

# TEAM HANDBOOK

## FRANKLIN AREA SWIM TEAM



<http://www.swimmingfast.net>

# **TEAM HANDBOOK FRANKLIN AREA SWIM TEAM (FAST)**

This Handbook is to be used as a reference for understanding the structure of FAST membership.

The Allegheny Mountain Swimming (AMS) handbook is the official reference for our local swim committee in Region II. The United States Swimming (USS) handbook is the ultimate reference for USS competitive swimming.

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Franklin Area Swim Team provides training and development for team swimmers in the four competitive strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

The FAST coaching staff believes there is a direct correlation between a swimmer's dedication and success in the sport. The Coaching staff tries to instill this maxim with each swimmer: hard work and attendance lead to swimming success.

The Swim Team Board and coaching staff feel that swimming on a USS team should be an enjoyable experience. Swimmers make new friends, bolster their confidence, develop a spirit of camaraderie with teammates, and are introduced to values such as organization and self-discipline.

### **How is USS swimming different from summer recreation swimming?**

There is a difference in the frequency and structure of meets. Instead of swimming two meets per week (as in rec swimming), the USS team will swim one meet every several weeks. The number of events offered at a USS meet is also greater. Rec meets offer 25's and 50's of each stroke, 100IM, and relays. Other than at special meets directed specifically at swimmers 8 years old and younger, events at USS meets range higher in yardage: 50-100-200 in each of the four strokes, 500 and 1650 in freestyle, 100-200-400 IM, and 100-200-400 in both the free and medley relays.

For younger swimmers, USS training is very similar to summer rec training, concentrating on stroke improvement. As the swimmer becomes older, the USS workload will continually increase and become significantly higher than found on summer rec teams. It is for this reason that USS swimmers in older age groups are so much faster than summer rec swimmers, while in the younger age groups there may not be much difference.

USS swimmers become more conscious of their times in each event. Competition at a USS meet is against swimmers with similar times. By improving over time, the goal is to become competitive with oneself. Swimmers learn to achieve their goals, cope with adversity, and accentuate the positives; and they swim faster and achieve a higher level of competition as they get older.

### **How long are USS meets and do we have to attend?**

In general, USS meets run two days with some events on Saturday and others on Sunday. This division is because of the large number of events offered. Meets are usually divided into morning and afternoon sessions by age group to keep the duration of each session under four hours.

While attendance at a meet is not mandatory, this is the swimmers reward for all the practice and hard work they have put into swimming. By competing, the swimmer is able to reach his or her goals.

As the swimmers get older, the importance of the meets increases. A swimmer may be expected to attend certain team meets or may be expected to attend as a member of a relay team. Note: a swimmer who does not show for an assigned relay will have three very disappointed teammates and will be charged for the cost of the full relay event.

# FAST Training Groups

## Overview:

In order to ensure that every FAST swimmer is taught the proper technique, learns the fundamentals of the sport, and trains to his/her highest level, FAST is divided into an organized set of groupings. These groups ensure the FAST effectively uses its pool time and each swimmer receives the best possible workout.

The guidelines of the groups are based on age, ability level, and practice attendance. Each group has specific goals and expectations of practice attendance. The best way to progress through the program and to maximize swimming improvements is by committing to achieving the group goals and by realizing practice expectations. Not living up to attendance expectations could limit ability to execute drills and sets, increase chance of injury, and limit improvements over the course of the season.

There are four levels of a FAST swimmer: Developmental 1, Developmental 2, Age Group, and High School Group. All of the goals and criteria of the training groups are set up by the coaching staff. A swimmer's placement into a group is based solely on the recommendation of the coaching staff. If your swimmer is interested in swimming in another group for whatever reason it must be discussed with the coaching staff, no exceptions.

## Developmental Group Overview:

The FAST Developmental Groups consist of swimmers ages 10 and under who are learning the fundamentals of the sport. The focus of this group is to learn proper and legal technique and skills in all four strokes, learn starts and turns, and have fun in the water. The Developmental Group is divided into two groups to accommodate the large number of 10 and under swimmers. The Developmental I and Developmental II Groups are primarily for newer swimmers to learn and understand all four competitive strokes.

***Group Philosophy: "Swim for fun, and learn to do your best"***

## Developmental 1:

The FAST Developmental 1 Group consists of swimmers ages 8 and under who are learning the fundamentals of the sport. This group will practice 3 times a week for 45 minutes per session. The focus of this group is to learn proper and legal technique and skills in all four strokes, learn starts and turns, and have fun in the water. The group will be introduced to basic stretching and simple abdominal exercises during a 10-minute dry land session 1 day a week. It is recommended that a swimmer in this group compete in 3 to 5 meets during the short course season.

## **Developmental 2:**

The FAST Developmental 2 Group consists of swimmers ages 9 and 10 who are learning the fundamentals of the sport. This group will practice 3 times a week for 1 hour per session. The focus of this group is to learn proper **and legal** technique and skills in all four strokes, learn starts and turns, and have fun in the water. The Developmental 2 Group will also learn to swim IM's and to swim continuously with proper breathing. The group will be introduced to basic stretching and simple abdominal exercises during a 10-minute dry land session 1 day a week. It is recommended that a swimmer in this group compete in 3 to 5 meets during the short course season.

## **Age Group Overview:**

The FAST Age Group swimmers consists of swimmers ages 11 to 14 and is intended to provide technique in all four strokes, provide a training base for competitive swimming, and serve as stepping stone to the High School group. This group will practice 5 times a week for 1 ½ to 2 hours per session. The group will have 20-30 minutes of dry land training 5 days per week. It is recommended that a swimmer in this group compete in 4 to 6 meets during the short course season.

***Group Philosophy “Give your best, build an aerobic foundation with sound technique, and learn how to train.”***

## **High School Group Overview:**

The FAST High School Group is made up of swimmers 14 and older who have multiple years of experience in the sport and want to get in shape for the high school swim season. This group will practice 5 days a week for 2 to 2 ¼ hours. This group will have 30 minutes of dry land training each session. It will include stretches, core training, running, and upper body work.

***Group Philosophy: “Train smart, train hard.”***

## **Meet Participation:**

FAST swimmers are encouraged to participate in a variety of events during the scheduled meet season. By swimming multiple events and by charting progress in those events, a swimmer is challenged to be a complete swimmer. Swimmers are encouraged to discuss meet participation and which events they should swim with the coaches. The coaches will be happy to aid the swimmer in choosing appropriate events.

## **Practice Schedule:**

The FAST coaching staff and board does its best to maximize our allocated pool time. We have a very large team and we share the pool with a variety of other activities throughout the year. We have to be creative with our schedule so practice times will change on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. However, we will do our best to keep the schedule as consistent as possible. The schedule will be made available ahead of time and is posted on the FAST website so you will have the opportunity to plan a practice schedule that works for you. There is always the chance we will have last minute change to the schedule due to cancellations out of our control. Any changes to the schedule will be sent via email.

## **Meet Participation:**

FAST is a member of AMS swimming and participates in a variety of meets. Meets have different formats and some have time and/or age requirements. Here is a description of the meets (remember it is beneficial for a swimmer to have multiple personal times in different events on file so they have the option to swim a variety of events at meets.

**Age Group Open (AGO)** – The most basic meet that provides all swimmers with the option to swim any event in his/her age group. There are no qualifying times for Age Group Opens.

**Mini Meet** – These meets are for swimmers ages 8 and under. These meets provide younger swimmers with the opportunity to compete in all types of events, both individuals and FAST relays.

**B Meet (qualifying times, no faster than meet)** – These are developmental meets great for newer swimmers who are learning to race and swim competitively. Swimmers' must not exceed national standard B times.

**BB Meet (qualifying time, no faster than meet)** – These are qualifying meets for swimmers achieving national BB time standards.

**A Meet (qualifying meet)** – These meets are for experienced swimmers who have national A qualifying time or higher.

**Zones** - This is an Age-Group all star meet for our LSC, Alleghany Mountain Swimming. Qualifying times for this meet usually requires one to be in the top one or two in the AMS in your age group.

**Sectionals** – A swimmer must achieve a Sectional time qualification.

**Junior Nationals** – A swimmer must achieve a Junior National time qualification.

**Senior Nationals** – A swimmer must achieve a Senior National time qualification.

This is an overview of the format of AMS meets. FAST also competes in a few non sanctioned AMS meets usually intended for the entire team. Please, feel free to approach the coaching staff if you have any questions about the meets or which one is right for you.

## FRAMEWORK of COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

**USS Membership** All swimmers that compete in a USS swim meet must join United States Swimming. USS membership is renewed every year and the cost is included in your FAST dues. Membership provides swimmers with accident insurance for all sanctioned swim meets and supervised practices of member clubs. Additionally, registered USS members become eligible for USS and Allegheny Mountain Swimming travel fund money when competing at Junior National or National Championships.

Each swimmer will receive a membership card. The registration number is recorded on the Times Entry Sheet for each meet entered by our Club. ***The card should be taken to all meets since a registration check on all swimmers may be called for.***

**Worldwide** FINA, International Federation for Aquatics.

**National** United States Swimming (USS).

**Regional** Region II is one of thirteen regions which divide the U. S. Swimming into more easily administered areas for all amateur athletics. Allegheny Mountain Swimming and five other district associations comprise Region II: Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, District of Columbia, Virginia, and West Virginia.

**LSC** Allegheny Mountain Swimming is the name of our local swim committee in Region II. It is comprised of all the Pennsylvania counties west of Potter, Clinton, Center, Huntington, and Bedford counties: Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, and Marshall counties in West Virginia; Jefferson, Belmont, and Columbiana counties in Ohio.

Allegheny Mountain Swim Committee oversees the aquatics program in our district. AMS:

1. Grants USS sanctions. (AMS must approve the design and structure of individual meets throughout an entire season. Without this sanction, the meet cannot be considered official.)
2. Interprets and implements USS rules: hears protests.
3. Establishes and coordinates the swimming calendar.
4. Establishes the developmental swimming program and sets the applicable time standards.
5. Is responsible for the training of meet officials.
6. Provides a forum for coaches.
7. Sponsors and conducts special meets. (such as the all star meet)
8. Maintains the district's swimming records.
9. Is responsible for overall quality of the district's aquatics program.

# FRANKLIN AREA SWIM TEAM ORGANIZATION

The Franklin Area Swim Team is a non-profit corporation operated by its members on a voluntary basis in accordance with its bylaws. Primary responsibility for club operations is vested in the Board, club officers, and the coaching staff.

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FAST membership is automatic for parents when a child is accepted as a member of the swim team and has paid all dues. The help and cooperation of all parents is expected and essential as all swimmers share in the benefits and services of the Club.

**Income** is obtained from member dues, fees for the Introduction to Competitive Swimming program (ICS), and the operation of swim meets. Dues are low compared to those of similar clubs in the area and can be maintained if members support the meets held by the team.

Fundraisers have not been a regular occurrence with FAST. Fundraisers, when held, are for the purpose of holding dues amounts down or for specific equipment or team trips. When held, it is hoped that all families participate.

**Expenses** incurred by the team include salaries for coaching staff, payroll taxes, insurances, end of the season banquet, and various administrative and miscellaneous costs.

**The FAST Board** consists of six to ten members and the Head Coach. New board members are elected during the General Membership Meeting in the spring. The Board, in turn, elects the officers of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Board performs or oversees a designee (FAST Administrator) for the following functions:

- Selects coaching staff
- Arranges for the use of the school facilities
- Establishes the budget for the year and sets membership dues consistent with budget
- Establishes length of practice season and the length of practice in conjunction with the Head Coach
- Establishes, with Head Coach's agreement, qualification for membership
- Registers swimmers with U.S. Swimming
- Supports the Allegheny Mountain Swimming (AMS) committee and its programs
- Manages team entries and individual entry fee accounts
- Conducts FAST sponsored meets
- Administers swimmer recognition, i.e., Spring Banquet
- Purchases and maintains equipment related to competitive swimming
- Maintains team communication, weekly-updated telephone hotline, FAST bulletin board, and frequent e-mails
- Plans and manages the yearly Introduction to Competitive Swimming (ICS) program to obtain new qualified members
- Arranges for annual team trip, if possible

**The Coaching Staff** is responsible for training and development of team swimmers. Activities cover full range of training and competition. In particular the coaching staff:

- Conducts practices, arranging appropriate workout schedules to teach all racing strokes and techniques and to develop stamina
- Establishes, with approval of board, team practice times
- Attends swim meets
- Represents swimmers at meets, particularly when difficulties arise
- Provides critiques of performances and encourages swimmers
- Establishes and enforces rules for swimmer conduct at practices
- Maintains general discipline (includes suspension and dismissals with board concurrence)
- Contributes to overall improvement of the team by consulting and cooperating with the swim team board, other coaches, and AMS swim committee

## PARENTAL SUPPORT

Volunteers are needed to run meets and provide other team functions throughout the season. By helping the team, parents help swimmers achieve their goals. In addition to specific volunteer opportunities, parents' support is required in the following areas:

- Signing up their swimmers to enter in meets
- Providing/arranging transportation to practice and meets
- Helping their swimmers maintain and track their individual times
- Providing encouragement to their swimmers

All families are encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions with the Board. Every family is expected to volunteer and is asked to sign an agreement to do so at the time they join the team. FAST requires that at least one member of each family volunteer for the FAST Home Meet. Included in the FAST Registration Packet is a Volunteer Incentive Fee letter that describes FAST's position. If a family does not volunteer, the fee of \$100 will be assessed.

***It is FAST's position that swim dues are paid in a timely manner as requested in the registration packet. Failure to do so will be subject to either suspension from practices and meets until the dues are paid in full or permanent removal from the team.***

### During the Season - Committees

Many volunteer jobs require support throughout the season. Some involve sporadic activity over an extended period of time; some require more intense effort over a short period of time.

Team Trip Coordinator:	One or two people are needed to work with the Head Coach and Board to select an appropriate meet for the team trip, select a hotel, and make reservations as needed.
Banquet Committee:	This job organizes the team's end-of-season banquet.
Social Committee:	This group plans and implements fun nights, pizza parties, etc., throughout the season.
FAST Merchandise:	One or two people coordinate selection of team merchandise, take orders, purchase, and deliver articles at the beginning of the season.
Home Meet	Work with meet director. Volunteer coordinator is needed and a concession committee to run the kitchen for the home meet.
Pool & Facility	Monitor the lobby, locker rooms, and pool bleacher area.
Bulletin Board:	One or two people keep the FAST bulletin board neat and orderly.
Webmaster:	One or two people create and maintain the FAST web site.
Corporate Sponsors:	One or two people solicit local businesses for significant sponsorship and provide thank you at end of season.
Photography:	One or two people coordinate team pictures and collect candid photos throughout the season.

## Meet Volunteers

Families are expected to work at least half of the sessions hosted by FAST during the season. Typical 2-day, 4-session meet requires a minimum of 232 jobs to be filled. Most positions require no special skills or qualifications and are easily picked up by an adult, or in some cases by a swimmer or sibling. The following is a representative list of jobs needed for home meets:

Meet Director:	This is almost always a board member.
Volunteer Coordinator:	This is the job for anyone with a phone and some time to solicit volunteers for open jobs.
Timers:	A total of 12 timers plus one head timer are needed per session (18 timers plus one header timer if a mini-meet).
Kitchen:	Staffing includes one or two coordinators per session and at least 6 people for prep/server/cashier jobs per session.
Marshals:	Four are needed per session to monitor the pool during warm-ups and between sessions.
Scorer:	Requires training on timing/scoring equipment – two people per session run scoring system, print times by lane and announces winning results in the pool area.
Heat and Tee:	Two volunteers are needed at the start of each session (one or two later in each session) to sell heat sheets and procure and sell meet merchandise such as tee shirts.
Awards:	This job involves sorting and distributing ribbons to swimmers and requires two to three people per session.
Deck Runners:	One coordinator and four runners are needed per session to move data and results from one point to another on the pool deck and other locations in the building. Kids like to volunteer for this.
Data Entry:	Three skilled adults handle the results computer system and resolve any discrepancies.
Place and Finish Judges:	Two to three adults are needed per session to provide visual confirmation of the order of finish for each heat.
Safety Director:	One person per session remains on deck to monitor, defer or address any injuries.
AMS Officials:	This job requires training and monitors adherence to rules during home and away meets. FAST is required to have a minimum of four officials per season.
Set-up:	About 8-10 people set up chairs and tables, install equipment, post signs, etc. the night before the meet.
Tear-down and Cleanup:	About 8-10 people remove signs, clear chairs, and dismantle equipment immediately after the meet.
Heat Sheet Organizers:	One or two people are needed to set-up advertising and text for heat sheets.
Meet Advertisement:	Solicit ads for heat sheets prior to the meet-usually board member

## **SWIM MEETS GENERAL INFORMATION**

USS COMPETITIVE SWIMMING RULES 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. Swimmers are encouraged to attend the meets that the coaches have scheduled for the team. This is typically one to two meets per month.

### **TYPES OF MEET COMPETITION**

- Closed: Entries are limited to members of one organization or one USS district (in our case the AMS).
- Open: For all USS registered swimmers.
- Invitational: For those swimmers or those clubs invited by the sponsoring organization.
- Junior Olympic: For swimmers seventeen years of age and under (maximum time no minimum).
- Developmental: For district (in our case AMS) age group swimmers whose times meet certain specified time standards (both minimum and maximum).
- Mini: For swimmers eight years old and under.

### **AGE DIVISIONS**

- Age Group: Swimmers compete in categories according to their age on the first day of the meet. The categories or age groups as established by the USS are as follows: 9 and 10, 11 and 12, 13 and 14, and 15 through 18. The 8 and under and 9 and 10 are combined as 10 and under in some meets. At Mini Meets swimmers compete as 6 and under, 7, or 8 year olds.
- Open or Senior: All swimmers 6 years old and over in A and BB meets. There are no Senior events for B meets.

### **SHORT COURSE vs. LONG COURSE** (Refer to length of pools)

- Short: Any 25 yard pool or course; abbreviated: (sc) for short course.
- Long: Any 50 meter pool or course; abbreviated: (lc) for long course.

## **SWIM MEETS SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **AMS DEVELOPMENTAL MEETS (Closed)**

These meets are limited to AMS district teams and are confined to age group competition. There are specific events with qualifying times for ages 9 - 18 with qualifying times slower than national "A" time standard. The purpose of this program is to further enhance the goals of the USS and to provide the best possible conditions to encourage all swimmers to improve skills.

"B" Developmental Meets	Qualifying times must be slower than national "B" time standards
"BB" Developmental Meets	Qualifying times must be slower than national "A" time but faster than national "B" time standards

Usually two or three separate clubs host these meets at their pool. The FAST coaching staff and Board determine which location the team will attend. A swimmer's strength generally varies in the different strokes, and therefore, it is not uncommon for a swimmer to compete, for example in "BB" meets in the freestyle and in a "B" developmental meet in the butterfly. A swimmer in the program competes at his or her own level. Each swimmer faces progressively stronger competition with personal improvement. Awards at these meets are ribbons and achievement awards.

### **SPECIALTY MEETS (Closed)**

These meets are developed for specific areas of interest and needs. Examples are relay meets, distance meets, and odd age meets.

### **MAJOR MEETS - AGE GROUP OPEN (Invitational)**

For most months of the short course season, a club will host an Age Group Open Meet. There are no qualifying times required for these meets and swimmers are seeded in heats with other swimmers of comparable strength.

### **MAJOR MEETS – CHAMPIONSHIPS (Closed and Open)**

Championship meets are held for each type of swimmer ("B" Meet Championships, "BB" Meet Championships, Mini-Meet Championships, and Age Group Open Championships). The Age Group Open Championships and some of the other large meets such as the annual Christmas Meet require swimmers to obtain a national "A" time to qualify.

Meets such as the Christmas Meet attract outstanding USS registered swimmers from all over the eastern half of the United States. Awards for these meets are team trophies, high point trophies, and medals. Zone team selections are made from these meets.

## HOW TO ENTER A SWIM MEET

A list of all eligible FAST swimmers for a given meet is posted on the bulletin board outside the pool showing all the events they are eligible to swim. Eligibility is determined by the swimmer's individual times compared to the qualifying times established for the specific meet. (Swimmer's individual times must be achieved at a meet or recorded by a coach in a time trial.)

If a parent wishes to have a child swim that meet, they circle the swimmer's name and the desired events. Usually swimmers are limited to swim four (4) individual events per day plus relays. The last date for sign-up is noted on the sign-up sheet. Relays will be entered by the coaching staff on the day of the meet.

After the FAST Administrator enters the swimmers into the meet, a confirmation listing will be posted on the bulletin board. It is a good idea to check this listing to confirm the swimmer's entry information.

Meet information is usually provided to FAST by the sponsoring club approximately four weeks before the meet entry deadline. Entries are required to be in the hands of the meet host no later than two weeks prior to the meet. Factoring in time to process a list of the eligible swimmers and processing the sign-ups, a swimmer normally has about one week to sign up for a meet. Late mailings from the hosts can cause a tight time schedule for the whole procedure, but the FAST Administrator will try to give swimmers as much time as can be allowed to indicate their intention to swim.

Keep a meet schedule posted near your calendar with the entry distribution dates approximated, and be on the lookout for them on the bulletin board. It is recommended that parents check each time a swimmer is brought to practice to avoid missing a meet sign-up.

It is a good idea to copy all pertinent information from the invitation (which is posted) for reference before the meet. Most importantly, list your child's event numbers and type of event on a slip of paper to have with you. Be sure you are aware of directions to the meet location. Meet invitations can be found on the AMS website [www.amswim.org](http://www.amswim.org).

Based on sign-ups, the cost of entry fees for individual events and a swimmer's share of any relay events are charged to the family meet entry account. The individual event entry fee is charged to the swimmer even if the swimmer does not actually attend the meet. The coaches decide if relay teams are to be entered in the meet. If so, the swimmers split the relay entry fee four ways, and each share is charged to the individual's entry fee account. A swimmer who leaves early and causes a relay to be scratched will be charged for the full relay.

Families with active swimmers should maintain a positive balance in their meet entry accounts. Parents will be informed periodically of the status of each family's account by posting on the bulletin board. Accounts must be kept current for each swimmer's entries to be accepted.

# SWIM MEETS MEET PROCEDURE

## OVERVIEW

Heat sheets are normally sold at the door. FAST swimmer meet results are posted on the bulletin board after received from the hosting club. Results are also available on the AMS web site.

The swimmer's arrival should allow time to:

1. Obtain a rest area space.
2. Check in, if required.
3. Report in to the coach.
4. Take warm-ups; to loosen up and to become accustomed to the pool edges, the starting blocks, and to the water temperature.
5. Check the heat sheet (bought, borrowed, or displayed on some wall) for the order of events.
6. Locate the Clerk of Course and the seeding area.

The swimmer should then:

1. Listen to the PA system or watch the call boards for events to be called; each event is usually announced three times. Failure to hear a call for an event does not dismiss a swimmer from responsibility of being on time for the start of a heat. At a preseeded meet there is no seeding area and swimmers report directly to the pool deck for seeding. Swimmers and parents should pay close attention to the heat sheet information and time flow of the meet events. For some meets, seeding is done in a special seeding area and entry cards are provided to swimmers to take to their lanes.
2. When the swimmer's event is announced or posted, the swimmer reports on deck to the assigned lane or to the Clerk of Course in the seeding area. The heat sheet or an entry card in the seeding area (if used) designates the event number, heat, and lane assignment for the swimmer. The meet invitation indicates the type of seeding in place for the meet.

After the race, the swimmer should:

1. Get his/her time from the head lane timer or the time board.
2. Give his/her time to the coach.
3. Record the time for his/her Times Record Sheet.
4. Check the posted results, and pick up any awards.

Before leaving, the swimmer should:

1. Check with the Coach to see if participation is needed in a relay.
2. Clean up the rest area and be sure to collect all personal belongings.

## MEET HELPFUL HINTS

- The "weather conditions" at an indoor swimming meet vary from warm (spectator section) to cool (rest area or seeding area). It is suggested that parents and swimmers dress for maximum flexibility. In all cases, sneakers are a must for any kind of deck duty. When not actually in the water, swimmers should have something on over their suits -- a T-shirt, sweatshirt, or a warm-up suit -- to ward off getting chilled.
- Identify or mark ALL your swimmer's belongings. Sew a nametag into the warm-up suit and/or mark with indelible ink the label tag in the swimsuits, towels, etc.
- Take a blanket or sleeping bag for the rest area. Bring games, playing cards, books, and/or a radio to pass the time between events and a bag of snacks to ease the budget and the hunger pangs. Generally, snacks such as coffee, donuts, hot dogs, hamburgers, and candy are sold at the meets.
- Parents find it most helpful to write the event numbers on the back of the swimmer's hand with a ballpoint pen. This provides a constant reminder of the events, which minimizes the risk of missing an event.

## SWIM MEETS GLOSSARY

**Heat and Heat Sheet:** a term given to the division of swimmers within a single event when there are too many contestants to compete at one time. Each group of contestants is called a heat. The slowest heat swims first in the event; the fastest heat swims last. The heat sheet is the printed meet program, which lists the events, Rules of Conduct, swimmers entered and their entry times.

**Call Boards:** a board on which the event number currently being seeded is posted. This serves to notify swimmers in an event that they should report immediately to their assigned lane on the pool deck. There is usually a call board in the swimmer's rest area and often an additional one in the pool area. The event being seeded is usually two events ahead of the event that is being swum.

**Clerk of Course:** an official who distributes entry cards, if used, to the swimmers and accounts for the presence of all swimmers scheduled for the event. This official places each swimmer in the properly seeded position for the race. This is most often seen in mini-meets.

**Seed, Seeding Time, Seeded Position, Seeding Area:** seeding of swimmers into heats is done to arrange the number of contestants into a distribution pattern in order to equalize the competition. In swimming, the entry time, presumably the swimmer's best time to date for that event, is the seeding time. The heat sheet lists the swimmer's position (seeded position) in the race according to his/her entry time; seeding also determines the specific lane assignment. The seeding area is where the swimmers are physically lined up in the correct and actual order in which the event is to be swum. In pre-seeded meets, there is no separate seeding area – swimmers report directly to their assigned lane.

**Lane Assignment:** this is noted on the time card or heat sheet. In each heat a lane assignment is determined by the seeding time, with the fastest swimmer seeded in the "middle lane" and the slowest swimmer in the outside lane. For example, in a six lane pool the fastest swimmer in the heat will be in lane 3, the second fastest in lane 4, third fastest in lane 2, fourth in lane 5, fifth fastest in lane 1, and the slowest in lane 6.

**Scratch:** to withdraw an entry from competition. If a swimmer scratches himself/herself or is scratched from one event in a meet, he/she may or may not be permitted to swim the remainder of the meet. Check with the coach if there is a question.

**Timed Finals:** in this type of meet, the final placings are determined simply by the times performed in the heats. The majority of our district meets are judged on this basis.

**Preliminaries and Finals:** another type of meet competition and setup, with two sessions - preliminaries (events) and finals (events). With the exception of the three fastest heats, the preliminary events are seeded as usual. In the fastest heats, the competition is mixed to a much greater extent than usual. The fastest swimmers are dispersed throughout all three heats in accordance with a USS seeding pattern instead of just the first heat.

A final heat of swimmers with the fastest times from the preliminaries returns (the finalists ) and swims a final race to determine places and final times. Often under this setup, the event is more stimulating, with finishes less predictable. Exceptional performances are encouraged. However, this system creates a longer meet.

**Strokes:** four basic strokes, which are keyed to five basic events: freestyle, butterfly, breaststroke, backstroke, and individual medley. The individual medley is a combination of the other four strokes: butterfly, back, breast, and freestyle. Each stroke constitutes one-fourth of the event

distance. Each stroke, except freestyle, has clearly defined legal and illegal technique. Freestyle constitutes a free style or free choice as long as one of the previous strokes is not swum again. The crawl stroke or any variation is usually used. Swimmers are disqualified for any infraction and their race is null and void.

**Disqualification ("DQ"):** occurs for either an illegal start, stroke, touch or turn. The swimmer is usually advised by an official; the infraction is also noted on the time card. A time achieved under disqualification is not a legal time and cannot be used for any purpose. A "DQ" is indicated by a meet official raising one hand overhead with an open palm.

**Official Time:** the final time for a swimmer for a particular event. Most meets use electronic timing systems (touch pads) with two people as backup timers per lane. Otherwise, three timers are required for each lane. If touch pads are used, the electronic time is the official time and watch times serve only as a backup. If an electronic timing system is not used and two or three times are identical, this is the official time. If all three readings disagree, the middle reading is the official time. If there are only two readings available and they differ, then the average of the two readings becomes the official time. All watch readings are written on the swimmers entry card; the unofficial time is posted on the time board for each lane. The time cards are put in order of the official time, disqualifications and judges' decisions are noted, and these cards are compiled for the official results of the race.

**Results:** the results of each event and award winning places are prominently posted as soon as times are available from the administration desk. A complete set of results is mailed to each club. Individuals may order and pay for a complete set of results. In addition, a complete set of results are posted on the AMS web site ([www.amswim.org](http://www.amswim.org)) after each meet.

**Awards Table:** awards, as described in the heat sheet, are issued at this table. Usually, ribbons are awarded to the top six places in each event. Awards are not available immediately after the finish of the race; the tabulation work must be done first. Swimmers who qualify for an award should report to the awards table as soon as an event's results are posted or announced over the public address system. Swimmers who pick up an award must initial the results sheet at the awards table.

## **Record Times**

**FAST Record** – a record set by any FAST swimmer at an official meet, which is the fastest time in a particular event in a particular age group. These records may be posted on the bulletin board.

**AMS Record** - a record set by any AMS district swimmer in any USS sanctioned meet, recognized only when official meet results are provided for the AMS Records Chairman. It is the best time ever swum by an AMS swimmer in a particular event.

**District Record** - a record achieved in an AMS district meet by any swimmer from any district; it is the best time swum in this district in a particular event.

**Junior Olympic Record** - a record achieved by a swimmer for a particular event. This is a separate system of records under the USS Junior Olympic Program.

**Relays:** an event with 4 swimmers in a single event from each team. In order to enter a relay team in a meet, the coach must determine which swimmers will make up the team. Before leaving a meet, swimmers should always check with the coach to see if they are needed for a relay.

**Special Situations:** If questionable developments, problems, or difficulties arise for a swimmer at any time during the meet, the swimmer should seek the advice, assistance, and/or representation of the coach.

**Behavior:** Each club and its coach are responsible for the conduct of its swimmers. Swimmers must obey all rules of good behavior and safe practices. A swimmer may be expelled from the meet for unacceptable behavior.

## RECOGNITION

Benefits or awards are provided by the Swim Club and also by the AMS for swimming achievements. Swimmer recognition is promoted in several ways.

1. Privilege of wearing the team suit - this occurs after qualifying for the team and is the first level of achievement for a swimmer. (Purchase of the team suit is optional.)
2. Recognition party - this is sponsored each spring, usually in March. All team members are invited. All swimmers are recognized for their hard work and dedication to the sport and awards are presented.
3. Team record recognition – a summary of current FAST all-time records for each event by age group is posted on the FAST bulletin board. Also posted is a summary of current season records for each event by age group. This recognizes top performers for the season and gives a challenge to other swimmers to improve times to beat those times.
4. Coaches' discretionary awards – the coaching staff may elect to recognize swimmer achievements during the season for such accomplishments as consistent attendance at practices or meets or exemplary performance.
5. There are meet recognition awards. These include:

Place awards (ribbons, medals, trophies, or plaques) are given at all meets for all events. The schedule for awards, which varies from meet to meet, is usually given in the information section of the individual meet announcement as well as on the heat sheet.

Time standard - These exist for each sex, each age group, as well as each of the five recognized events: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley.

First "A" time standard - the swimmer is awarded an AMS patch, a bar denoting the applicable age group, and a single star. Additional stars are awarded as the time standards are achieved in each of the recognized strokes.

Best time ribbons – this is a FAST program which provides a ribbon to each swimmer as they achieve a new personal best official time in an event.

Age group awards - Upon moving to an older age group, a swimmer must strive to achieve the standards that apply thereto.

# **POOL RULES/DISCIPLINARY CODE**

## **Pool Rules**

1. Running is never permitted in the pool area. All wet areas become slippery and dangerous and are an invitation to injury.
2. Conduct and behavior must be good at all times and all places, particularly when and where the team is being represented.
3. Private and public property must be taken care of and respected at all times.
4. During practice times all swimmers are expected to be in the pool area. Roaming around other areas of the building by swimmers or siblings is not permitted.
5. Disruptive behavior or insubordination will not be tolerated in practice.
6. All safety (USS & AMS) regulations must be observed and enforced.

## **Disciplinary Code**

1. Minor infractions: one week suspension.
2. Actions which involve questions of safety: one week to permanent suspension.<sup>1\*</sup>
3. Insubordination, willful disobedience of coaches, willful destruction of property: one week to permanent suspension.\*

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<sup>1\*</sup> When such a penalty is assessed, the coach should discuss it with the Board.

## MISCELLANEOUS HELPFUL HINTS

**The FAST Bulletin Board:** Check at least weekly during the season, preferably at each practice. It helps to keep up with team events and swimmers' achievements. Meet entry sheets for upcoming meets are posted on the bulletin board. Prompt review permits entry omissions or errors to be corrected. Notify the Coach or Meet Entry Person regarding an error or omission.

**AMS Handbook:** An AMS Handbook is available from AMS for a small fee. Contact FAST Board members if you would like to order a copy.

**USS Official Handbook:** A complete swimming and diving rulebook is available. Contact FAST Board members to place an order. The contents of the handbook are also available at the AMS web-site ([www.amswim.org](http://www.amswim.org)).

**Swimming World:** SWIMMING WORLD is the monthly national magazine for competitive aquatics. It is informative and very useful, especially when parents and swimmers become more enthusiastic and involved in this sport. To subscribe, send your name, address, and check to Swimming World Magazine, P.O. Box 45497, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

**FAST MailBox and Communications:** Inside the pool area is located the FAST *MailBox*, which contains a slot for each FAST family. You can also drop off information to the coaches and FAST board members in the *MailBox*. FAST communicates primarily via e-mail. FAST Administrator's email address is [swimfast30@comcast.net](mailto:swimfast30@comcast.net).

**FAST Hotline 724-325-8601:** This service provides updated information on practice schedules. It is routinely updated during the season.

**FAST Web Page:** The FAST Website address is <http://www.swimmingfast.net>. AMS also maintains a site at <http://www.amswim.org>; this site contains information related to meet schedules and results.

**On Leaving the Team:** If a swimmer becomes inactive or if a family is moving, please notify the coach and the club treasurer so that names can be removed from the mailing list and any balance in a family's meet entry fund be returned. If meet entry money is not requested within three months from the date of severance, the money will be automatically rolled into the general fund.

Please check the FAST website for Board of Director and Head Coach contact information.