Swim Florida Handbook

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! Swimmers get to “race” and see how much they have improved from all the work they have put into practice.

Summer league meets

Summer league meets are held at various Swim Florida pools. This is a fun way to introduce young swimmers to the competitive sport of swimming. There are no disqualifications and are not sanctioned USA swim meets.

Swim Florida Handbook

Swimming Terms

AGE GROUP SWIMMING - the program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent.

ANCHOR - The final swimmer in a relay.

ATTACHED - A registered swimmer who is attached to a registered USA Swimming swim team.

BACKSTROKE FLAGS - Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately five yards/meters from the wall that notify backstroke swimmers that they are approaching the end of the pool.

BUTTON - The manual Timing System stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. The button is at the end of a wire, plugged into a deck terminal box. It is the timer's responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.

CHAMPIONSHIP MEET - The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.

CHECK-IN - The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check in, the coach will mark each swimmer's name on a list posted by the meet host. Once a swimmer is checked in they must swim the event or they will be scratched from his/her next event.

CIRCLE SEED - In a Prelims and Finals meet, the fastest three heats of each event in Prelims is specially seeded: the fastest swimmer is in the fastest heat, the second fastest swimmer is in the next heat, the third fastest swimmer is in the next heat,

the fourth fastest swimmer is in the fastest heat and so on until the three heats are filled up. As opposed to the normal slowest to fastest seeding in the rest to the heats (used in a Timed Finals format).

CIRCLE SWIMMING - When swimming in a lane with several swimmers – staying to the right of the black line.

CLERK OF COURSE - The USA Swimming-certified official responsible for deck seeding and organizing swimmers into heats (usually, a parent-volunteer). Also, where scratches and relay cards are turned in and on-going meet information is available for the coaches.

CLUB - A registered swim team that is a dues paying member of USA-S and the local LSC.

CODE OF CONDUCT - an agreement between swimmer and club, stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

CUT (STANDARD) – slang for Qualifying standard; a time set for entry into a meet or event.

DECK SEEDING - The process of organizing swimmers into events, heats, and lanes (by the Clerk of Course) at the meet as it progresses (as opposed to pre-seeding prior to the meet).

DEHYDRATION - The abnormal depletion of body fluids (water). This is the most common cause of cramps and sick feelings.

DISQUALIFICATION "DQ" - the loss of points and a time due to an infraction of the rules that govern the meet.

DIVE OVER STARTS - Start procedures at a meet in which swimmers of the previous heat remain in the water, close to the wall, during the start of the next heat. Usually used in senior sessions/meets to save time and/or allow swimmers to rest before exiting the pool.

ENTRY FEE - a set fee paid to swim each event at a meet.

Swim Florida Handbook

FALSE START - occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start of a race, prior to the starting signal. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in disqualification.

15-METER MARK - Marks on the sides of the pool and on the lane lines 15 meters from the ends of the pool. In Free, Back, and Fly events the swimmer must surface at or before these marks.

FINA - Federation Internationale de National de Amateur, the international governing body of competitive swimming, diving, water polo and synchronized swimming.

FLORIDA "A" SWIMMER – swimmer that has 2 "A" times in 2 different strokes. (Free, Back, Breast, Fly, IM)

FLORIDA "BB" SWIMMER – swimmer that has 2 "BB" times in 2 different strokes – (Free, Back, Breast, Fly, IM)

FLORIDA SENIOR CIRCUIT SWIMMER – swimmer (regardless of his/her age) that has 2 13-14 "AA" times in 2 different strokes. (Free, Back, Breast, Fly, IM)

FLORIDA SWIMMING, INC. – The name of the Local Swimming Committee (LSC), charged by USA Swimming to govern competitive swimming in the state of Florida.

FREESTYLE RELAY - In the freestyle relays, four swimmers each swim one fourth of the total distance. As in the medley relay, no individual may swim more than one leg of the relay.

HEAT - a division of any event in which there are too many swimmers to swim at the same time (set up by the submitted times and number of lanes in the pool being used).

HEAT SHEETS - a printed program of events and "who swims when" sold at most meets, a MUST for parents.

IM – slang for Individual Medley; an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

LANE LINES - Continuous floating dividers stretched from the start end of the pool to the turn end, used to delineate the individual lanes.

LAP COUNTER – a set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race by the person who counts for the swimmer, stationed at the opposite end of the start.

LENGTH/LAP - Technically, a length is once across the pool; a lap is across and back. However most coaches use the terms interchangeably to mean simply once across the pool. Thus, 4 lengths in a 25 yard pool would be swimming across the pool 4 times, totaling 100 yards.

LONG COURSE - a pool 50 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its summer competition in long course. This is the size pool that the Olympics are competed in.

LSC – Local Swim Committee, the governing body that govern swimming at the local level. There are 59 LSC's in the country. Our LSC is Florida Swimming, Inc.

MARSHAL - The officials (usually, parent volunteers) who control the crowd and swimmer flow at a swim meet. They are primarily responsible for safety in the venue.

MASTERS SWIMMING - A program for swimmers aged 19 and older who wish to continue swimming, but not necessarily at the senior level. Age groups are in five-year increments.

MEDLEY RELAY - In the medley relay, all four strokes are swum by four different swimmers. No swimmer may swim more than one leg of the relay, which is swum in backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle order.

Swim Florida Handbook

FL 14 and UN AGE GROUP

CHAMPIONSHIPS - FL Swimming's season ending championship meet to include the following age groups – 10 – UN, 11-12 and 13-14.

NT - No Time - Abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swum that event before and does not have an official time of record.

OFFICIAL - a judge on the deck of a pool at sanctioned and approved competitions that enforce USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers and referees.

OPEN WATER SWIMS – conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river or ocean.

PERSONAL BEST - The best time a swimmer has achieved so far in a given event.

PRELIMINARIES (PRELIMS) - also called trials. Races in which swimmers qualify for the finals to typically be swum later in the day.

PROOF OF TIME - A requirement some meets have to make certain that swimmers have legally met the time standards for that meet. Monetary fines are typically assessed for any failed swim at meets if the entry time can't be proven.

PSYCH SHEET - A printed order of events by session with swimmers listed in order, usually fastest to slowest according to their entry times. It does not show heats.

QUALIFYING TIMES - Published times that must be achieved during a given period in order to enter certain meets.

REFEREE - the head official at a meet that makes all final decisions based upon USA Swimming rules.

SANCTION – A competition or time trial must be sanctioned (approved) by USA Swimming (through the Local Swim Committee) for the times swum to count and to be used in other sanctioned meets.

SCRATCH - to withdraw from an event (with the forfeit of the entry fee), only to be done by the Coaching Staff.

SEEDING TIMES = the time a swimmer uses to enter a meet. This time determines one's heat and lane in the particular event.

SESSION - Portion of meet distinctly separated from other portions by time (usually a morning or afternoon set of events for different age groups).

SHORT COURSE (SC) - a pool 25 yards/meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in short course.

SPLASH MAGAZINE - The USA Swimming magazine that is mailed bi-monthly. (A benefit of being a member of USA Swimming.)

SPLIT - a time taken at an intermediate distance, e.g., a 50 yard time for a 100 yard race

STARTER - a Certified Official responsible for starting each event and being sure that each start is fair for all participants.

STOPWATCHES - watches used to time the swimmers during a competition. When automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method.

STREAMLINE - the position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as straight and tight as can be.

STROKE AND TURN JUDGE - a Certified Official that walks the deck or stands at the end of the pool during a meet to certify the legality of individual strokes and turns.

STROKE DRILL - an exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

SWIM - Official abbreviation of Swim Florida

Swim Florida Handbook

SWIM-OFF - In a Prelims and Finals (championship) format, a second race after the scheduled event to break a tie between swimmers, in order to determine which swimmer makes it into which finals heat or the order of the alternates.

TIME STANDARDS – Certain qualifying times, which have been set up annually by USA Swimming or FL Swimming for all events in all levels of meets to ensure that all competitions are reasonably of the same ability in their respective meets. The swimmer's goals should be betterment of his or her time, progressing from the "standard to the Nationals.

TOUCH PAD - a large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

UNATTACHED – is a registered swimmer who is not attached to a registered USA swim team. If a swimmer changes teams, that swimmer must swim unattached for 120 days from the last day of meet competition representing the former team.

USA SWIMMING, INC. – the National Governing Body that regulates our sport. All SWIM FLORIDA swimmers are registered with USA Swimming and each has been assigned an identification number. This USA Swimming registration expires at the end of each year. This is the organization that sends swimmers to the Olympic Games. USA Swimming is a member of FINA.

USA SWIMMING CARD/NUMBER - a membership card with a unique number assigned to a swimmer when he/she joins USA Swimming. The formula for deriving a swimmer's USA Swimming # is the following: Birth Date (6 digit format MM/DD/YY), first three letters of the first name, middle initial, and first four letters of the last name.

For example: John A. Smith was born September 1, 1959. His USA Swimming number is the following: 090159johasmit
WARM-DOWN - low-intensity swimming used by a swimmer after a practice, set or race to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce the heart rate and respiration.

WARM-UP - low-intensity swimming used by a swimmer prior to a practice, set or race to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.