



Water Rat Swim Team Handbook



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Introduction

The Westport Weston Family YMCA Water Rat Swim Team is a year-round, nationally recognized competitive swim program, which is operated by the Aquatics Department of the Westport Weston Family YMCA. Consistent with the Y's mission, the team strives to help children group, develop, and become socially responsible while providing them with the tools for life-long healthy living.

The Water Rat Swim Team competes in YMCA competitions at the local, state, and national level. The team is also a registered USA Swimming Team sanctioned by Connecticut Swimming, Inc. and competes in USA Swimming meets at the local, regional, state, zone, and national level.

This handbook is a reference guide to the Water Rat Swim Team. It states the policy and practices used during a typical swim year. During emergency situations, such as those faced during the Covid 19 pandemic, these policies will be modified to deal with the exigent circumstances faced by the team and YMCA.

Team members, and their parents, should frequently visit *wrat.org*, the Water Rat's website on Team Unify, a swim team management platform. There you will find the information about swim meets, practice schedule changes and Parents' Club meetings. You will also find links on *wrat.org* to other sites dedicated to competitive swimming.

About Our Team

Mission Statement

The Westport Weston Family YMCA Water Rat Swim Team embraces a team philosophy that commits it to develop the highest level of competitive excellence for every swimmer, while simultaneously encouraging spirit, honesty, team pride, personal commitment, and individual growth. The Water Rat Swim Team is also committed to providing a healthy and positive environment free of abuse from all its members.

As we strive to fulfill our mission, we expect swimmers, coaches, and parents to work together. We also expect the following from our swimmers.

1. Attend training sessions on time and with all the necessary equipment (cap, goggles, swimsuit, and towel).
2. Attend required meets wearing team apparel. (Labeling items with a marker are recommended.)
3. Keep communication lines open with your coach. Always share your goals, concerns, and questions to ensure the best possible season.
4. Inform your coach when you cannot make a practice or fulfill other team obligations.
5. Establish reasonable and achievable goals and practice to succeed.
6. Compliment and encourage teammates and build positive team spirit.
7. Practice good sportsmanship by also complimenting your competitors on a good race.
8. Respect the Westport Weston Family YMCA facility and follow the "Y" rules and regulations.

9. Participate in fund-raising activities to support the team and to promote our program in the community. Remember, you represent the Westport Weston Family YMCA and your team.
10. Most important, have fun!

Team Name and Identity

Our official team name is the Westport Weston Family YMCA Water Rat Swim Team. The term WRAT (for Water Rat) refers to our USA Swimming Club code. You may see the term “WRAT” on bathing caps or as a stand-alone term, but we prefer to refer to our swimmers “Water Rat” swimmers.

Team History

The Water Rat Swim Team was established in 1949 and from the beginning, the team was a perennial state champion. The team originally practiced in the Brophy pool, built in 1929 and renovated in 1978, at the original Post Road location of the Westport Weston Family YMA. The team became a year-round program in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the co-sponsorship of the Westport Parks and Recreation Department. The team used the town’s Longshore Pool during the summers. Legend has it that the name “Water Rats” was established at that time when the water rats were found in the Longshore Pool, which is located outdoors on Long Island Sound. As a result of the construction of the Westport Weston Family YMCA’s Stauffer Pool in 1978, the team grew in stature and added its first full-time coach.

Today and Tomorrow

The Water Rat Swim Team today has a roster of more than 200 swimmers. The staff includes a Head Coach, Head Junior Coach, Head Development Coach, and several part-time assistant coaches. Swimmers from the age of 6 through 22 at all levels swim with the Water Rats.

Until 2014, practices were held in both the Brophy and Stauffer pools at the original Westport Weston Family YMCA on the Post Road as well as at the pool at Staples High School in Westport. The team’s current home is the Strittmatter Family Aquatic Center on the Y’s Mahackeno campus.

Water Rat swimmers become more than excellent swimmers, who are physically fit. They learn skills that they can use all their lives. They learn how to set and achieve personal goals, through self-discipline and hard work, learn how to be a team member, and learn how to experience success and disappointment. Water Rats, who swim during their middle and high school years, also develop great time management skills.

Team Structure

The Water Rat Swim Team uses a “progressive” age group program designed to develop the child physically, mentally, and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined, long term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during a swimmer’s physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation is placed on developing technical skills and a love of the sport. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge is introduced to the training program.

In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, the team has established training groups of swimmers who are compatible with respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. At

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

Currently, there are eight practice groups, including a pre-team instructional group.

8/Under Program

White Group

The pre-team developmental group.

This group consists of swimmers ages 5-7 who have demonstrated strong freestyle and backstroke technique at tryouts. Swimmers in this group are not guaranteed a space on the Red Team, but this does put them on the fast track to the competitive roster.

Swimmers in this group will have the opportunity to swim in some team events and non USA Swimming home events.

This is NOT a swim lesson group. This group is coached by a Water Rat coach who will teach each swimmer the team's terminology and drills.

Red Group

Ages: 8/under Description

This group is for beginner level swimmers ages 8/under.

Focus

Emphasis will be to introduce the proper technique for all four competitive strokes through drills and games. Dives and turns will also be introduced. Basic swimming etiquette such as circle swimming will be taught. Swimmers should attend at least two practices per week and are encouraged to attend any meets that are offered.

Prerequisites

- Able to swim 25 yards freestyle with face in the water
- Able to swim 25 yards backstroke with arm recovery
- Able to kick 25 yards of breaststroke
- Able to kick 25 yards of butterfly
- Able to listen and work well in groups
- Demonstrate a willingness to wear proper swimming attire such as a competitive suit, swim cap and goggles.

Blue Group

Ages: 8/under Description

This group is for advanced level swimmers ages 8/under who understand the basic concepts of all four competitive strokes and can swim 25 yards of all four strokes.

Focus

This group will focus on developing four legal strokes through drills and games. Racing dives and turns will be taught. Basic understanding of pace clock work will also be introduced. Swimmers should attend at least two practices per week and are encouraged to attend any meets that are offered.

Prerequisites

- Able to listen and work well in groups
- Demonstrate a willingness to wear proper swimming attire such as a competitive suit, swim cap, and goggles.
- Must be able to swim all four competitive strokes.
- Must show a desire to attain higher swimming goals.

Age Group Program

Discovery III

Ages: 9-11 Description

Discovery III is entry level to the WRAT Age Group program. Swimmers must demonstrate the ability to swim freestyle and backstroke proficiently and have a rudimentary knowledge of breaststroke and butterfly.

Focus

This training group emphasizes stroke development and basic competitive skills. Practices are designed to focus on specific instruction at a pace that is geared toward the beginner level of competitive swimming. Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least two practices per week. Swimmers may participate in several dual and invitational meets. Attendance at these meets is encouraged and swimmers must attend at least one of these events.

Prerequisites

- Able to listen and work well in groups
- Able to wear proper swimming attire such as: competitive suit, swim cap, training fins, and goggles.
- Able to swim 50-yard freestyle under 55 seconds
- Able to swim 50-yard backstroke under 65 seconds
- Able to swim 3x50 freestyle on an interval of 1:30
- Able to kick a continuous 100 yards freestyle

Demonstrating these skills does not guarantee placement in this group.

Discovery II

Ages: 9-11 Description

Discovery II is the intermediate level of the WRAT Age Group program. This group mainly consists of strong 9 year old swimmers transitioning from the Blue swim group, or 10 year olds who have moved

up from our Discovery III group. Members must demonstrate the ability to swim all four strokes legally at a minimum of 50 yards. They must also have the ability to start from the starting block.

Focus

This training group emphasizes continuing stroke development and competitive skills. Swimmers will learn stroke drills and a basic understanding of interval training. Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least three practices per week. Swimmers will also be expected to attend all scheduled meets.

Prerequisites

- Able to listen and work well in groups
- Able to wear proper swimming attire such as: competitive suit, swim cap, goggles, and training fins
- Able to swim 50-yard freestyle under 45 seconds
- Able to swim 50-yard backstroke under 50 seconds
- Able to swim 4x50 freestyle on an interval of 1:00
- Able to kick a continuous 100 yards freestyle

Demonstrating these skills does not guarantee placement into this group.

Discovery I

Ages: 9-11 Description

Discovery I is the top level of the WRAT Junior Age Group program. Swimmers must be legal in all four competitive strokes and show a willingness to make a commitment to their training and competition.

Focus

This group emphasizes the development of stroke technique through advanced drills. Swimmers will continue to learn to use the pace clock and must be able to complete “sets” of 15-20 minutes of duration. Swimmers are encouraged to participate in all scheduled practices and are expected to attend a minimum of three practices per week. Swimmers will also be expected to attend all scheduled swim meets.

Prerequisites

- Able to listen and work well in groups
- Able to wear competitive swimming attire, including a competitive suit, swim cap, training fins and goggles
- Able to swim 5x100 freestyle on an interval of 1:45
- Able to swim 1x100 IM in under 1:35
- Able to kick 4x50 freestyle on 1:15
- Able to swim 5x50 non-freestyle stroke on 10 seconds rest
- Must be willing to swim 500-yard freestyle in competition

- Must be willing to swim 100's of non-freestyle in competition

Challenger II

Ages: 11-13 Description

This group is designed for the development of the older age group swimmer. Swimmers in this group should express a desire to improve their competitive swimming through conditioning and continued development of stroke technique.

Focus

Challenger II coaches promote an increased commitment to training and conditioning. Practices include complex sets with a focus of 40 percent technique and 60 percent conditioning. Swimmers are expected to train as often as their schedules permit but are expected to attend a minimum of four practices a week. Challenger II swimmers also are expected to participate in most of the team's scheduled swim meets and attend championship meets for which they qualify (including Connecticut Regionals, YMCA States, and Connecticut Age Group Championships).

Prerequisites

- Able to swim 5x100 freestyle @1:45
- Able to swim 4x100 non-free stroke on 2:15
- Able to swim 1x200 IM @4:00
- Able to kick 4x50 @1:15

Challenger I

Ages: 11-13 Description

Challenger I is the highest level of the Age Group program. Swimmers must show a high level of commitment to training and a willingness to maintain consistent practice attendance, training intensity and focus. Swimmers should also be willing to travel to out of state competitions and train over weekends and holiday breaks.

Focus

The coaches continue emphasize technique, but they also introduce aerobic conditioning. Swimmers must be able to complete challenging sets with complex intervals that are 30-60 minutes in duration. Swimmers are expected to train as often as their schedules allow with a minimum of 5 practices per week. Multiple dry-land session will be required when dryland is offered during the swim year. The Challenger I team is required to participate in all scheduled meets for the season.

Prerequisites

- Able to swim 10x100 free @1:30
- Able to swim 4x200 IM @3:30

- Able to swim 5x100 non-freestyle stroke @0.10 seconds rest
- Able to kick 5x100 @2:00
- Must be willing to swim the 1650 free in competition
- Must be willing to swim 200's of non-free in competition
- Able to understand intervals and use a pace clock

Senior Program

Senior III

Ages: 13/Over

The Senior III program is an introductory and bridge program offered to those age group swimmers who need more time to transition into the Senior program. This group is also open to high school swimmers who want to stay in shape during the off season.

Senior II

Ages: 13/Over Description

Although the Senior II group is the introductory group in the senior program, it requires a lot of commitment from the swimmers.

Focus

Senior II is for swimmers aspiring to train at a higher level, emphasis on continuing to develop the athlete as a whole and to continue to prepare the swimmer for the highest training group. Swimmers in this group are introduced to a more intense aerobic and anaerobic training than they experienced in the Age Group program. Additional stroke development and refinement is incorporated into the training. Senior II swimmers must be willing to work hard during practice and they must compete in all meets.

Prerequisites

- Show desire to become a more committed swimmer
- Able to swim all four competitive strokes
- Able to learn new training techniques, which will take them to the next level
- Able to swim 10 x 100 on 1:20 or 1:25
- Able to kick 10 x 50 on 1:00
- Must compete in meets and represent the Water Rats in championship meets
- Attend five or more practices a week based on the season (short course or long course)

Senior I

Ages: 14/Over Description

The Senior I group is the highest level of training for the Water Rat Swim Team and the coach has very high expectations for practices and meets.

Focus

Swimmers in this group develop their individual technical and racing skills to advance in their sport. As the highest (and hardest working) training group in the Water Rat Swim Team, it places more responsibility on its members than other groups. Senior I swimmers dedicate themselves to training, racing and their swim team. Athletes understand that being in the Senior I group makes them role models for younger swimmers and ambassadors to the community. Swimmers commit to excellence in their sport and to achieving high-level results in state and national championship meets.

Prerequisites

- Has shown a commitment to the sport
- Has shown a steady practice attendance of six to ten per week based on the season (short course or long course)
- Can swim all four competitive strokes for 200 yards/meters, 500 freestyle, 1000 freestyle, 1650 freestyle, and 400 IM
- Able to swim an intensive 2.5 hour plus training session, both mentally and physical
- Able to attend two practices per day, waking up early for the first practice
- Able to listen to and understand coaching instructions and apply what has been said
- Able to kick 12 x 50 on 55
- Able to swim 15x 100 freestyle on 1:15 (short course)
- Must compete in meets and represent the Water Rats in championship meets

College Swimming

We offer a college swimming program that runs during winter and summer breaks. This serves our former Water Rat Swim Team members who want to continue training when their collegiate teams are not holding regular practices. It is also available to other visiting college swimmers, but only by invitation. All college swimmers must be approved by the coaching staff.

Practice Sessions and Attendance

Short course practices begin in September with competitions ending in late March or early April. Competitions take place in 25-yard pools. The long course season starts in late April or early May. The last long course swim meets are in late July or early August. Competition for the age group and senior teams takes place in 50-meter pool facilities. The 8/Unders compete in 25-yard pools.

Coaching

The Water Rat Swim Team coaching staff includes full and part-time professionals, all of whom are members of the American Swimming Coaches Association. To learn about your child's coach, visit the team website at wrat.org.

Coaches' Responsibilities

Water Rat coaches have created a swim program that help every team member work toward his/her individual goals, from getting personal bests in local meets to moving up in the rankings in a national championship.

- The coaches (not parents) are responsible for assigning swimmers to practice groups. The assignment is based on age and ability of the swimmer. When the swimmer is ready by virtue of their age and ability, he/she will be moved to a more challenging practice group.
- The coaches are responsible for teaching the sport and training the team. Each practice group has unique goals – which meet USA Swimming guidelines – and swimmers are expected to attain those goals before moving to a higher group.
- The coaches are the only adults, other than lifeguards, that are allowed on deck during practices and meets, except those parents who are working at a swim meet.
- The coaches make the final decision about which meets a Water Rat can attend and which events a Water Rat can swim.
- The coaches supervise warm-ups at all meets. After an event, one of the coaches will offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance.

Parents' Responsibilities

Parents should ensure that their children attend practice regularly and that they arrive on time. Parents should encourage their children to have a good diet and sleeping habits. They should also remember the following:

- The coach coaches. The coach directs and instructs your child on swimming. Children become confused and suffer athletically when their parents take on the role of coach.
- The parents support. The coach's job is to motivate and constructively critique the swimmer's performance, but it is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary for the child to improve in swimming.
- Children under 10 are just kids. They are generally unfocused and inconsistent athletes. This can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and swimmers. Parents must remain patient and allow their swimmers to become young athletes who love their sport.
- Nobody gets a best time every time. Setback and defeat are a normal part of swimming. Parents should help their children learn to accept athletic setbacks and teach them that swimming success is measured not just by second but also by seasons.
- Feed them to win. Swimmers must have water bottles at practice and at meets so they can hydrate. (Yes, swimmers sweat.) Swimmers need to eat well every day. The night before a meet, they should eat a healthy meal. Avoid fats and sodas. Send your swimmer to meets with healthy snacks such as apples, bananas, bread sticks, granola bars, or dry cereal.

Raising Concerns

The coaches understand that parents frequently have questions and concerns. If you have a concern, you should email your child's coach. Any written or oral communication should be respectful and professional.

If you feel that you have done everything you can – including emailing, talking on the phone, and/or meeting in person – and you still have unanswered questions or unresolved concerns, you should

arrange to talk to the head coach, whose contact information is on the Contact Us page of the team website.

Parents are reminded that during competitions, questions or concerns about decisions by meet officials must be directed to a Water Rat coach. Parents cannot address officials directly.

Swim Team Fees

Water Rat families must pay four separate fees before the first practice of the short course season in September. These fees, and their current amounts, are listed in the WRAT Registration Packet, which can be found at *wrat.org* under the Team Info drop-down menu button.

1. **Family YMCA Membership** - Water Rat swimmers, or their families, must be members of the Westport Weston Family YMCA.
2. **Team Program Fees** – The Family YMCA program fees pay the salaries of the full and part-time coaches as well as the maintenance of the pools. You must pay the program fees by check or credit card before the first practice. If you pay by credit card, you can opt to use the Y's six-month payment plan.
3. **PET-WRAT Fees** – All Water Rat families must pay the Parent Encouragement Tax, the membership dues for the Water Rats Parents' Club. PET-WRAT fees, which are based on the number of family members on the team, are due in full at registration. The fees can be earned back by volunteering more than the minimum required by the club. (See Appendix D.)
4. **USA Swimming** – Water Rat swimmers must join USA Swimming. They must also pay entry fees to compete in swim meets. (Events typically cost between \$6-\$12.) Money from the USA Swimming fees go into an escrow account to pay these fees. Money is deducted from the account as your child swims at meets and when the team pays the annual USA Swimming Athlete Registration fee. The escrow account is also used to pay for non-personalized team swim caps.

Parents should understand that meet entry fees are paid in advance by the team. Therefore, it is essential that you use your Team Unify account to notify coaches by the meet entry deadline of your child's intention to compete. Failure to notify the coaches can result in unnecessary payments from your USA Swimming account. You should monitor your swimmer's escrow account on Team Unify. When your balance is near zero, you will need to replenish the account. Since the team uses an escrow system having a negative balance is good. Having a zero or positive balance means you need to add money to the account. When your child leaves the team, any balance in your escrow account will be refunded.

Financial Assistance

As 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organizations, both the Westport Weston Family YMCA and the Water Rats Parents' Club endeavor to provide financial assistance to those who qualify. If you wish to be considered for financial assistance, read Appendix E to this Handbook and then contact the Head Coach.

Apparel

Being a member of the Water Rat Swim Team entitles all swimmers to wear team apparel and should be done so with pride. **Only Water Rat apparel is to be worn at swim meets when representing the team.**

Through its affiliation with Metro Swim Shop, the Water Rat Swim Team offers a variety of team logo-wear, including backpacks, parkas, sweatshirts, warm – ups and t-shirts. Logo-wear is available for purchase every September at the beginning of the short course season. The items listed below are the only things the swimmers must have:

Team Apparel – WRAT team apparel can be purchased in September and other times throughout the year. Notices about apparel orders and will be posted on Team Unify.

Team Suit – The Water Rats are a “Speedo” sponsored team. Swimmers are required to wear “Speedo” brand suits when competing at swim meets. Team suits may be purchased online from Metro or at their store in Norwalk CT. The team suit is made of Lycra. Senior Water Rat swimmers may compete in Speedo technical suits at state, zone, and national championships. Coaches will let swimmers know when they can wear the technical suits at meets. Swimmers should not use their team suits for practice.

Team Cap – If a swimmer chooses to wear a swim cap, the team cap must be worn at competitions. During practice, swimmers may wear any swim cap they choose. Non-personalized team caps can be purchased from the coaches. The coaches also bring a few extra to swim meets. The price of the team cap is deducted from the swimmers’ escrow account. Personalized swim caps are available to order as well. The Team Administrator will send out notices throughout the year about order personalized caps.

Goggles – Goggles are a necessity for competitive swimmers. They tend to disappear or break, so please ensure your swimmer has a few extra pairs in her swim bag for practices and meets. You can buy goggles at Metro Swim Shop in Norwalk or order them online using the Water Rat store at Swimoutlet.com by clicking the link on *wrat.org*.

Safe Sport

Parents and swimmers should understand that it is an honor and privilege to be a member of the Water Rat Swim Team. As such each parent and swimmer is also a representative of the team and has responsibilities that are integral to the overall health and success of the swim team program.

The Water Rat Swim Team strives to make every swimmer a successful athlete at the highest level, while encouraging spirit, honesty, team pride, personal commitment, and individual growth. To achieve our mission and to ensure the safety of our swimmers at practices and meets, the coaches have created Codes of Conduct of for parents and swimmers, which all Water Rat swimmers and parents must follow. Parents and swimmers must read and acknowledge their respective Codes of Conduct before their first practice of the short course season. The acknowledgement forms are part of the online registration process on Team Unify.

The Water Rat Swim Team is also committed to providing a healthy and positive environment free of abuse from all its members. To achieve that, the Water Rats adhere to the USA Swimming Safe Sport Program and all its required policies and best practices. A whole section of the Team Website is devoted to our Safe Sport Program, which parents are encouraged to review. In addition, a copy of the USA Swimming Code of conduct is attached as Appendix G to this Handbook.

A key element of USA Swimming's Safe Sport Program is its Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP). A copy of MAAPP is attached as an appendix to this Handbook. Parents and athletes 18 years and older must agree to abide by MAAPP. The acknowledgement of MAAPP is part of the online WRAT Registration process when parents register their swimmers. Adult athletes can independently sign an acknowledgement letter of the MAAPP policy, which is found under the Safe Sport Tab on the team website.

Swimmer's Conduct

The Water Rat Swim Team expects every member to commit to the team's winning tradition by giving his or her best effort at every practice session and in every competition. Water Rat swimmers encourage and support their teammates and always display good sportsmanship. Swimmers must adhere to the Westport Weston Family YMCA conditions of membership as stated in the Westport Weston Family YMCA brochure. Parents and swimmers are also required to read this handbook and read and acknowledge the Codes of Conduct when registering for the team.

The Westport Weston Family YMCA is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all members- young and old. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the Water Rat Swim Team. That is, any use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person (including, but not limited to, physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual) is not tolerated. The Westport Weston Family YMCA encourages a culture of "telling" in its programs. Staff members are trained to recognize and respond in all circumstances and effectively deal with the issues of bullying, both on behalf of the individual being bullied and in relation to working with the "bully." (See the team's anti-bullying policy and electronic communication policy, both of which are appended to this Handbook.)

Swimmer's Code of Conduct

As a member of the Water Rat Swim Team swimmers are expected to follow these principles:

- Respect their teammates and coaches. Obscene language and/or actions which embarrass or reflect poorly on the team, coaches, teammates, or the Westport Weston Family YMCA are prohibited.
- Prohibited from using tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.
- Communicate with his/her coach regarding scheduling conflicts with practices and meets.
- Be on deck and ready for scheduled practice times and for warmups at swim meets.
- Have a positive attitude during practice and all interactions with coaches and teammates.
- Maintain swimming equipment and return the equipment to its rightful place when no longer in use.
- Strive for excellence during practice and competitions.
- Practice good health habits, including proper nutrition and optimal sleep.

- Follow locker room rules that include, but are not limited to, not using cell phone cameras or other cameras in the locker rooms (see photography policy attached as an appendix to the Handbook); no food in the locker rooms; keep the locker rooms neat by picking up and throwing out trash; respecting the privacy of others also using the locker rooms; staying away from other's belongings; no running or roughhousing; and keeping noise levels to a minimum.

Failure to comply with the above expectations may result in disciplinary action by the head coach including, but not limited to one or more of the following:

- Loss of locker room privileges;
- Suspension from practice and/or certain swim meets;
- Suspension from team activities for a period determined by the coaches;
- Ejection from the team with forfeiture of all fees; and/or
- Revocation of membership in the Westport Weston Family YMCA.

Parents Conduct

As parents of a member of the Water Rat Swim team, parents are representative of the team and are an essential part of the success of the team. To that end, parents are expected to be role models for their swimmer and other members of the team and therefore are expected to behave in the following manner:

- Model exemplary behavior for the swimmers by demonstrating the core YMCA values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, teamwork, and sportsmanship.
- Model and exhibit courtesy always to swimmers, coaches, competitors, officials, and parents at all facilities and venues.
- Refrain from coaching or providing feedback to their swimmer from the stands during practices or meets.
- Unconditionally support their swimmer regardless of their performance or results.
- Acknowledge and agree that all communications related to their swimmer must first go to the swimmer's coach, and then to the Head Coach if needed.
- Support their swimmer's developmental path and journey as member of the swim team.
- Accept their role as a parent within the Water Rat paradigm where a parent parents, swimmers swim and coaches' coach.
- Abide by clearly stated expectation that any public criticism, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures, bullying, harassment, or intimidation directed toward coaches, officials, volunteers, and/or participating swimmers will not be tolerated and is subject to the parent being barred from participating in their swimmer's team on-site or off-site activities for that swim year.

Parental behavior that is determined to be detrimental to the Water Rat Swim Team's core goals and objectives may result in disciplinary action that may result in refusal of service or dismissal from the team or YMCA.

Water Rats Parents' Club

As the parent of a Water Rat swimmer, you become a member of the Water Rats Parents' Club when your child joins the team.

The Water Rats Parents' Club was established in 1980 to support the activities of the Water Rat Swim Team. It was incorporated in 1990 as a Connecticut non-stock corporation and is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. (Copies of the club's 990 tax filings, and certain other information related to the Club's nonprofit status are available to club members upon written request to one of the Club's Co-Presidents.)

The Water Rats Parents' Club supports the Water Rat Swim Team by doing the following:

1. Promoting competitive swimming by hosting and managing swim meets so Water Rat swimmers can use their athletic skills and practice good sportsmanship while developing team loyalty.
2. Organize and host social functions for the participants of the program.
3. Raise funds to be used for the benefit of the program and participants.

There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer, including working at swim meets as a timer or official, hosting social events for parents and swimmers, and serving on the Parents' Club Board of Directors.

The Parents' Club Board of Directors hold monthly meetings – generally on the first Thursday of every month – at the Westport Weston Family YMCA. All club members are invited to attend. The dates and locations of all Parents' Club meetings are posted on the team website. The club also has an annual Planning and Evaluation Meeting, usually in February, and an Annual Meeting in June, where members elect club officers. The club's bylaws, meeting minutes, a list of current directors and other information can be found under the Parents drop down menu on the team website.

PET-WRAT

Water Rat families pay PET-WRAT fees (or Parents' Club dues) when they register their children with the Water Rat Swim Team. These fees allow the Parents' Club to support the team by hosting swim meets, buying team equipment, and awarding financial assistance to swimmers who cannot afford to pay the full cost of being a Water Rat. The annual fees are set every year in June or July when the board votes on the club's budget.

In addition to paying PET-WRAT fees, all Water Rat families are required to help manage the Water Rat Swim Team by performing volunteer jobs, which help them earn PET-WRAT points. The number of Water Rat swimmers in a family, and their ages, determine the number PET-WRAT volunteer points a family must earn. If parents earn more volunteer points than required, they will earn back part of all their PET-WRAT fees. Rebates are paid during the summer after the end of the long course season.

Parents can register to volunteer using their Team Unify account, which keeps track of their PET-WRAT points.

PET-WRAT fees, PET-WRAT points, and the importance of volunteering are explained in the club's Volunteer Policy (which is attached as an Appendix to the Handbook and is also available on the team website under Volunteer Info drop down menu), which all parents must acknowledge before the first day of practice in September. The intent of this policy is not to raise money but to emphasize how important it is that we work together to provide well-run meets for our children. The team cannot run a meet without adequate support. This policy is intended to provide flexibility for families throughout

the meet season to fulfill the minimum volunteer commitment. Many of parents volunteer more than 100 hours during the year. Families not doing their fair share jeopardize the smooth management and operation of team events.

Volunteerism

Unlike most youth sports, competitive swimming requires many adult volunteers. A swim meet needs officials, timers, and runners to name a few. We need parents to organize fundraisers and prepare our swimmer and parent socials.

Working at Meets

Every year the Water Rat Swim Team hosts four or more Connecticut Swimming sanctioned meets. It takes many volunteers to run each session of these meets. We need one to two timers per lane, runners to post results, officials, and safety marshals.

USA Swimming Official

USA Swimming Officials (Stroke and Turn, Starter, and Referee) are parent volunteers who have been trained in the rules of USA Swimming. Aspiring stroke and turn officials (the entry – level position) attend a three-hour clinic, take an open book test online and then train at several sessions at meets as a trainee. Clinics are announced on the team website. If a parent is interested in becoming an official, contact one of the Water Rat Swim Team Officials co-chairs.

Officiating FAQs

- Are officials former competitive swimmers? No. Swimming experience is helpful but not required. Most officials did not swim competitively when they were young.
- Will I be required to officiate at meets even if my child does not attend? No. officials are volunteers and decide when they work. But you may be asked to help out during a Water Rat – hosted meet.
- Will I be forced to disqualify a child? You might have to do so. Officials ensure every swim is “legal,” which makes a competition fair for all participants. Your training will prepare you to speak with a swimmer, but most of the time an official informs the meet referee that a swimmer has been DQ’ed. The referee talks to the coach, who tells the swimmer.
- Does it cost money to become an official? Yes. There are some out-of-pocket costs involved in becoming an official, including USA Swimming non-athlete membership, a background check, and the officials apparel, among others. These expenses will be reimbursed by the Water Rats Parents’ Club, once you have completed your training.

Swimming 101

As a YMCA-sponsored swim team, the Water Rats are members of both YMCA Swimming and USA Swimming, the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming sets the rules and policies and conducts regional and national championships. It also oversees the growth and development of the sport by offering insurance, workshops, and swim clinics to swim teams.

Within the United States, there are many Local Swimming Committees (LSC). They are responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area. Connecticut Swimming is the LSC for the state of Connecticut and it is responsible for the conduct and administration of swim events within the state. A majority of meets the Water Rat meet schedule are held under the auspices of USA Swimming. Many meets are “qualifiers,” which means swimmers are competing to qualify for one or more championships at the end of the season. Qualifiers, which include many teams, do not have standards for participation. We also participate in “invitational” and championship meets. These have strict time standards for participation.

YMCA Swimming

Although the Water Rats follow USA Swimming rules, we are a YMCA team. That means we participate in Y swim meets. Most of these are dual meets in which we compete against another YMCA in Connecticut. We also send our team to the Y State Championships. Some members of our team qualify for the YMCA New England Swimming Championships or the YMCA National Short Course Swimming Championships, both of which are held at the end of the short course season.

There is one big difference (which can be confusing): USA Swimming and the YMCA use a different system to determine an athlete’s age and eligibility to compete. A swimmer can swim a USA Swimming sanctioned meet if she is the right age on the day of the meet. For example, a 12 year – old girl can swim in a meet for 11–12-year-olds if she is 12 when she competes, or 12 on the first day of a multi-day meet. If she has a birthday (even a day before) and turns 13 she will be ineligible to swim with the 12-year-olds.

The Y uses a fluctuating cutoff date based on the age of the swimmer at the annual Connecticut Y State Championship. That meet usually is held in January, but the date varies from year to year.

YMCA Meets

YMCA Dual or Tri-Meet: A meet where we compete against one or two Y teams. Swimmers usually swim in two or three events per session. Swimmers must participate in YMCA dual meets to be eligible to participate in the YMCA National Championships. A swimmers’ age group is determined by his or her age on the first day of Connecticut Y States.

Connecticut YMCA State Championships: Traditionally held over two months, January, and February. This meet does not have qualifying standards.

YMCA New England Championships: This meet brings together swimmers from all of the YMCA’s in New England. Swimmers must achieve qualifying times to compete.

YMCA National Championships: The YMCA of the USA holds national championships at the end of both the short course and long course seasons. The Water Rats traditionally attend the short course championships, which are held at the end of March and/or early April. Short Course YMCA Nationals is the largest Y swim meet in the United States. The “National Teams” from more than 250 YMCAs compete against each other. Swimmers must achieve qualifying times to compete.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming is a 400,000-member service organization that promotes the culture of swimming by creating opportunities for swimmers and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through clubs, events, and education. Connecticut Swimming, Inc. is the local LSC for the state of Connecticut and is one of the local swim committees that make up USA swimming. Connecticut Swimming is made up of over 60 member clubs, including the Water Rats, which range from 10 athletes to more than 300. With a roster of more than 200 swimmers, the Water Rat Swim Team is one of the larger swim teams in the state.

USA Swimming Meets

Most competitions on the Water Rat schedule are Connecticut Swimming-sanctioned meets, in which swimmers compete in age groups based on their age of the first day of the meet. USA Swimming meets can be as short as half a day or as long as four days. Some Connecticut Swimming-sanctioned meets can have more than 500 swimmers.

Age Group Qualifiers: Swimmers are not required to meet time standards to enter. Events are generally arranged by sex and age group (10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18). Heat awards may be provided. Ribbons, or awards, are typically provided to the top 20 in each individual event. If relays are held, ribbons, or awards, are awarded to the top three relay teams. These meets are designed to promote individual achievement and to develop the swimming talent in Connecticut.

Invitational Meets: These meets are open to Connecticut – registered swimmers, as well as swimmers from other LSCs. Swimmers are generally required to meet minimum time standards to enter. Events are arranged by sex as well as by age group. Medals, trophies, or other similar awards are given per the meet announcement. Invitational meets are designed to provide an opportunity for Connecticut athletes to compete against each other as well as athletes from other LSCs.

Connecticut Championship Meets: The 8/under Finale, Regional, Age Group and Senior Open Championships, which are sponsored by Connecticut Swimming and held near the end of the short course and long course seasons. Except for the spring Connecticut Senior Open, these meets are open to Connecticut registered swimmers only. Swimmers must meet minimum and maximum qualifying standards to enter these meets in which Connecticut Swimming Championships are provided.

Travel Meets: The Water Rat coaches try to arrange for at least one out-of-state travel meet every year for select Age Group and Senior swimmers. These meets give Water Rat swimmers the chance to compete against swimmers from outside Connecticut. During the past few years, the Water Rat Swim Team has traveled to Boston and Nashville to attend invitational meets. A travel policy is attached as an appendix to this Handbook.

Eastern Zone Short Course Championships: Connecticut Swimming selects swimmers to be members of the Connecticut Zone Team, which competes in the Eastern Zone Short Course. Championships are in late March or early April. To be selected in their respective age group swimmers must meet strict time standards. Selected swimmers, who apply to be selected, must meet all eligibility criteria posted online with Connecticut Swimming. This three-day meet, which brings athletes together from the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic States, is one of the top meets for age group swimmers.

Eastern Zone Long Course Age Group Championships: This is a four-day meet usually held in mid-August. Swimmers, who must meet strict time standards to be selected for the Connecticut Zone Team, can swim a maximum of six individual events. 10/under swimmers do not travel with the team; parents must take the 9- and 10-year-old swimmers to Zones and stay with them in a hotel for the entire meet.

National Meets: National swimming meets, which are conducted under the auspices of USA Swimming, include Junior and Senior National Championships, the USA Open and the US Olympic Trials. Connecticut Swimming athletes, who have the qualifying time standards, are eligible to enter national meets. Water Rat swimmers who compete at this level usually travel with a Water Rat coach. Connecticut Swimming subsidizes the travel expenses of Connecticut athletes who participate in national competitions.

Swim Meet Basics

Meet information, including dates and location, are posted on the team website. Directions to the away – meet pools and meet announcements – which list the type and order of events – also can be found on the team website.

- Swimmers usually need to be on deck at least one hour before the start of a meet, so they can warm up with their team. The coaches will inform swim families of reporting times by email and the information will be posted on the team website. Swimmers should be on deck, dressed to swim, 15 minutes before warm-up. If you are late, your swimmer runs the risk of being scratched from his events, so it is especially important to be on time and to inform the coach of possible delays.
- After arriving at the pool, swimmers should change in the pool locker room, then proceed to the pool deck with their swim bags, and other gear, to find where the Water Rats are sitting.
- Parents are not allowed on the pool deck unless they are working as meet volunteers.
- After warm-up, swimmers go back to where the team is sitting for their events. Please be advised meets generally start on time, directly after warm-ups.
- Meet programs/heat sheets are frequently sold in the pool lobby, at the concession stand or online. The program lists swimmers in every event in order of seed time. If a swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she may enter with “no-time” (NT) or with the coach’s best estimate based on practice times.
- Results are usually posted near the spectator seating areas. Awards usually are given to coaches at the end of meets, so they can be distributed during practice. Water Rat coaches usually give trophies in person and put ribbons in the swimmers’ folders in the team award bins on the observation deck.
- Swimmers, who have been accompanied to a swim meet by a parent, may leave the meet once they have completed all their events, including relays. Swimmers 13/under must verify with their coach that they are done before leaving and all swimmers must “check out” with the head coach on deck before going home.

What to Bring to Meets

Swimmers should bring some or all the following to both home and away swim meets:

- Team swimsuit, t-shirt, team cap, and goggles (an extra pair of goggles is recommended)
- Towels
- Warm up suit or sweatpants and sweatshirt, and an extra t-shirt.
- A portable chair to use on deck unless they are prohibited (coaches will let you know whether they are allowed)
- Games, books, cards, even homework to pass the time between events.
- Nutritious food, such as granola bars, fruit, yogurt, cereal, bagels, among other things.
- Healthy drinks, such as water, fruit juice, and sport drinks (glass is not allowed on pool decks)

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix A: Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the Westport Weston Family YMCA Water Rats (WRATs) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Water Rats are committed to providing a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all of our members. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, or other Family YMCA employee. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively, according to the procedure outlined below.

What Is Bullying?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
2. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
4. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

Reporting Procedure

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

1. Talk to your parents;

2. Talk to a WRAT coach;
3. Write a letter or email to the WRAT Head Coach.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

How We Handle Bullying

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. We reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when we intervene.

If bullying is occurring on our team, it is reported to be occurring on our team, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

Finding Out What Happened

1. First, we get the facts.
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - c. Listen without blaming.
 - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while we try to understand what happened.
 - e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. We collect all available information.
2. Then, we determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying

but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, we consider the following questions:
 - i. What is the history between the kids involved?
 - ii. Have there been past conflicts?
 - iii. Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
 - iv. Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- d. Once we have determined if the situation is bullying, we support all of the kids involved.

Supporting the Kids Involved

1. Support the kids who are being bullied.
 - a. We listen and focus on the child. We learn what’s been going on and show we want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
 - b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. We are persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. We commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child. It may help to:
 - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the WRATs and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be

addressed going forward.

- c. We are persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. We commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.
2. Address bullying behavior
- a. We make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
 - b. We show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
 - c. We work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because something else — issues at home, abuse, stress — is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
 - d. We involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
 - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Y, or for others in our community.
 - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
3. We avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
- a. Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - b. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.

- c. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, we continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.
- 4. We support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.
 - a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
 - b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
 - c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."
 - d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
 - e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix B: Electronic Communication Policy

The Westport Weston Family YMCA Water Rat Swim Team recognizes how prevalent electronic communication and social media have become; many of our swimmers use Facebook, Twitter and texting as their primary methods of communication. But while the Water Rat Swim Team acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the team also realizes that there are risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

Swim Team Information Only

All communications between a coach, or other adult, and a Water Rat swimmer must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- drugs or alcohol use;
- inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity; or
- the adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems.

Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is a coach, parent or swimmer, before you write to a Water Rat you should always ask yourself, "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud in front of the intended recipient's parents or coaches.

There is a simple test that can be used in most cases to determine if your electronic communication with Water Rat swimmers is appropriate: is Transparent, Accessible and Professional?

Transparent: Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of

hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between Water Rat coaches, parents and swimmers should be considered a matter of record and part of the team's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a Water Rat coach, parent and Water Rat swimmer should be professional. Word choice, tone, grammar, and subject matter all should reflect the moral standards and integrity of the Westport Weston Family YMCA.

If your communication meets all three of T.A.P. criteria, then it's probably appropriate

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix C: Travel Policy

During travel, youth athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting — new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles, and hotel rooms — is less structured and less familiar. When they go to travel meets, swimmers can be vulnerable to misconduct, particularly by other swimmers. That is why Water Rat Swim Team has implemented this Water Rat Travel Policy.

Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity, which is planned and supervised by the Water Rat Swim Team or the Water Rats Parents' Club.

1. The Water Rat travel policy must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (USA Swimming Code of Conduct 305.5.D)
2. Team coaches and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (USA Swimming Code of Conduct 305.5.B)
3. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (USA Swimming Code of Conduct 305.5.A)
4. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (USA Swimming Code of Conduct 305.5C)
5. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
6. Water Rat swimmers should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
7. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes, they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13/over, chaperones and/or team coaches would ideally stay in nearby rooms. Although it is

preferable for parents to travel with their children when athletes are age 12/under, chaperones and/or team coaches may stay with athletes if their parents are not traveling with the team. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).

8. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a "buddy" team to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
9. To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
10. A copy of the Water Rat Code of Conduct, which has been signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian, must be on file with the Westport Weston Family YMCA.
11. The Westport Weston Family YMCA must obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
12. Water Rat coaches and/or chaperones should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
13. Curfews shall be established by the senior Water Rat coach for each day of the trip.
14. Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
15. The directives and decisions of coaches and/or chaperones are final.
16. Swimmers are expected to always remain with the team during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
17. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theaters, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12/under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix D: Volunteer Policy

PET-WRAT is the Parent Encouragement Tax of the Water Rats Parents' Club, Inc. The annual PET-WRAT fee, paid at registration, is the major source of income used to fund the Parents' Club annual operating budget. Families can earn back their PET-WRAT fees by volunteering at swim meets or by participating in the management of the Water Rats Parents' Club.

The PET-WRAT fee is set every year by the Water Rats Parents' Club board of directors and is listed in the team's registration packet. The PET-WRAT fee is payable in full at registration in September. No swimmer will be allowed to begin practicing with the team until the PET-WRAT fee is paid or waived because of financial need. (PET-WRAT fees are lowered or waived only for families that receive financial assistance from the Westport Weston Family YMCA.)

PET-WRAT Points

Below are the minimum volunteer points a family must earn during the Swim Year.

- 8/under – 15 Points
- Age Group Swimmer – 25 points
- Senior Swimmer – 25 points
- 2 or more swimmers, including an 8/under – 30 points
- 2 or more Age Group and/or Senior Swimmers – 35 points

Parents are required to help manage the Water Rat Swim Team by performing volunteer jobs, which help them earn PET-WRAT points. The number of Water Rat swimmers in a family, and their ages, determine the number of PET-WRAT points a family must earn.

To staff swim meets with parent volunteers, the Water Rat Parents Club revised its PET-WRAT requirements in September 2009. Since that time, Water Rat families have been

urged to perform on-deck assignments during both the Short Course and Long Course swim seasons.

Parents who are not certified USA Swimming Officials, can work on-deck as timers and PET-WRAT points will be granted for each swim meet they work.

Parents can use the team website at any time to register to work at swim meets. Later in the season, the PET-WRAT Coordinator will choose timers from a list of those who have not volunteered in person or online.

The parents of championship swimmers are expected to volunteer at championship meets irrespective of past volunteer work.

Parents who fail to register online will be assigned to work at swim meets as needed by the PET-WRAT Coordinator.

Parents must find a replacement if they cannot work at a swim meet for which they have registered or been assigned. If they fail to work on deck or find a replacement their child may be prevented from participating in future swim meets. This sanction can be appealed by requesting to meet with the PET-WRAT Coordinator and one of the co-presidents of the Water Rat Parents Club.

Parents who do not fulfill their volunteer point requirements may jeopardize their child's continued membership in the Water Rat Swim Team. Swimmers may be excluded from the team if their parents consistently fail to participate in the team's management.

Parent Commitment

Volunteer points can be earned by working at swim meets, by becoming a swim meet official, by accepting an appointed volunteer position, or by serving on the Parents' Club Board of Directors. Parents will be asked to acknowledge this commitment when they register their child for the Water Rat Swim Team.

Water Rat-Hosted Meets

You will sign up to work at Water Rat-hosted swim meets on the team website wrat.org. We will post these events and the available positions on the team web site prior to the meet. It is your responsibility to check the web site and sign up for positions. At the meet, it is your responsibility to check in with the Meet Manager to verify that you have fulfilled your commitment. If you cannot fulfill an assignment, you are responsible for obtaining a substitute. Failure to fulfill your assignment or to provide a substitute at a home meet may result in a fine of \$50.00.

Away Meets

You will sign up to work at away swim meets on the team website wrat.org. We will post these events and the available positions on the team website prior to the meet. It is your responsibility to check the web site and sign up for positions. At the meet, it is your responsibility to check in with the host team. If you cannot fulfill an assignment, you are responsible for obtaining a substitute.

Off-deck Volunteering

You can also earn volunteer points by accepting an appointed volunteer position or serving on the Parents' Club Board of Directors. Additional volunteer opportunities for which points can be earned may be posted from time to time as the need arises.

PET-WRAT Rewards

Families that volunteer above the minimum level of points will have the opportunity to earn cash back through our PET-WRAT Rewards Program. Families may earn cash back for volunteering above the minimum level. Once the minimum level of volunteer points has been met, you will receive \$1.00 for each volunteer point earned more than the minimum. Volunteer rewards will be capped at the amount of your PET-WRAT fees.

Non-compliance

Parents who do not fulfill their on-deck and volunteer point requirements will jeopardize their

child's continued membership in the Water Rat Swim Team. Swimmers may be excluded from swim meets if their parents consistently fail to participate in the team's management. If you do not meet your minimum volunteer commitment, you will be subject to a non-compliance fee of \$10.00 for each minimum volunteer point not earned. For example, if your commitment was 25 volunteer points and you earned 15 points, you would be assessed \$100.00. Families who meet their volunteer commitment will not be assessed the non-compliance fee. Points not earned will be billed to families in August of each year.

[Additional Information](#)

An adult other than the parent may satisfy volunteer obligations, if the substitute can competently perform the volunteer task. New members who join the Water Rat Swim Team mid-way through the year will have their volunteer commitment pro-rated over the remaining months of the year.

The intent of this policy is not to raise money but to emphasize how important it is that we work together to provide well-run meets for our children. The team cannot run a meet without adequate parent support. This policy is intended to provide flexibility for families throughout the meet season to fulfill the minimum volunteer commitment. Many of our parents' volunteer more than 100 hours during the year. Families not doing their fair share jeopardize the smooth management and operation of team events and subject the club to increased membership fees.

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix E: Ann Atkinson Fund (Parameters for Use of the Fund)

The Parents' Club Ann Atkinson Fund was established in 1997 in honor of a former president of the Water Rats Parents' Club, who passed away at a young age. Ann, whose daughters Andrea and Emily were Water Rats for more than 10 years, firmly believed in the value of YMCA swimming and she thought the Water Rat Swim Team should not exclude talented children of modest means. The Ann Atkinson Fund was created to help such children and to help Water Rat swimmers whose families are suffering a temporary financial hardship or are in crisis.

The Water Rats' Parents Club Board uses the following guidelines when granting money from the Ann Atkinson Fund:

1. In most cases, a Water Rat family seeking assistance should apply first to the Westport Weston Family YMCA for financial aid (exceptions are noted below).
2. Once the Family YMCA had made a decision on financial aid, the Y executive making the decision, or the head coach, informs one of the co-presidents of the Parents' Club.
3. If the Family YMCA offers to pay 100 percent of the swimmer's program and membership fees, the PC will endeavor to pay 100 percent of the swimmer's USA Swimming Escrow and PC fees. If the swimmer is a member of the National Team and he/she qualifies for Y Nationals, the Parents' Club will endeavor to cover the swimmer's Y Nat expenses. Assistance for all other travel meets will be decided on an ad hoc basis in consultation with the head coach.
4. If the Family YMCA offers a financial aid applicant less than a 100-percent discount (25 and 50 percent are most common), the Parents' Club should do the following:
 - a. Endeavor to reduce the Water Rat family's Parents' Club dues by a percentage equal to the percentage of financial assistance offered by the Family YMCA.
 - b. Endeavor to reduce the swimmer's initial escrow fee payment (the amount of which is announced during the fall registration) by a percentage equal to percentage of financial assistance offered by the Family YMCA.

- c. Endeavor to help pay YMCA National expenses if the swimmer qualifies to attend Y Nationals. The Parents' Club should decide on an ad hoc basis if it can and should pay a percentage of expenses for other travel meets.

Occasionally, Water Rat parents, who have not applied for financial assistance, may ask for help in paying for Y NATs or other travel meets. The co-presidents should consider such ad hoc requests in consultation with the co-treasurers and the head coach. The Parents' Club and coaches should encourage Water Rat parents, whose children receive financial assistance, to make an extra effort to volunteer as much as they possibly can.

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix F: Photography Protection Policy

All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency in particular:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualized image in a sporting context.
- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swimsuit.
- Photographs should not be taken from behind swimming blocks at the start of a race or exhibit a child climbing out of the swimming pool.
- Photographs should not be taken in locker-rooms or bathrooms.

A parent has a right to refuse to have their children photographed and such refusal shall not be used as grounds for denying the children entry into a swim meet. Parents can consent or refuse the use of photography of their children in a secure fashion when registering their children to participate on the team.

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix G: USA Swimming Code of Conduct

ARTICLE 304

CODE OF CONDUCT

304.1 The mission of USA Swimming is to encourage participation and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of swimming. USA Swimming grants the privilege of membership to individuals and organizations committed to that mission. The privilege of membership may, therefore, be withdrawn or denied by USA Swimming at any time where USA Swimming determines that a member or prospective member's conduct is inconsistent with the mission of the organization or the best interest of the sport and those who participate in it.

In order to assist all members to better serve the interests of those who participate in swimming, USA Swimming has adopted this Code of Conduct.

304.2 Any member, former member, or prospective member of USA Swimming is subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of Review. Any member, former member, or prospective member of USA Swimming may be denied membership, censured, placed on probation, suspended for a definite or indefinite period of time with or without terms of probation, fined or expelled from USA Swimming for life if such person violates the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, set forth in 304.3, or aids, abets or encourages another person to violate any of the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. USA Swimming shall initiate an investigation of any former member of USA Swimming when a report required under 306.1 is received.

304.3 The following shall be considered violations of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct: Measures to be adjudicated by the USA Swimming National Board of Review.

1. Violation of the right to compete provisions set forth in Article 301.
2. Discrimination in violation of the Amateur Sports Act which requires that USA Swimming must provide an equal opportunity to athletes, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators, and officials to participate in the sport of swimming. Athletes must be allowed to participate and compete to the fullest extent allowed by the Rules and Regulations. Discrimination against any member or participant based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, genetics, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by federal, state or local law, where applicable, is prohibited.

3. Repeated violation of any of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies [see page 91].
4. Any violation of the FINA Rules on the Prevention of Manipulation of Competition as found in the current FINA Manual, including (i) betting; (ii) manipulating competitions; (iii) corrupt conduct; (iv) misuse of inside information; (v) failure to report; and (vi) failure to cooperate.
5. The sale or distribution of illegal drugs or the illegal sale or distribution of any substance listed on FINA's recognized list of banned substances.
6. The use of illegal drugs in the presence of an athlete, by a coach, official, trainer, or a person who, in the context of swimming, is in a position of authority over that athlete.
7. The providing of alcohol to an athlete by a coach, official, trainer, manager or any other person where the athlete is under the legal age allowed to consume or purchase alcohol in the state where the alcohol is provided.
8. The abuse of alcohol in the presence of an athlete under the age of eighteen (18), by a coach, official, trainer, or a person who, in the context of swimming, is in a position of authority over that athlete. 2021 Rules & Regulations 91 304.3.
9. Any act of fraud, deception or dishonesty in connection with any USA Swimming-related activity.
10. Any non-consensual physical contact, obscene language or gesture, or other threatening language or conduct directed towards any meet official and which is related to any decision made by such official in connection with a USA Swimming sanctioned competition.
11. Action, other than through general advertising, by a coach, owner, officer, volunteer, representative, or employee of a swim club, or a USA Swimming or LSC employee, either through direct contact with an athlete or the encouragement of others, to recruit or otherwise encourage an athlete who is already a member of a USA Swimming member swim club to leave that club, unless the acting party receives prior written approval to recruit or encourage the athlete to change affiliation from the designated club representative of the athlete's existing USA Swimming-member swim club or contact is initiated by the athlete, the athlete's parent or authorized representative. General advertising includes any information that is: A Distributed to an identifiable general population where there is a reasonable expectation that the majority of that population are not current members of USA Swimming; or B Placed in or on any item that is sold. In the event of a violation of this section, a sanction may be imposed against any coach, owner, officer, volunteer, representative or employee of a swim club, or against any such club, or any combination thereof, as appropriate.

12. Any other material and intentional act, conduct or omission not provided for above, which is detrimental to USA Swimming, an LSC or the sport of swimming.

Measure to be adjudicated by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency

13. Violation of the anti-doping provisions set forth in 303.3.

Measure to be adjudicated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport .

14. Violation of the SafeSport Code. [see www.usaswimming.org/code]

Water Rat Swim Team Handbook

Appendix H: USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

In-Program Contact: Any contact (including communications, interactions or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport. Examples include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post event meals or outings, team travel, video review, team- or sport-related team building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community services, sport education, competition site visits, conventions and/or summits.

Adult Participants: Any adult 18 years of age or older who is a:

- USA Swimming member, either athlete or non-athlete;
- Participating non-member (e.g., meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
- Authorized, approved or appointed by USA Swimming, Zones, Local Swimming Committees (“LSCs”) or member clubs to have regular contact with (e.g., ongoing interactions during a 12- month period wherein the individual is in a role of active engagement) or authority over Minor Athletes; and/or
- Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of USA Swimming, Zones, LSCs or member clubs.

GENERAL REQUIREMENT

USA Swimming Zones, LSCs and member clubs are required to implement this Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy in full. The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy must be reviewed and agreed to in writing by all athletes, parents/legal guardians, coaches and other non-athlete members of member clubs on an annual basis with such written agreement to be retained by the club or LSC, as applicable.

DEFINITIONS

Athlete: A USA Swimming athlete member.

Authority: When one person’s position over another person is such that, based on the totality of the circumstances, they have the power or right to direct, control, give orders to, or make decisions for that person (e.g., when a power imbalance exists).

Dual Relationship: When an Adult Participant has a relationship with a Minor Athlete that is outside of the sport program. Examples of Dual Relationships include, but are not limited to,

family members, mental health professionals, teachers, medical professionals and family friends.

Emergency Circumstances: A serious, unexpected and possibly dangerous situation that requires quick action and cannot be avoided. Emergency circumstances include, but are not limited to: a physical, mental or emotional medical emergency involving the Minor Athlete, relative of the Minor Athlete or relative of an Adult Participant; a Minor Athlete's suicidal ideations/behavior; a report of abuse; a severe weather event; and last-minute practice changes.

Electronic Communication: Includes, but not limited to, phone calls, emails, videoconferencing, video coaching, text-messaging and social media.

Event or Facility Under Partial or Full Jurisdiction: Includes any USA Swimming sanctioned event (including all travel and lodging in connection with participation in the event) or any facility that USA Swimming, Zones, LSCs or member clubs owns, leases or rents for practice, training or competition.

In-Program: Activities related to participation in sport. Examples include, but are not limited to: competition, practices, meetings, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post event meals or outings, team travel, video review, team- or sport-related team building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community services, sport education, competition site visits, conventions, conferences, summits and/or workshops.

In-Program Contact: Any contact (including communications, interactions or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport. Examples include, but are not limited to contact occurring at or related to: competition, practices, meetings, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post event meals or outings, team travel, video review, team- or sport-related team building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community services, sport education, competition site visits, conventions, conferences, summits and/or workshops.

In-Program Massage: Any Massage involving an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport. Examples include, but are not limited to Massage occurring at or related to: competition, practices, meetings, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post event meals or outings, team travel, video review, team- or sport-related team building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community services, sport education, competition site visits, conventions, conferences, summits and/or workshops.

In-Program Travel: Any transportation or travel involving an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in sport authorized or funded by USA Swimming. Examples include, but are not limited to transportation or travel to or related to: competition, practices,

meetings, camps/clinics, training/instructional sessions, pre/post event meals or outings, team travel, video review, team- or sport- related team building activities, celebrations, award ceremonies, banquets, team- or sport-related fundraising or community services, sport education, competition site visits, conventions, conferences, summits and/or workshops.

Massage: Any massage, rubdown, athletic training modality including physical modalities (e.g., stretching, physical manipulation, injury rehabilitation, etc.) and electronic or instrument assisted modalities (e.g., stim treatment, dry needling, cupping, etc.).

Minor Athlete: An athlete under 18 years of age who is a USA Swimming member or was a USA Swimming member within the previous 12 months.

EXCEPTIONS

[Note: Exceptions apply only where specified]

Close-In-Age Exception: In-Program Contact between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete is permitted if:

- a. The Adult Participant has no authority over the Minor Athlete; and
- b. The Adult Participant is not more than four years older than the Minor Athlete.

Dual Relationship Exception: An Adult Participant has a dual role or relationship with a Minor Athlete. This exception requires written consent of the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian at least annually.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

I. Observable and Interruptible

All one-on-one In-Program Contact interactions between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant must occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, except:

- a. In emergency circumstances;
- b. When a Dual Relationship exists; and/or
- c. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies.

MEETINGS AND INDIVIDUAL TRAINING SESSIONS

I. Meetings

- a. Meetings between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant may only occur if another adult is present and where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- b. If a one-on-one meeting takes place, the door to the room must remain unlocked and open. If available, it must occur in a room that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- c. Meetings must not be conducted in an Adult Participant or Athlete's hotel room or other overnight lodging location during In-Program Travel.

II. Meetings with Licensed Mental Health Care Professionals and/or Health Care Providers

If a licensed mental health care professional and/or health care provider meets one-on-one with a Minor Athlete at an Event or Facility Under Partial or Full Jurisdiction of USA Swimming in conjunction with participation, the meeting must be observable and interruptible by another adult, except if:

- a. The door remains unlocked;
- b. Another adult is present at the facility;
- c. The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring although the Minor Athlete's identity does not need to be disclosed;
- d. USA Swimming is notified that the licensed mental health care professional and or health care provider will be meeting with a Minor Athlete; and
- e. The licensed mental health care professional and/or health care provider obtains consent consistent with applicable laws and ethical standards, which can be withdrawn at any time.

III. Individual Training Sessions

- a. In-Program one-on-one individual training sessions outside of the regular course of training and practice between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes must be observable and interruptible by another adult, except:
 - i. When a Dual Relationship exists; and/or
 - ii. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies.
- b. The Adult Participant providing the individual training session must receive advance, written consent from the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian at least annually, with a copy provided to the USA Swimming, which can be withdrawn at any time.
- c. Parents/legal guardians must be allowed to observe the individual training session.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

I. Content

All Electronic Communication from Adult Participants to Minor Athletes must be professional in nature.

II. Open and Transparent

- a. If an Adult Participant communicates one-on-one with a Minor Athlete via Electronic Communications, the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian must be copied or included. If a Minor Athlete communicates to the Adult Participant privately first, said Adult Participant must copy or include the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian on any Electronic Communication response to the Minor Athlete. Adult Participants must only use Electronic Communication platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication.
- b. The following exceptions apply to Section II(a):
 - i. In emergency circumstances;
 - ii. When a Dual Relationship exists; and/or
 - iii. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies.
- c. When an Adult Participant communicates electronically to the entire team or any

number of Minor Athletes on the team, said Adult Participant must copy another Adult Participant.

III. Requests to Discontinue

Parents/legal guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by USA Swimming or by an Adult Participant subject to this Policy. USA Swimming must abide by any such request that the Minor Athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, or included in any social media post, absent emergency circumstances.

IV. Hours

Electronic communications must only be sent between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. local time for the location of the Minor Athlete, unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

V. Prohibited Electronic Communication

- a. Adult Participants are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with Minor Athletes and such Adult Participants are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from Minor Athletes, unless the Adult Participant has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact as opposed to regular contact. Existing social media connections with Minor Athletes must be discontinued. Minor Athletes may “friend”, “like” or “follow” USA Swimming’s official page.
- b. Adult Participants must not send private, instant or direct messages to a Minor Athlete through social media platforms.
- c. The following exceptions apply to Section V:
 - i. When a Dual Relationship exists; and/or
 - ii. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies.

IN-PROGRAM TRAVEL AND LODGING

I. Transportation

- a. During In-Program Travel, observable and interruptible environments must be maintained.
- b. An Adult Participant must not transport a Minor Athlete one-on-one during In-Program Travel and must always transport at least two Minor Athletes or another Adult Participant except:
 - i. In emergency circumstances;
 - ii. When a Dual Relationship exists;
 - iii. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies; and/or
 - iv. The Minor Athlete’s parent/legal guardian has provided, at least annually, written consent for the Adult Participant to transport the Minor Athlete one-on-one, which can be withdrawn at any time.
- c. Adult Participants, including team managers and chaperones, who travel with USA Swimming must be USA Swimming non-athlete members of USA Swimming.

Adult Participants who are parents/legal guardians of Minor Athletes must pick up their Minor Athlete first and drop off their Minor Athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

II. Lodging

- a. An Adult Participant must not share a hotel room, sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with an Athlete.
- b. During In-Program Travel, all In-Program Contact in a hotel room, sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location between an Adult Participant and a Minor Athlete must be observable and interruptible.
- c. During In-Program Travel, when doing room checks, two-deep leadership (two Adult Participants should be present) and observable and interruptible environments must be maintained.
- d. The following exceptions apply to II(a), (b) and (c):
 - i. When a Dual Relationship exists, the Adult Participant is not a coach, and the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian has provided advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement; and/or
 - ii. When the Close-In-Age Exception applies and the Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian has provided advance, written consent for the lodging arrangement.
- e. Minor Athletes should be paired to share a hotel room, sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with other Minor Athletes of the same competition category and of similar age.

III. Written Consent

A Minor Athlete's parent/legal guardian must provide written consent, at least annually, for all In-Program Travel and lodging during In-Program Travel, which can be withdrawn at any time.

IV. Meetings

- a. Meetings during In-Program Travel must be conducted consistent with the One-on-One Interactions section of this Policy (e.g., any such meeting must be observable and interruptible).
- b. Meetings must not be conducted in an Adult Participant or athlete's hotel room or other overnight lodging location during In-Program Travel.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

I. Requirement to Use Locker Room or Changing Area

The designated locker room or changing area must be used when an athlete or Adult Participant changes, in whole or in part, into or out of a swimsuit when wearing just one suit (e.g., deck changing is prohibited).

II. Observable and Interruptible

All In-Program Contact between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes in a locker room, changing area or similar space must be observable and interruptible, except:

- a. In emergency circumstances;
- b. A Dual Relationship exists; and/or
- c. The Close-In-Age exception applies.

III. Private or Semi-Private Space for Minor Athletes

USA Swimming must provide a private or semi-private place for Minor Athletes that need to change clothes or undress at Events or Facilities Under Partial or Full Jurisdiction of USA Swimming.

IV. Use of Recording Devices

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces by a Minor Athlete or an Adult Participant is prohibited.

V. Undress

Adult Participants must not change clothes or behave in a manner that intentionally or recklessly exposes his or her breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to a Minor Athlete under any circumstance. An Adult Participant must not request a Minor Athlete to expose the Minor Athlete's breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to the Adult Participant under any circumstance. Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to areas of the body exposed while wearing swimwear which conforms to the current concept of the appropriate for the individual's competition category.

VI. Showers

- a. Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes unless:
 - i. The Adult Participant meets the Close-in-Age Exception; and/or
 - ii. The shower is part of a pre- or post-activity rinse while wearing swimwear.
- b. Parents/legal guardians may request in writing that their Minor Athlete(s) not change or shower with Adult Participants during In-Program Contact. USA Swimming must abide by such a request.

VII. Monitoring

USA Swimming must regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with this Policy. Locker rooms and changing areas may be monitored by use of the following methods:

- a. Conducting a sweep of the locker room or changing area before athletes arrive;
- b. Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use;
- c. Leaving the doors open when adequate privacy is still possible; and/or
- d. Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms or changing areas with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms.

Every effort must be made to recognize when a Minor Athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition, and, if the Minor Athlete does not return in a timely fashion, to check on the Minor Athlete's whereabouts.

VIII. Parents/legal guardians in Locker Rooms or Changing Areas

If a parent/legal guardian enters a locker room or changing area, it must only be a parent/legal guardian of the same competition category and the parent/legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance.

MASSAGES, RUBDOWNS AND ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES

I. General Requirement

Any In-Program Massage performed on an athlete must be conducted in an observable and interruptible location and must be performed by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. However, even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach must not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstance.

II. Additional Minor Athlete Requirements

- a. Written consent by a parent/legal guardian must be obtained in advance at least annually by the licensed massage therapist or other certified professional which can be withdrawn at any time.
- b. Parent/legal guardians must be allowed to observe the Massage, except for competition or training venues that limit credentialing.
- c. Any Massage of a Minor Athlete must be done with at least one other Adult Participant physically present and must never be done with only the Minor Athlete and the person performing the Massage in the room.
- d. Any Massage of a Minor Athlete must be performed with the Minor Athlete fully or partially clothed, ensuring that the breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals are always covered. Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to areas of the body exposed while wearing swimwear which conforms to the current concept of the appropriate for the individual's competition category.
- e. Any Massage of a Minor Athlete must only occur after a proper diagnosis from a treating physician and be done in the course of care according to the physician's treatment plan.

APPENDIX A
**[REQUIRED BY U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT FOR INCLUSION AS APPENDIX TO THE USA
SWIMMING MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY]**

ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING AND PREVENTION POLICIES

All NGBs, PSOs, LAOs, and the USOPC (the “Organization”) must implement proactive policies designed to prevent abuse. These organizational requirements are described below.

A. Organizational Requirements for Education & Training

1. USA Swimming must track whether Adult Participants under its jurisdiction complete the required training listed in Part I.
2. USA Swimming must, on an annual basis, offer and, subject to parental consent, give training to Minor Athletes on the prevention and reporting of child abuse.
 - a. For training to Minor Athletes, USA Swimming must track a description of the training and how the training was offered and provided to Minor Athletes.
 - b. USA Swimming is not required to track individual course completions of Minor Athletes.
3. USA Swimming must, on an annual basis, offer training to parents on the prevention and reporting of child abuse.

B. Required Prevention Policies and Implementation

1. USA Swimming must develop minor athlete abuse prevention policies that contain the mandatory components of the Center’s model policies in Part III. These model policies cover:
 - a. One-on-one interactions
 - b. Meetings and training sessions
 - c. Athletic training modalities, massages, and rubdowns
 - d. Locker rooms and changing areas
 - e. Electronic communications
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Lodging
2. The policies must be approved by the Center as described in subsection (C) below. The policies may include the recommended components in Part III and the recommended policies in Part IV. Given the uniqueness of each sport, however, some recommended components or policies may not be feasible or appropriate. An Organization may choose to implement stricter standards than the model policies.
3. USA Swimming must also require that its LAOs implement these policies within each LAO.
4. USA Swimming, Zones, LSCs and member clubs must implement these policies for all In-Program Contact.
 - a. At sanctioned events and facilities partially or fully under its jurisdiction, the organization must take steps to ensure the policies are implemented and followed.

- b. For In-Program Contact that occurs outside an Organization's sanctioned event or facilities, implementing these policies means:
 - i. Communicating the policies to individuals under its jurisdiction;
 - ii. Establishing a reporting mechanism for violations of the policies;
 - iii. Investigating and enforcing violations of the policies.
- 5. USA Swimming must have a reporting mechanism to accept reports that an Adult Participant is violating the Organization's minor athlete abuse prevention policies. USA Swimming on must appropriately investigate and resolve any reports received, unless the violation is reported to the Center and it exercises jurisdiction over the report. This requirement is in addition to requirements to report abuse under the SafeSport Code.

C. Policy Approval and Submission Process

1. Each NGB, PSO, and the USOPC may adopt the MAAPP as-is or adapt it to fit their needs. Regardless, each Organization must submit their policies to the Center at compliance@safesport.org for review and approval by January 31, 2021. The Center will approve, approve with modifications, or deny the policies. If the Center denies the proposed policy, the mandatory components of Part III become the default policy until the Center approves the policy.
2. NGBs must require their LAOs to incorporate the mandatory components of Part III. NGBs may require that their LAOs implement the NGB's policies, which may be more stringent than the policies in Part III.
3. An NGB may, in its discretion, require its National Member Organizations (NMO) to implement these policies.
 - An NGB that chooses to require its NMOs to implement the Education & Training Policy must obtain advanced, written approval from the Center to expand the training access to additional persons. Requests must be submitted to ngbservices@safesport.org.
4. The mandatory components of Part III will serve as the default policy for any organization that fails to develop its own policy as required by this section.

Water Rat Handbook

Appendix I: Glossary

USA Swimming Terms of the Sport

From usaswimming.org

A glossary of those strange words used in the sport of swimming. You may or may not find these words in an English dictionary, but if you do, their definitions will probably be radically different than the ones listed here.

Age Group

Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Some LSCs have divided the swimmers into more convenient divisions specific to their situations: (i.e. 8-under, 13-Over, 15-Over, Junior, Senior).

Alternate

In a Prelims/Finals meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalists are designated as alternates. The faster of the two being the first alternate and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place.

Anchor

The final swimmer in a relay. Also a term coaches use for the beginning of all four strokes indicating the “high elbow,” “catch,” or “early vertical forearm.”

Approved Meet

A meet conducted with sufficient USA Swimming officials to certify conformance to USA Swimming rules. The meet may include competitors who are not USA Swimming members. The meet may be a competition sanctioned at the LSC level with the added approval of USA Swimming because both member and non- member athletes will be competing.

ASCA

The American Swim Coaches Association. The professional organization for swim coaches throughout the nation. Certifying coaches and offering many services for coaches' education and career advancement.

Backstroke

One of the four competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swum as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/ meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd back).

Blocks

The starting platforms located behind each lane. Minimum water depth for use of starting blocks is 4 feet. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.

BOD

Board of Directors of the Local Swim Committee (LSC) or USA Swimming (USA Swimming).

Breaststroke

One of the four competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swum as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter. (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd breast).

Butterfly

One of the four competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swum as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd fly).

Camp

A swimming function offered by USA Swimming, your LSC, or a USA Swimming coach. There are many types of camps for just about every level of swimmer. When selecting a camp, ask for your coach's advice as to what will be the best for the swimmer, or call USA Swimming for details on the many camps they offer.

Carbohydrates

The main source of food energy used by athletes. Refer to a Nutritional Manual.

Championship Meet

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

Championship Finals

The top six or eight swimmers (depending on the number of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the prelims are swum, qualify to return to the Finals. The last heat is the fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held.

Check-In

The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check-in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.

Circle Seeding

A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes (i.e. Lane 4) in the final three heats. See U.S.A. Swimming rule book for exact method for seeding depending on the lanes in the pool.

Clinic

A scheduled meeting for the purpose of instruction. (i.e.) Official's clinic, Coach's clinic.

Closed Competition

Swim meet which is only open to the members of an organization or group. Summer club swim meets are considered to be "Closed Competition."

Club

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

Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct that both swimmers and coaches are required to sign at certain USA Swimming/LSC sponsored events. The Code is not strict and involves common sense and proper behavior.

Colorado Timing System

A brand of automatic timing system.

Consolation Finals

After the fastest six or eight swimmers, the next six or eight swimmers (depending on the number of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the prelims are swum, qualify to return to the Finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held and are conducted before the Championship heat.

Convention

United States Aquatic Sports annual, weeklong, meeting where all rules changes are decided and working committees are established. Representatives are sent by each LSC to make up the voting body.

Course

Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition (i.e. Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters).

Deadline

The date meet entries must be "postmarked" by, to be accepted by the meet host. Making the meet deadline does not guarantee acceptance into a meet since many meets are "full" weeks before the entry deadline.

Deck

The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one but an "authorized" USA Swimming member may be on the deck during a swim competition.

Deck Entries

Accepting entries into swimming events on the first day or later day of a meet.

Deck Seeding

Heat and lane assignments are posted after swimmers who checked in have “scratched” (indicated they will not participate in the event).

Dehydration

The abnormal depletion of body fluids (water). The most common cause of swimmer’s cramps and sick feelings.

Developmental

A classification of meet or competition that is usually held early in the season. The purpose of a developmental meet is to allow all levels of swimmers to compete in a low-pressure environment.

Distance

How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards (2 lengths), 100 yards (4 lengths), 200 yards (8 lengths), 400 yards (16 lengths), 500 yards (20 lengths), 1000 yards (40 lengths), 1650 yards (66 lengths). Distances for long course are: 50 meters (1 length), 100 meters (2 lengths), 200 meters (4 lengths), 400 meters (8 lengths), 800 meters (16 lengths), 1500 meters (30 lengths).

Disqualified

A swimmer's performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with open hand above their head. Also called DQ.

Diving Well

A separate pool or a pool set off to the side of the competition pool. This pool has deeper water and diving boards/platforms. During a meet, this area may be designated as a warm-down pool with proper supervision.

Division I-II-III

NCAA member colleges and universities are assigned divisions to compete in, depending on the school's total enrollment and commitment to competitive athletics. Division I includes mainly large universities and Division III is made up of small research universities and small colleges.

Dual Meet

Type of meet where two teams/clubs compete against each other.

Dryland

The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

Dry Side

That part of the Code book (rule book) that deals with the "Administrative" Regulations of Competition.

Entry

An individual, relay team, or club roster's event list in a swim competition.

Entry Chairperson

The host club's designated person who is responsible for receiving, and making sure the entries have met the deadline.

Entry Fees

The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the LSC and type of meet.

Entry Limit

Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they cannot exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.

Electronic Timing

Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touchpads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer-type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers.

Event

A race or stroke over a given distance. An event equals 1 preliminary with its final, or one timed final.

False Start

When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.

False Start Rope

A recall rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. The rope is about half way on yard pools and about 50 feet from the starting end on meter pools.

Fastest to Slowest

A seeding method used on the longer events held at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on.

Fees

Money paid by swimmers for services (i.e. Practice fees, registration fee, USA Swimming membership fee, etc).

FINA

The international rules-making organization for the sport of swimming.

Finals

The final race of each event. See "Consolation Finals", "Timed Finals", etc.

Final Results

The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.

Fins

Large rubber flipper-type devices that fit on a swimmer's feet. Used in swim practice, not competition.

Flags

Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.

Freestyle

One of the four competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swum as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, 200 yards/ meter, 400 mtr/500, yd 800 mtr/1000 yds, 1500 mtr/1650 yds (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd free).

Goals

The short- and long-range targets for swimmers to aim for.

Goggles

Glasses-type devices worn by swimmers to keep their eyes from being irritated by the chlorine in the water.

Gun (or Bell) Lap

The part of a freestyle distance race (400 meters or longer) when the swimmer has two lengths plus five yards to go. The starter fires a gun shot (or rings a bell) over the lane of the lead swimmer when the swimmer is at the backstroke flags.

Heats

All of the swimmers entered in the event are divided into heats, or groups of swimmers. The results are compiled by the times swum, after all heats of the event are completed.

Heat Award

A ribbon, coupon, or other prize given to the winner of a single heat at an age group swim meet.

Heat Sheet

The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers' seed times in the various events at a swim meet.

High Point

An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet. All meets do not offer high point awards; check the pre meet information.

HOD

House of Delegates. The ruling body of an LSC composed of the designated representative of each club plus the board of directors (BOD) of the LSC. One vote per club and board member. Also refers to the national USAS convention meeting.

Horn

A sounding device. Used mainly with a fully automatic timing system.

Illegal

Doing something against the rules that is cause for disqualification.

IM

Individual Medley. A swimming event using all four of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. Equal distances must be swum of each stroke. Distances offered: 100 yards, 200 yards/meters, 400 yards/meter.

IMX

IMX is a motivational program that allows swimmers across the nation to compare themselves to the thousands of other athletes in their age group. All you have to do is swim a combination of events, at least one time per season, and USA Swimming will automatically give you your ranking.

IM Ready

A stepping stone program to IMX where swimmers compete in a series of five events at shorter distances and achieve a score. In this program swimmers are not ranked.

Interval

A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.

Invitational

Type of meet that requires a club to request an invitation to attend the meet.

Jump

An illegal start done by the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th member of a relay team. The swimmer on the block breaks contact with the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.

Junior Nationals

A USA Swimming Championship meet for swimmers 18 years old or less. Qualification times are necessary.

Kick Board

A flotation device used by swimmers during practice.

Lane

The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim (i.e. Lane 1 or Lane 2).

Lane Lines

Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.

Lap

One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.

Lap Counter

The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.

Leg

The part of a relay event swum by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.

Long Course

A 50-meter pool.

LSC

Local Swim Committee. The local level administrative division of the corporation (USA Swimming) with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by the Corporation. There are 59 LSCs.

Marshall

The official who controls the spectators and swimmers at a swim meet.

Meet

A series of events held in one program.

Meet Director

The official in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet.

Meters

The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the metric system. Long course meters is 50 meters, short course meters is 25 meters.

NAGTS

National Age Group Time Standards - the list of "C" through "AAAA" times published each year.

Nationals

USA Swimming National Championship meet conducted in March/April and August.

Natatorium

A building constructed for the purpose of housing a swimming pool and related equipment.

NCAA

National Collegiate Athletic Association.

NGB

National Governing Body.

Non-Conforming Time

A short course time submitted to qualify for a long course meet, or vice versa.

NT

No Time. Abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swum that event before.

Observed Meet

A meet that is not conducted according to USA Swimming rules (high school, YMCA) where a request for observation has been processed and approved in advance. Sufficient USA Swimming officials are present to certify that the athletes' swims are in compliance with USA Swimming technical rules.

Observed Swim

A swim observed by assigned USA Swimming officials for conformance with USA Swimming technical rules in a meet conducted under other than USA Swimming rules.

Officials

The certified adult volunteers who operate the many facets of a swim competition.

Olympic Trials

The USA Swimming-sanctioned long course swim meet held the year of the Olympic Games to decide what swimmers will represent the USA on our Olympic Team. Qualification times are faster than Senior Nationals.

Omega

A brand of automatic timing system.

OTC

Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Open Competition

Competition which any qualified club, organization, or individual may enter.

Pace Clock

The electronic clocks or large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warmups or swim practice.

Paddle

Colored plastic devices worn on the swimmers hands during swim practice.

Positive Check In

The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck seeded or pre seeded meet. The swimmer or coach must indicate the swimmer is present and will compete.

Practice

The scheduled workouts swimmers attend with their swim team/club.

Prelims

Session of a preliminary and finals meet in which the qualification heats are conducted.

Prelims-Finals

Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session. The fastest six or eight (Championship Heat) swimmers, and the next fastest six or eight swimmers (Consolation Heat) return in the evening to compete in the Finals. A swimmer who has qualified in the Consolation Finals may not place in the Championship Finals even if their finals time would place them so. The converse also applies.

Pre-seeded

A meet conducted without a bull pen in which a swimmer knows what lane and heat they are in by looking at the heat sheet or posted meet program.

Psyche Sheet

An entry sheet showing all swimmers entered into each individual event. Sometimes referred to as a "Heat Sheet" or meet program. However, a "heat sheet" would show not only every swimmer in an event, but also what heat and lane they are swimming in.

Pull Buoy

A flotation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice.

Qualifying Times

Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer. See "A", "AA" (etc.) times.

Ready Room

A room pool side for the swimmers to relax before they compete in finals.

Recall Rope

A rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. The rope is about 1/2 way on yard pools and about 50 feet from the starting end on meter pools.

Referee

The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the "Wet Side" administration and decisions.

Relays

A swimming event in which four swimmers participate as a team. Each swimmer completes an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1.) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. Medley relays are conducted over 200 yd/mtr and 400 yd/mtr distances. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle. Free relays are conducted over 200 yd/mtr, 400 yd/mtr, and 800 yd/mtr distances.

Sanction

A permit issued by an LSC to a USA Swimming group member to conduct an event or meet.

Sanction Fee

The amount paid by a USA Swimming group member to an LSC for issuing a sanction.

Sanctioned Meet

A meet that is approved by the LSC in which it is held. Meet must be conducted according to USA Swimming rules. All participants, including coaches, athletes and officials, must be USA Swimming members.

Schedule

USA Swimming or LSC list of meets with dates, meet host, meet location, type of meet, and contacts address and phone.

Scratch

To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.

Sectionals

Nickname for Speedo Championship Series (see below).

Seed

Assign the swimmers heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.

Seeding

Deck Seeding - swimmers are called to report to the Clerk of the Course. After scratches are determined, the event is seeded. Pre Seeding - swimmers are arranged in heats according to submitted times, usually a day prior to the meet.

Senior Meet

A meet that is for senior level swimmers and is not divided into age groups. Qualification times are usually necessary and will vary depending on the level of the meet.

Senior Nationals

A USA Swimming National Championship meet for swimmers of any age as long as the qualification times are met.

Session

Portion of meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, type of competition, or age group.

Short Course

A 25-yard or 25-meter pool.

Speedo Championship Series

Open "senior level" meets held in the spring and summer. Each Zone may hold up to four meets. Meets are commonly called "Sectionals." Qualifying times, sites, dates and meet rules are determined locally.

Splash

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

Split

A portion of an event that is shorter than the total distance and is timed (i.e. A swimmer's first 50 time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 race. It is common to take multiple splits for the longer distances).

Start

The beginning of a race. The dive used to begin a race.

Starter

The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and ensuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

Stand-up

The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.

Step-Down

The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks, because there is a technical, or other, problem which is preventing the race from starting.

Stroke

There are four competitive strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

Stroke Judge

The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified.

Submitted Time

Times used to enter swimmers in meets. Times must have been achieved in a previous sanctioned meet.

Swim-A-Thon

The "Fund Raiser" trademarked by USA Swimming for local clubs to use to make money.

Swim-off

In a Prelims/Finals type competition, a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise ties stand.

SWIMS

USA Swimming system that keeps track of every time swum by all swimmers. Available through the USA Swimming website.

Taper

The resting phase of a swimmer at the end of the season before the championship meet.

Team Records

The statistics a team keeps, listing the fastest swimmer in the club's history for every event by age group.

Timed Finals

Competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by those times.

Time Standard

A time set by an LSC or USA Swimming, which a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.

Timers

The volunteers standing behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for taking manual stopwatch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the electronic timing system.

Time Trial

An event during a championship where swimmers try to achieve a time standard for a future championship.

Top 10 or Top 16

A list of times compiled by the LSC or USA Swimming that recognizes the top 10 or 16 swimmers in each single age group (boys & girls) by each event and distance.

Touch Pad

The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race.

Transfer

The act of leaving one club or LSC and going to another. Usually 120 days of unattached competition is required before swimmer can represent another USA Swimming club.

Travel Fund

A sum of money set aside for a swimmer to use for travel expenses and entry fees to specified meets.

Unattached

An athlete who competes in a swim meet, but does not represent a club or team (abbr. UN) and therefore does not earn points for a club or team. Club swimmers compete as unattached athletes during the high school or college swim season(s) so as not to conflict with high school swimming or NCAA rules.

Unofficial Time

The time displayed on a read out board or read over the intercom by the announcer immediately after the race. After the time has been checked, it will become the official time.

USA-S

An abbreviation for USA Swimming.

USA Swimming

The national governing body of the sport headquartered in Colorado Springs.

USA Swimming ID Number

A 14-part number assigned to a swimmer after they have filled out the proper forms and paid their annual dues. The first 6 parts are numbers of a swimmer's birthdate: Month/Day/2-Digit Year using zeros as place holders. The next three spaces are the first three letters of the athlete's legal first name. The next letter is the middle initial, followed by the first four letters of the swimmer's last name. For example: USA Swimming ID# for swimmer Suzanne Eileen Nelson and born Aug.27, 1976 = 082776SUZENELS.

USOTC

United States Olympic Training Center located in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

VCC

Virtual Club Championships. The VCC recognizes and highlight clubs that are developing athletes and achieving success at multiple levels emphasizing the team element in club swimming. This program serves as a key part of the Athlete Development & Performance component of the Club Recognition Program.

Warm-down

The recovery swim that is done after a race when pool space is available.

Warm-up

The practice and "loosening-up" session that swimmers do before the meet or their events are swum.

Yards

The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the American system. A short course yard pool is 25 yards (75 feet) in length.

Yardage

The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.

Zones

The country is divided up into four major zones: Eastern, Southern, Central and Western. The zones sponsor age group championships at the end of the short course and long course seasons.