

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Welcome to the Dolphin-Laser Swim Team! This handbook should serve as your first resource for any questions you may have as you become familiar with the Dolphin-Laser program. Inside you will find information about your responsibilities as a parent; how best to communicate with the coach; an outline of the team's financial policies and how billing works and other important policies; as well as valuable information about swim meets, the coaching staff and more. **If you have a question, please look here before calling the coaching office. Chances are the answer is here.**

The goal of the Dolphin-Laser team is to provide a positive and motivating experience that builds self esteem, develops the athlete to his fullest potential, and gives swimmers the skills and lessons of competitive swimming that they may take with them through all walks of life.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Within the Dolphin-Laser Swim Team, there are two different billing systems, which are described below.

TEAM UNIFY ACCOUNT

Upon joining you will be sent a password for the Dolphin-Laser web site. Usage of this web site as a member will be referred to as your Team Unify account. This access will also allow for meet sign up, account information and other items. All fees, other than monthly training fees, will be on your Team Unify account (swim meet entry, current team members USA Swimming registration yearly fee and any extra items you may purchase). **This is an account for which you will be accountable for supplying an automatic draft source.** The swim team office may assist you in viewing this account but cannot set up the automatic draft for you. The swim office cannot view your automatic draft information. All swimmers on accounts with an invoice balance that is more than 90 days past due will be suspended from meet participation until a payment plan is set up with the swim office.

MONTHLY TRAINING FEES

Monthly training fees are processed for the team by the Little Rock Athletic/Racquet Club. Monthly Training Fees are separate from the Team Unify account. For all non-members, your training fees are set up on automatic draft through the LRAC. If you are a member of the LRAC or LRRC, the monthly fee will be processed with your club account. The Dolphin-Laser Swim Team office located at the LRRC does all the bookkeeping on your account.

* Automatic Drafts for monthly fees will be debited on the 10th of each month. (First months' fees will be pro-rated based on join date)

MEMBERSHIP CANCELLATION POLICY

A written cancellation must be submitted to the team email address at swimoffice@dolphin-laser.com, or by mail to Swim Office, #1 Huntington Rd., Little Rock, AR, 72205, one month prior to the swimmer's last practice. Do not tell the coach on deck.

There will be no refund given if you drop from the team before the end of a billing cycle.

YEARLY REGISTRATION FEE

A \$100 annual fee is required for each swimmer upon completion of this registration. This fee cannot be billed through your club account.

- \$59 of the registration fee is passed to Arkansas Swimming Inc. (ASI) to cover each swimmer's USA swimming membership fee. As a registered USA Swimming Team, every athlete of the team must be registered with USA Swimming. As members of USA Swimming, each athlete will receive a membership card, have both liability and secondary medical insurance coverage, and receive an annual subscription to USA Swimming's bi-monthly publication SPLASH magazine.
- The remaining \$41 of the registration fee remains with the team and is used to pay for team administrative costs, your team T-shirt and your team swim cap.

If you join between the months of May and August: the registration fee is only \$55 (Summer SEASONAL REGISTRATION ONLY). Upon renewal in September, the annual fee will be the full \$100.

MONTHLY TRAINING FEES

LRRC/LRAC:

Developmental I: \$64

Developmental II: \$69

Developmental III: \$79

Developmental combo: \$69

Age Group I/II: \$93

Age Group III: \$98

* 20% discount given for LRRC/LRAC members

UALR:

Developmental: \$69

Senior I: \$105

Senior II: \$115

SHERWOOD:

Developmental: \$65

Age Group: \$70

CABOT:

Dolphin-Laser PeeWee Team

\$25 for members of the community center

\$45 for non-members

Age Group I and II swimmers

Tues/Thursday only

\$25 for members of the community center

\$45 for non-members

Or

Mon-Thursday

\$50 for members of the community center

\$70 for non-members

Age Group III and Senior swimmers

\$50 for members of the community center

\$70 for non-members

SWIM MEET FEES

Entry Fees: At the beginning of each season, a meet schedule will be posted on the team website. The majority of meets we participate in are United States Swimming Sanctioned meets. Typically, you can expect to be charged a surcharge per swimmer of \$3-\$15 and \$1.50-\$3 per each event the swimmer competes in. Surcharges vary by meet location and meet level. Developmental meets typically offer 5 events. Three-day meets can offer up to 12 events. The average meet entry could range from \$12-\$30. These fees are billed to the swimmer's Team Unify account and will be deducted from the payment source associated with that account.

Travel and Lodging: Depending on your child's level, some meets will require overnight lodging. You are responsible for all costs associated with transportation, lodging and meals.

Heat Sheets: Heat sheets are offered for sale by the host team at each swim meet and range in price from \$2-\$15.

EQUIPMENT COSTS

Please write your name on all equipment!

WORKOUT EQUIPMENT

Fins: Swimmers will need a pair of fins to help develop technique and leg strength. They should be solid and have a shoe to slip the foot in. Fins with a strap do not support the foot as well and tend to break easily. Also, fins used for scuba diving are too heavy and not flexible enough. The best advice for swim fins is to try them on. They should feel snug because when they are being used to kick in the water, they need to feel secure and not loose. The proper fins can be ordered through team's outfitting company, Splashwear Aquatics in North Little Rock, or online from sites such as SwimOutlet.com. are another equipment must-have soon after beginning swim team. The price range is \$20-\$25.

Goggles: Swimmers need goggles to protect the eyes. They come in all varieties. Trying on several kinds to see what is comfortable will help you make the best decision of what to buy. While goggles can last a while, they can be affected by chlorine and wear out with time. They are available at Splashwear Aquatics, online from sites such as SwimOutlet.com, sporting goods stores and some swim meets. Please write your swimmer's name on the strap so that we may return the goggles to their owner. The price range is \$10-\$20.

Practice suit: A suit that fits is important for the comfort of the swimmer. Practice suits can be found in many stores in many price ranges. They are usually found on sale at the end of each swimming season. Some swim meets will have suits for sale. These suits work well as practice suits. Suits WILL wear out due to regular use and exposure to pool chemicals, so regularly check the condition of your swimmer's suit and replace as necessary. After each swim, the swim suit should be rinsed in cool water (not detergent) and allowed to air dry. This will help preserve the swim suit for a longer period of time.

Swim caps: Swim caps are needed for swimmers with long hair. The caps are necessary for keeping hair out of the face when learning proper technique. The price range is \$5-\$10 and they are available at Splashwear Aquatics, online from sites such as SwimOutlet.com, and some swim meets.

Additional Equipment: Depending on the swim level, each coach may request other equipment to be used in practice such as pull buoys, kickboards, hand paddles, and center-mount snorkels.

COMPETITION EQUIPMENT

Team Suit: The Dolphin-Lasers are encouraged to wear the team suit at all competitions. These are ordered at the beginning of the season from Splashwear Aquatics. The price is approximately \$50.

Extra cap and goggles: Swimmers should always have an extra cap and goggles.

Team caps: These are given to the swimmers at their first competition. Swimmers are encouraged to wear this cap at each meet.

Team T-shirt: Team T-shirts are passed out each fall in conjunction with team pictures. Team T-shirts should be worn at all swim team functions.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Team T-shirts and Sweatshirts: These are special ordered throughout the year and emails are sent out notifying of their availability. Prices vary.

Parkas: Parkas may be ordered with the team order in the fall or online. This heavy coat is great for wearing between events at a meet. It is suggested that the swimmer be on the team for one year before making this investment. Price range is \$80-\$125.

Warm-ups: Warm-ups may be ordered with the team order in the fall or online. It is suggested that the swimmer be on the team for one year before making this investment. Prices range between \$50-\$60 per piece. Shipping and embroidery is extra.

POLICIES

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Parent involvement is required for the program to operate smoothly. The volunteer policy applies for the parents of all Dolphin-Laser swimmers who compete in USA sanctioned swim meets.

Each family is required to work at least 5 sessions for the short course season and ??? sessions for the long course season. If you are unable to complete the requirement a \$50 volunteer charge will be billed to your Team Unify account at the end of the season (prorated for \$10/session). **If your child is attending ASI State Championships, and we are hosting the event, parents must work two sessions.**

Volunteers must sign up on line prior to the event! Team Unify has a system for keeping up with your volunteer hours. You must sign up for your volunteer position under "job sign up" by midnight prior to the start of the meet. The jobs are on a first-come, first-serve basis, so please sign up quickly.

Volunteers must also sign the volunteer check-in book located at the clerk of course/awards table in order to receive credit for their participation. It is the volunteer's responsibility to sign in. Unless excused by the meet director, the volunteer must remain during the entire length of session he is working, regardless of when the swimmers' races are completed.

Note: Bringing items to the hospitality room is always needed and appreciated. We generally feed 30-40 coaches and officials at each meet. However, this does not fulfill the requirements of the volunteer policy. Only if a volunteer works a session in the hospitality room does it fill the requirements.

Officials are excluded from the volunteer policy.

NEW MEMBER POLICY

- New members must complete registration forms within the first 5 days of practice.
- Non-members of LRRC/LRAC are required to sign a guest card prior to their first day of practice.
- Swimmers must complete the USA Swimming registration within their first month of practice.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

If questions or problems should arise, the lines of communication are always open, but please avoid disrupting a practice to discuss anything with the coach. This time is devoted to swimmers exclusively. The primary means of communication is through the Dolphin-Laser team website and email. Please let us know if you do not have access to email or a computer. If you are not receiving emails and have given us your email address at registration, or if your email address has changed, please log into your Team Unify account and

make the necessary changes. Each swimming family has a mailbox (file folder) at the pool practice location where unclaimed meet awards will be placed. Please check your mailbox and the team website regularly. The following are the best methods of finding information or meeting with a coach.

- When you have questions, first turn to the website to see if it can be answered either in this handbook or elsewhere on the site.
- All coaches have email addresses and this is the preferred method of contacting them. Email addresses are below.
- When email contact is not appropriate, you may contact the coach in the coaches' office via phone or in person. Please remember that a coach is preparing for practice immediately prior to practice and may be beginning another practice immediately following your swimmer's practice, so before or after practice may not be the appropriate time to discuss your concerns. Emailing the coach to schedule a meeting is ideal.

Tay Stratton, co-head coach, CoachTayStratton@Dolphin-Laser.com

Keith McAfee, co-head coach, coachkeith@dolphin-laser.com

Matt Adams, head Senior coach, CoachMatt@dolphin-laser.com

Evan Johnston, Age Group coach, evanjohnston@att.net

Eimear Ryan, head coach, LRAC,

Brian Bowen, Cabot coach,

GENERAL POLICIES

- A swimmer will be dismissed from activities for drug or alcohol use, improper language, stealing and/or fighting.
- A coach may dismiss swimmers from activities if they disrupt and/or limit the performance of another swimmer.
- The coach will treat your child with respect and expects the same from Dolphin-Laser swimmers.
- When wearing any item representing the Dolphin-Laser Swim Team, the member should remember that his actions and words reflect on the team and should act accordingly and show respect.
- Any damage to facility or equipment caused by a swimmer or family member must be paid for by the swimmer or his family.

WORKOUT POLICY

Workouts are the coaches' time to teach a swimmer more about the sport of swimming, self-esteem, respect and team work. The following policies are in effect to help achieve these goals.

- The coach should not be interrupted while on deck. If you have any questions, please contact the coach before or after a workout. Please refer to the Communications section of this handbook for the best way to contact coaches.
- All swimmers must be picked up promptly after their activities have been completed.
- The Coach is not responsible for swimmers before or after the scheduled activity.
- Swimmers are not allowed to enter the water prior to workout unless supervised by a parent.
- The coach will decide when the swimmer is ready for the next level based on the swimmer's strength, technique, endurance and mental readiness. For a review of what criteria are used to determine a swimmer's readiness, see the placement criteria section of this handbook.
- If a swimmer needs to leave practice early, she must bring a signed note excusing her from practice.
- If there is a medical reason for your child to be excused from practice, please send a note.
- Locker room privileges for the entire team can be revoked due to the misconduct of any team member. Please refer to and adhere to the facilities policy outlined in this section.

WEATHER POLICIES

DEVELOPMENTAL

- If Little Rock Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, practice is cancelled.
- If it is lightning or thundering outside, bring suit as well as dry-land clothes.

AGE GROUP

WINTER WEATHER POLICIES FOR AGE GROUP TEAM:

- If Little Rock Public Schools are closed during the day due to inclement weather, practice will be cancelled.
- If the weather clears up throughout the day, we will possibly have changed the workout time or will hold workout at regular time. Please check web site for information.
- If it is lightning or thundering outside, bring suit as well as dryland clothes.

SUMMER WEATHER POLICIES FOR AGE GROUP TEAMS:

- If it is lightning or thundering during summer morning practice, it will be cancelled. But all age group levels should attend the age group III afternoon practice.
- If it is lightning or thundering 15 minutes prior to afternoon practice, bring dry-land clothes and a swimsuit. We will have lecture, training videos, team meeting, and or dry-land training. Also bring swim gear, if it clears we will swim.
- If lightening and thunder begin during practice: we will move indoors and continue with dry-land, lectures, or videos.

SENIOR

WINTER WEATHER POLICIES FOR SENIOR TEAM:

- If Little Rock Public Schools are closed during the day due to inclement weather, practice will be cancelled.
- If the weather clears up throughout the day, we will possibly have changed the workout time or will hold workout at regular time. Please check web site for information.
- If it is lightning or thundering outside, bring suit as well as dry- land clothes.

SUMMER WEATHER POLICIES FOR SENIOR TEAMS:

- If it is lightning or thundering during any summer practice, there will be a dry-land practice. Bring dry-land clothes and suit in case it clears up.

HOLIDAY POLICIES

- Workouts will not be held on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.
- There are breaks scheduled at the end of each season. They will be posted on the web site. Swimmers are still responsible for payment during these scheduled breaks.

SWIM MEET POLICIES

- All swimmers are responsible for their own sign up for the meet through the team web site. www.Dolphin-Laser.com
- Parents are not allowed to contact the host team to enter late or make changes. All changes or late entries must be approved and processed by the Dolphin-Laser team manager. There will be a \$10 processing charge for this service.
- All swimmers are responsible for knowing the location and time for their meet session.
- All swimmers are responsible for their own transportation to and from meets.
- Swimmers should arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time. If there is any discrepancy in the events entered, report these to the coach prior to warm-ups. If a swimmer arrives 30 minutes after warm-ups begin, she will not be allowed to participate on the first relay.
- It is the swimmer's responsibility to report to the correct lane prior to each race.
- Always check with the coach before leaving a meet to be sure the swimmer has not been placed in a relay.
- Before leaving the facility, make sure the team area has been cleaned up, collect all your belongings and check all event results for your official times.
- If you feel there is a discrepancy in a result, an officiating call, or conduct of a meet, please contact the coach immediately so he may pursue the matter through the proper channels. Do not confront the officials or meet directors yourself.
- If a swimmer is unable to attend a meet because of an illness or an emergency, the coaching staff must be notified by phone that morning. If you are unable to contact a coach by phone, contact another swimmer participating in the meet so that the message can be relayed to the coach.
- There are no refunds on meets not attended or events scratched.
- Swimmers must consult with the coach prior to scratching an event.
- To promote the unity of the team, swimmers and parents are asked to sit together at meets.

OUT-OF-TOWN MEET POLICIES

Out-of-town meets are an important aspect of a swimmer's career. The travel experience will prepare your child as they advance through the age-group ranks. The trips can be great fun for parents and swimmers alike, building bonds between teammates, parents, siblings and coaches.

- Parents are responsible for swimmer's transportation to and from meets.
- Parents are responsible for hotel reservations. Prior to the meet, a team hotel list will be posted on the website.
- In the event a swimmer attends a meet with another swimmer's parents, a medical release and emergency phone number should be given to the chaperoning parent. The swimmer should contribute for lodging and travel expenses. Suggested travel contributions are: \$5 for less than 50 miles; \$10 for 50-150 miles; \$15 for 150-300 miles; \$20 for 300-500 miles; \$25 for 500 miles or more. These should be agreed upon and paid directly to the chaperone. Each swimmer is responsible for meals and spending money.
- Coaches have many responsibilities to the entire team and cannot accept responsibility for an individual swimmer. Do not ask the coach to provide transportation or lodging.

TEAM TRAVEL POLICIES

It is important for swimmers to participate in meets both with and without their parents in attendance. This adds to the growth experience a child can gain from competitive swimming, teamwork and individual initiative. As a swimmer progresses to the Zone, Junior or Senior Nationals levels, oftentimes they attend these meets without her parents.

- All Dolphin-Laser swimmers must travel with the team and stay in the hotel with the team on all team trips.
- Dolphin-Laser swimmers must remain with the team for the duration of the trip, including meals and team functions.
- If a Dolphin-Laser swimmer would like to return with his parents, he may leave if his meet is over and arrangements are made prior to the start of the trip with a signed permission slip. However, the swimmer is still responsible for full round-trip transporta-

tion costs.

- The full amount of designated transportation costs will be collected in advance and will not be refunded.
- All release forms must be signed prior to the trip.
- All swimmers are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct and to follow all regulations set forth by the coach and chaperones.
- Swimmers who cannot obey the rules set forth by the chaperones and coaches will be scratched from the meet and sent home at the parent's expense.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

If the coach feels the swimmer is conducting herself in any manner that is disruptive, unsafe or in opposition of any of the policies stated in the handbook, the following actions may be taken:

- First offense will result in a verbal warning from the coach.
- Second offense will result in a "time out" for the swimmer.
- Third offense will result in a parent, coach and swimmer conference.
- Drug use, stealing or fighting will result in an immediate conference with the parent, coach and swimmer.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICIES

Upon advancing to the Age Group or Senior levels, each swimmer will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct. The code's purpose is to promote the best possible team and individual impression at all times and to acknowledge each individual's responsibilities as a member of the Dolphin-Laser Swim Team.

FACILITY POLICIES

LRRC/LRAC USE RULES

We are fortunate to be able to have Dolphin- Lasers who are not members of the LRAC or LRRC. We appreciate all members and non-members following the below rules so we may continue with this privilege.

- Swimmers who are non-member may only use the club during designated practice times and team functions. They are only to use the designated area.
- Family members are not allowed to use the facility. A guest pass may be purchased.
- Payment will be automatic draft through bank or credit card. Your statement will be sent from the Little Rock Athletic Club.
- Please do not change in the bathroom stalls. With so few bathroom stalls in the locker room, it is essential that we save them for the purpose intended! The changing rooms in the locker rooms may be used if needed, however, changing rooms are provided at the pools.
- You must take your clothing, bags, books, etc. with you to the pool. The locker rooms must be kept clean. Items left unattended in the locker rooms will be put with lost and found.
- The sauna, steam room and hot tub are all for the use of members who are 14 and older. The rules are posted in each locker room.
- The Club Facilities are for the use of members. Swim team dues allow facility use for practice only during practice hours. If you are interested in purchasing a membership, stop by the Racquet Club membership office.
- Please pick up your children within 15 minutes of practice ending. If you will be late picking up your child, they may wait in the pool area (not the locker room).
- Please do not take home Racquet Club towels. If you use a towel, put it into one of the hampers when you are finished.
- It is recommended that each swimmer keep their practice gear in a mesh bag. These may be purchased at Splashwear Aquatics or online sites.
- The area at the end of the pool can get quite messy if each athlete does not pick up after himself. Please remind your swimmer to put away the Racquet Club's kickboards and pull buoy that they use. Pack up your personal items (fins, goggles, caps, paddles, etc.), recycle your water bottles, and pick up any trash left by their lane.

TEAM LEVELS

The Developmental Level is designed to provide a sound foundation in the proper technique of all four competitive strokes, starts and turns. It is for children age 6-12. Summer League swimmers and swimmers who have completed Intermediate/Advanced swim lessons often find this is a good level to be introduced to USA competitive swimming. Year-round participation is encouraged to continue improvement of the swimmer's skills. Most swimmers at Developmental I & II do not compete. Developmental III is an introduced to competition.

The Age Group Level is for children ages 8-14 and focuses on building a foundation in aerobic conditioning, motor-skills coordination, stroke development and strength. Self-confidence, self-discipline, and total body coordination will develop swimmers and increase their potential for personal achievement. This program offers a positive learning experience and healthy environment for fun and personal growth. Team spirit, friendship and commitment are key benefits on this level. All swimmers compete at this level.

The High School Level program is for swimmers age 14 and up who enjoy the fitness and friendship aspect of swimming and want to compete for their high school team. Swimmers enjoy the fitness and training experience, and compete and train at their own pace. Correct stroke mechanics, personal growth and an important aerobic base are encouraged. Students from all schools are welcome to participate.

The Senior Level Competition of regional and national levels offers swimmers ages 14 and over the highest degree of athletic achievement and individual growth. Qualities of leadership and time management skills are incorporated into a rigorous training program for overall development. Senior swimmers are challenged by their team commitment and personal goals for excellence in and out of the water. Swimmers at this level have 100 percent attendance for meets and practices. Practices are held at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock during the school season and at LRRC and UALR Summer Season.

The Masters Level is for adults age 18 and up who want to be a part of a group training atmosphere. This one-hour practice is divided into four levels: Beginners, Intermediates, Tri-athletes, and Advanced. It is for adults wanting to swim for fitness, triathlon competitions or United States Masters Competitions.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Jump Start is a special 6-8 week program offered in the spring that will prepare swimmers for their Summer League teams.

Stroke Technique Camps are one-week camps that cover all four competitive strokes through video, demonstration, lectures, and swimming drills. The camp also covers pool safety, water games, sports-specific lectures such as nutrition, self talk, and confidence of a champion.

PLACEMENT CRITERIA

- Level of commitment
- Practice attendance
- Training ability
- Stroke and skill development
- Level of maturity and personal responsibility
- Age and previous experience
- Meet performance and best times
- Space availability
- Satisfactorily completes placement criteria

PROGRESSION OF AN ATHLETE

The Dolphin-Laser Swim Team offers a progressive-level program to develop the athlete physically, mentally, and emotionally for long-term success. In order for an athlete to reach peak performance, a well-defined approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential. The emphasis in the early stages will be placed on developing technique skills and a love for the sport. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge will be consistent with the athlete's progression. Much time and effort is spent by the coaching staff to ensure that each athlete is in the training group that is most beneficial for his long-term development as a person and an athlete. Often parents will want what is most convenient for their own schedule, however this may not be what is most beneficial for the athlete's long-term success.

There are many aspects that go into the decision making of which training group will be the most beneficial for the athlete. The criteria, listed below, are used in evaluating each athlete and determine group placement.

PRACTICE GROUP PROMOTIONS

The swimmer under consideration:

- Consistently makes choices that demonstrate willingness to make the commitment level expected of swimmers at the next level.
- Meets attendance expectations for current group; demonstrates the ability to make attendance requirements for the next level.
- Consistently trains above the level of the current practice group.
- Demonstrates ability to train successfully on base intervals at the next practice level.
- Has mastered stroke and skill expectations of current practice group.
- Exhibits level of maturity and responsibility typical of swimmers at the next level.
- Fits age and experience parameters of the next training level.
- Has demonstrated potential to compete successfully at general competition level of the next group.
- Demonstrates an attitude that is conducive and beneficial to the next training group.

PRACTICE GROUP DEMOTIONS

The swimmer under consideration:

- Has demonstrated that he/she is not willing to make the commitment level expected of the practice group.
- Attends practice consistently less often than the group expectation.
- Is not training successfully on base intervals for team level.
- Needs injury rehabilitation at a less strenuous level.

- Has seasonal sport or other activity conflict.

PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING PRACTICE GROUP PROMOTION

- Current coach will evaluate athlete attendance, attitude and training base intervals.
- Current coach will discuss potential change with coach at the next level.
- Current coach will contact swimmer's parent to discuss team change and expectations at the next level.
- Current coach will discuss change with swimmer and outline expectations for next level. Upon the athlete's and parent's approval the swimmer will move into the 30-day trial period.
- There will be a 30-day trial period in which the swimmer will practice at the new higher level. At the conclusion of the 30-day trial period the coach will decide if the athlete is both physically and mentally ready to move up.
- Once the athlete officially advances, the status of the athlete's account will then change to reflect the new fees and the swimmer will be placed on the new level roster. If the athlete is determined not ready to advance, the coach will meet with the athlete to give specific goals so the advancement may be accomplished.

As you can see from looking through these criteria, it is not just about being able to swim fast or demonstrate appropriate technique. It is also about the athlete's ability to handle (physically and mentally) the training, the increased responsibilities that come with promotion to the next group, and the higher commitment level that is required. So, while an age group athlete may be physically able to train at the senior level, if she does not yet possess the maturity and attitude to train at that level, she remains at the age group level to allow time and experience for those necessary skills to develop. It may also allow an athlete being held in a given training group the opportunity to develop his leadership skills. This is sometimes felt to be more important than simply having the physical ability to handle the training load at the next level.

Coaches will assess factors such as attitude, ability to train, level of maturity, skill development mandates, and athlete's desire. It will be the athlete's current coaches' call on training group advancement. Not surprisingly, this ties into a coaching philosophy that places an emphasis on long-term development and on concern for development of the person and then the athlete.

Below is a guideline that we use to evaluate the progression of the athlete. Though it is not guaranteed that once an athlete can accomplish these basics he will move up. As you have read above there are many criteria elements that we utilize in making this decision. However this will give an athlete some of the tangible goals to aim for to progress to the next level. The swimmer needs to strive to accomplish the items under her practice group in order to advance to the next level.

PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR SWIM LESSONS TO DEVELOPMENTAL

- The child must be water safe. She must understand terminology of all four strokes and be able to demonstrate the basic movement of the arms and kick in all four competitive strokes.
- Understands the basic of breathing to the side for freestyle.
- Can swim a 25 yd length in freestyle and backstroke.
- Can swim a half a lap in breaststroke and butterfly.
- Demonstrates neutral position on both stomach and back.
- Can tread water 45 sec.
- Understands rhythmic breathing (rockets).
- Must be age 6 and up.

FOR DEVELOPMENTAL TO AGE GROUP

CHAMPIONSHIP BEHAVIOR AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Demonstrates an understanding of sportsmanship-championship behavior. (i.e. no throwing goggles, congratulating opponents, getting along with others regardless of their ability, etc.)
- Treats teammates, parents, coaches as he would like to be treated.
- Shows respect for the facility, equipment, and team rules.
- Begins to encourage and motivate other teammates.
- Demonstrates the ability to communicate with her coach.
- Knows teammates' and coaches' names in his practice group.
- Takes pride in being part of the team, demonstrated by: participation in team cheers and meetings, relays, and cheering for teammates and understanding relays are chosen for what is best for the team and can accept these decisions.

TRAINING WORK ETHIC

- Is ready to start practice on time and comes prepared with proper equipment.
- Challenges herself and others to perform to the utmost of their ability in practice.
- Understands the basic usage of the pace clock.
- Maintains attendance requirements of at least 70% of practices.
- Picks up after himself both on deck and in locker room.
- Not only listens but does not talk while coach is delivering instructions.
- Demonstrates safe choices upon entering the pool and being with teammates.

- During practice a swimmer is expected to:
 - Leave on time during sets and leave the designated amount of time behind the swimmer in front of him.
 - Start and finish to the wall.
 - Swim the set in the prescribed manner.
 - Swim the entire set (doesn't walk on bottom, counts accurately, doesn't turn around, doesn't stop to play with goggles...)

COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS

- Competes in local and developmental competitions.
- The swimmer talks to the coach before and after races
- Participates in team cheers and meetings.
- Understands the National Age Group Motivational Time Standard Goals.
- Knows best times in three events.

TRAINING PERFORMANCE

Test sets to move to Age Group training group

Can complete the following sets:

10 x 50 freestyle on 1:00 yards or 1:10 meters

8 x 50 kick on 1:15 yards and 1:25 meters

6 x 100 I.M. on 2:10 yards and 2:30 meters

5 x 200 free on 3:45 yards and 4:20 meters

10 x 100 free on 1:50 yards and 2:15 meters

4 x 200 I.M. on 4:10 yards and 4:45 meters

6 x 50 fly or Back on 1:10 yards and 1:15 meters

6 x 50 breast on 1:20 yards and 1:30 meters

Can swim 20 min straight without stopping

Can vertical kick 10 min straight without holding side or rope

SKILLS PERFORMANCE

- Can breathe to both sides without interruption of the stroke in freestyle and trains with a alternate breathing pattern in freestyle.
- Trains with every two breathing pattern in fly.
- Can demonstrate proper turns in all competitive strokes and I.M.
- Can demonstrate a proper racing start.
- Can demonstrate required stroke and skill drills.
- Knows proper ready position for start of sets and streamline push off the walls at the start of each set.
- Knows proper pull and kick patterns for each stroke.
- Knows the names assigned to all phases of the stroke.
- Knows proper air exchange and rhythm of breathing for each stroke.
- Can use sculling motion in deep water in a vertical chair seated position for 2 min.

STRENGTH PERFORMANCE

- Can do push-ups, pull ups, dips, and sit ups.
- In the Age Group level athletes will be introduced to strength training using their body's own weight.

REQUIRED STROKE AND SKILL DRILLS

Freestyle

Streamline kick
One-arm freestyle
Catch-up drill
2 rt. 2 lft. 4 both
Finish
Free turn
Ready position

Backstroke

Light bulb drill
One-arm backstroke
Double-arm backstroke
2 rt. 2 lft. 4 both
Count strokes and finish
Back turn
Streamline

Breaststroke

One pull-two kick
Kick on back
Baby stroke progression
One under two up, etc.
Finish
Breast turn
Pullout

Butterfly

Streamline kick
Dolphin drill
2 rt. 2 lft 2 both
Underwater fly
Finish
Fly turn

AGE GROUP TO SENIOR

CHAMPIONSHIP BEHAVIOR AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Demonstrates an understanding of sportsmanship-championship behavior. (i.e. no throwing goggles, congratulating opponents, get along with others regardless of their ability, etc.)
- Treats teammates, parents, and coaches as she would like to be treated.
- Shows respect for the facility, equipment, and team rules.
- Encourages and motivates other teammates.
- Demonstrates the ability to balance school and outside activities.
- Demonstrates the ability to communicate with his coach.

- Knows teammates' and coaches' names in her practice group.
- Takes pride in being part of the team, demonstrated by: participation in team cheers and meetings, relays, and cheering for teammates and understanding relays are chosen for what is best for the team and can accept these decisions.

TRAINING WORK ETHIC

- Is ready to start practice on time and comes prepared with proper equipment.
- Challenges herself and others to perform to the utmost of their ability in practice.
- Understands the basic usage of the pace clock.
- Maintains attendance requirements of at least 80% of practices.
- Picks up after himself both on deck and in locker room.
- Not only listens but does not talk while coach is delivering instructions.
- Demonstrates safe choices upon entering the pool and being with teammates.
- During practice a swimmer is expected to:
 - Leave on time during sets and leave the designated amount of time behind the swimmer in front of him.
 - Start and finish to the wall.
 - Swim the set in the prescribed manner.
 - Swim the entire set (doesn't walk on bottom, counts accurately, doesn't turn around, doesn't stop to play with goggles...)

COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS

- Attends the recommended swim meets for his level and understands the importance of being on time to warm-ups.
- Talks to the coach before and after races.
- Participates in team cheers and meetings
- Sets goals based on National Age Group Motivational Time Standards.
- Competes in all events offered in her age group.
- Knows best times in his events.

TRAINING PERFORMANCE

Test sets to move to Senior Training group

Can complete the following sets:

24 x 100 free on 1:15 yards 1:25 meters

12 x 50 kick on .55 yards 1:00 meters

8 x 200 I.M. on 2:45 yards 3:10 meters

12 x 50 fly on .45 yards and .55 meters

24 x 100 primary stroke

Fly and Back 1:25 yards 1:35 meters Breast 1:35 yards 1:45 meters

800 free on 10:00 yards 11:00 meters

6 x 50 on 3:00 at sub best time of 100 split

SKILLS PERFORMANCE

- Consistently practices proper turns and breathing patterns off turns.
- Can demonstrate a proper racing start and breathing patterns off start.
- Can demonstrate a proper relay take off.
- Has mastered required stroke and skill drills.
- Knows the names assigned to all phases of the stroke.
- Constantly trains with an efficient streamline off starts and turns.

COGNITIVE

- Begins learning about nutritional requirements of training and competition.
- Begins understanding how to utilize split information into training.
- Begins understanding race strategy for different events.
- Has a beginning understanding of effective goal setting.

STRENGTH PERFORMANCE

- Has strength and flexibility required for training at the Senior Level.
- Can do pushups, pull ups, and abdominal work correctly.
- Introduced to shoulder strengthening exercises.
- In the Senior Level athletes will be introduced to weight machines and other strength-training equipment.

REQUIRED STROKES AND DRILL

All of Developmental required skills plus:

- Sculling in three positions of catch, in sweep and finish through
- Vertical kicking
- Pop over drills
- Acceleration drills
- Speed drills

SENIOR LEVEL

CHAMPIONSHIP BEHAVIOR AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Demonstrates an understanding of sportsmanship-championship behavior.
- Treats teammates, parents, and coaches as she would like to be treated.
- Shows respect for the facility, equipment, and team rules.
- Encourages and motivates other teammates and peers.
- Demonstrates the ability to balance school, social, swimming and family.
- Communicates openly with his coach.
- Understands team rules and code of conduct and understands the consequences of breaking the rules.
- Is not influenced by negative behavior/actions of teammates/peers.
- Will learn coping strategies to deal with parental or peer pressure.

Takes pride in being part of the team, demonstrated by: participation in team cheers and meetings, relays, and cheering for teammates and understanding relays are chosen for what is best for the team and can accept these decisions.

- Accepts the responsibility of her performance.
- Can effectively communicate his commitment to his parents, coaches, teammates, and peers.
- Knows the team goals and will take an active part in developing specific and attainable practice group goals.
- Understands the relationship between her personal commitment level and results.

TRAINING WORK ETHIC

- Is ready to start practice on time and comes prepared with proper equipment.
- Understands and takes responsibility for attendance, performance, habits in practice, and how these relate to meet performance and the performance of the team as a whole.
- Challenges herself and others to perform to the utmost of their ability in practice
- Understands and calculates times using pace clock, and also understands intervals.
- Maintains attendance requirements of at least 80% of practices.
- Picks up after herself both on deck and in locker room.
- Not only listens but does not talk while coach is delivering instructions.
- Demonstrates safe choices upon entering the pool and being with teammates.
- Understands heart rate as it relates to intensity of training.
- During practice a swimmer is expected to:
 - Leave on time during sets and leave the designated amount of time behind the swimmer in front of him.
 - Start and finish to the wall.
 - Swim the set in the prescribed manner.
 - Swim the entire set (doesn't walk on bottom, counts accurately, doesn't turn around, doesn't stop to play with goggles...)

COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS

- Attends the recommended swim meets for the Senior Level and understands the importance of being on time to warm-ups.
- Understands the importance of communicating with the coach about his races.
- Participates and offers leadership in team cheers and meetings.
- Sets goals based on National Age Group Motivational Time Standards.
- Knows best times for each event and splits. May use this knowledge in training sets.
- Can recite goal times and splits.
- Periodically tries the longer events in communication with her coach.
- Should have competed at least once in events available for his age bracket.
- Understands and performs personal race strategy.

TRAINING PERFORMANCE

Senior swimmers should be able to do these sets:

24 x 100 free on 1:15 yards, 1:25 meters

12 x 50 kick on .55 yards, 1:00 meters

8 x 200 I.M. on 2:45 yards, 3:10 meters

4 x 400 I.M. on 5:30yds, 6:45 meters

12 x 50 fly on .45 yards, .55 meters

4 x 100 fly on 1:45 yards, 1:55 meters

24 x 100 primary stroke

Fly and Back 1:25 yards, 1:35 meters Breast 1:35 yards, 1:45 meters

800 free on 10:00 yards, 11:00 meters

6 x 50 on 3:00 at sub best time of 100 split

12 x 100 on 2:30 holding current best 200 (second 100).

SKILLS PERFORMANCE

- Consistently practices proper turns and breathing patterns off turns.
- Continues to strive for a proper racing start and breathing patterns off start.
- Can demonstrate a proper relay take off.
- Has mastered required stroke and skill drills.

COGNITIVE

- Has general knowledge of energy systems and how they are used in training.
- Understands nutritional requirements of training and competition.
- Understands the importance of distance per stroke and strives for goal DPS through race and practice.
- Understands that training seasons are designed for peak performance at the highest level of competition at the end of the season. Understands improvement will not happen at every competition as a result.
- Understands and utilizes effective goal setting principals.

STRENGTH PERFORMANCE

- Has strength and flexibility required for training at the Senior Level. Understands the importance of flexibility and stretches outside of training.
- Understands the importance of shoulder strength, and performs shoulder injury prevention exercises on own.
- Can do pushups, pull-ups, and abdominal work correctly.
- In the Senior Level athletes will be introduced to weight machines and other strength-training equipment.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUR SWIMMER

Please make every effort to have your swimmer at practice on time and ready to swim 5 minutes before practice. Realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. As a parent, your major role is to provide a stable, loving, and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, coming to swim meets, volunteering for your club's program and at meets, participating in fundraising, etc. Parents contribute to the success experienced by the child and the team. Parents serve as role models and their children emulate their attitude. Be aware of this and strive to be a positive role model.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND SUPPORTIVE

Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals and make their own progress toward them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not overburden your child with winning or achieving best times. Let them know that first they are the child you love, and second, a swimmer. Tell them you will love them whether they swim well or not and ask only that they give their best effort. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. Let the Coach judge the swimmer's performance and technique. Let the Coach talk to your child about what they could have done better. Your role is to provide love and support regardless of the outcome. The coach's role will provide the critique and information for improvement.

WATCHING PRACTICE

The Dolphin-Lasers have an open door policy for all practices and encourage parents to observe practices periodically. Through the years we have noted several parents become workout partners, carpoolers, and best friends just from the time they share during practice. Some will-organize socials, file ribbons, and have helped with administrative needs during the practice sessions.

When you do watch a practice we ask a few things from you:

- Sit on the side of the pool and not close to the start end.
- Do not coach your child during practice; this distracts and contradicts the coach's job.
- Do not coach your child when they come home; this is a sure way to create pressure and confusion.
- Do not talk to the coach during practice.

At swim practice coaches want the children's attention focused on the coach and the tasks at hand. Occasionally children miss an instruction, or have a goggle problem, or are involved in some other distraction, or are simply playing and having fun – which are all normal behaviors for young children. Coaches view these little difficulties as opportunities for the children to develop good listening skills, ability to reason, and self discipline. Sometimes coaches allow failure on purpose — a missed instruction leaving the child confused often results in the child learning to pay better attention the next time. Coaches endeavor to provide an environment for the children to develop these skills. A well-intentioned and over-enthusiastic mom or dad sometimes has difficulty allowing their child to miss something and wants to interfere. It's understandable. We know it is common in many other youth sports for parents to stand at the sidelines and shout instructions or encouragements and sometimes admonishments to their children. However, at swim practice coaches ask parents not to signal them to swim faster, or to tell them to try a certain technique, or to offer to fix a goggle problem, or to move away from some other “menacing” swimmer, or even to remind them to listen to the coach. In fact, just as you would never interrupt a school classroom to talk your child, you should not interrupt a swim practice by attempting to communicate directly with your child.

What's wrong with encouraging your child during practice? There are two issues. First we want your child to focus on the coach and to learn the skill for their personal satisfaction rather than learning it to please their parents. Secondly, parental encouragement often gets translated into a command to swim faster and swimming faster may be the exact opposite of what the coach is trying to accomplish. In most stroke skill development practices we first slow the swimmers down so that they can think through the stroke motions. Save encouragements and praise for after the practice session! This is the time when you have your child's full attention to tell them how proud you are of them.

What's wrong with shouting or signaling instructions to your children? Those instructions might be different from the coach's instructions and then you end up with a confused child. Sometimes you might think the child did not hear the coach's instruction and you want to help. Most of us do not want to see our own kids make a mistake. The fact is that children miss instructions all the time. Part of the learning process is learning how to listen to instructions. When children learn to rely on a backup they will have more difficulty learning how to listen better the first time. As parents, many of us want our children protected from discomfort and adversity and we will attempt to create or place them in an environment free from distress. So, what's wrong with helping your child fix their goggles during practice time? Quite simply, we want to encourage the children to become self-reliant and learn to take care of and be responsible for themselves and their own equipment. Swimming practice is a terrific place to learn these life skills. Yes, even beginning at age 6 or 7. If you need to speak to your child regarding a family issue or a transportation issue or to take your child from practice early you are certainly welcome to do so but please approach the coach directly with your request and we will immediately get your child out of the water.

RESPONSIBILITY AT DOLPHIN-LASER HOSTED MEETS

The Dolphin-Laser Booster Association funds most of our Booster Association expenses through hosting swim meets. The Booster Association pays for all expenses except for payroll. The expenses include the following: pool rental, coaches' travel and meet expenses, training equipment, awards banquet, administrative expenses, awards for meets, running the summer league program, Team Unify website fees, awards/motivation expenses, social expenses, and coaches' education, to name a few. The team hosts six meets during the short-course season and 2 to 3 meets in the summer. The profit made from these swim meets covers the expenses of the booster board. It can take from 60 parent volunteer positions for a one-day meet and up to 150 volunteer positions for a three-day meet. That averages about 30 volunteers for each session.

Organizing enough volunteers for the meet can be demanding and is crucial to the success of the meet. Your participation is critical to the success of the meet and is required of every family with a swimmer participating in USA Swimming sanctioned meets. Most positions require very little training and if a volunteer is unsure about a position please contact the meet director for any questions. Please familiarize yourself with the volunteer policy outlined in the Policies section of this handbook.

HOW TO BE A SUPPORTIVE PARENT

BEST KIND OF PARENT:

The coach's job is to motivate and critique 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 the confidence to perform well in competition.

TEN AND UNDER:

Ten and unders 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. Swimmers will go through changes as their bodies grow or they concentrate on technique, causing their times to slow down. However, this will result in much faster swimming for the individual. It is important that we reward the swimmer as long as they are putting forth the effort regardless of the outcome. We want the swimmer to enjoy the sport so they may continue swimming as part of a healthy lifestyle.

NOT EVERY TIME

Even the best swimmers will have meets where they do not do their best. These "plateaus" are a normal part of swimming. You cannot expect the swimmer to improve every time. The training season is designed to have your swimmer performing his best at a peak meet. The older swimmers may have only two or three meets each year in which they are rested and tapered. Your role as a parent is to be supportive of your child and to recognize the effort they are putting forward.

LOVE, SHELTER, FEED AND GET TO PRACTICE ON TIME

Swimmers train hard and it is important their bodies are receiving the proper food so that it may keep up with the demands of training. If the swimmer is not eating well-balanced meals, the performance in workout will be weak and therefore result in ineffective training.

It is also important that your swimmer gets to practice on time and stays for the whole practice. The practice time is developed to allow time for proper stretching, warm-up and cool-down. These are important for the swimmer to help prevent injury and to prepare the body for the best training time. If your child is late, she will miss this warm-up phase, as well as any announcements or team-building exercises.

We strongly recommend that swimmers try to attend as many practices as possible. It is like any sport: the more you practice the better you'll be! So, the more often a swimmer attends practice, the faster they usually progress. Our coaches assume that swimmers are going to miss practice here and there for many different reasons. One of the best things about swimming is that the swimmers get what they put into it. As a sport, swimming promotes the development of self-discipline and inner-strength. Even the swimmer who may come every day, but does not swim his best practices will see it in the end. Our program uses attendance for a few things: practice and stroke building, meets, relays, and coaching decisions. Practices that are on the calendar are the recommended practices and commitment for that particular group. We use attendance for decisions like: is this swimmer ready and/or prepared for his/her meet. We want to see the swimmers at the majority of practices to allow them to develop into the best they can be.

ALLOW THE COACH THE OPPORTUNITY TO COACH

The relationship between swimmer and coach is very important. When parents interfere with the coach's opinion as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and often insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. remember, the coach is a trained professional in the sport and holds the knowledge necessary to allow your child to become the best athlete possible. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact the coach away from practice time so you may discuss your concerns.

PROBLEM 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. Not only is it difficult to resolve conflict in this manner, but in fact this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for a parent when raising some difficult issues with a coach:

- Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interest of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
- Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interest of the group.
- If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss any matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines noted above. If the coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask the head coach to join the dialogue as a third party.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen sympathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly with the coach. He is the only one who can resolve the problem.

DOLPHIN-LASER BOOSTER ASSOCIATION

The Dolphin-Laser Booster Board is a non-profit organization composed of parent volunteers and coaches created to support the needs of the Dolphin-Laser Swim Team. The board raises money to pay for all expenses except for payroll. The expenses include the following: pool rental, coaches' travel and meet expenses, training equipment, awards banquet, administrative expenses, awards for meets, running the summer league program, Team Unify website fees, awards/motivation expenses, social expenses, and coaches' education, to name a few. Most of the funds raised to support the team are through team-hosted swim meets. Team sponsorship opportunities are also available. Please visit the team website or ask a coach for a sponsorship packet.