



# 2016 Swim Team Handbook

So, you've decided to take the plunge and become a Sugar Creek Gators Swim Team ("Team") parent! This Team handbook will help answer some of your questions and allay some of your concerns. Whatever is not covered in here can be answered by a veteran swim parent or a coach.

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# The Team

## Background & Affiliations

The Team, established in 1972, is one of the oldest summer swim teams in the area and is made up of Sugar Creek and surrounding neighborhood residents and is affiliated with Sugar Creek Country Club, though membership is not required. Currently, the Team is a member of the Southwest Houston Recreational Swim League ("League"), which is composed of more than twenty community and subdivision swim teams in the southwest Houston area. More information about the League can be found on their official website, <http://www.shrsl.org>.

Summer league provides an opportunity for young people to:

- begin the summer with an active lifestyle;
- improve their swimming abilities;
- make new friends and share good times;
- gain self-confidence through healthy competition, perseverance, success and failure.

## Meet Team & Practice Team

There are two types of teams in which swimmers can participate. The Meet team will consist of members that meet the eligibility requirements to swim at Dual Meets (regular season meets) and Post-season Meets (e.g. Finals, All-stars). Eligibility requirements to be a member of the Meet team are as follows:

- 3 to 6 year-old swimmers must be able to swim the length of the pool unassisted (25 yards).
- 7 to 10 year-old swimmers should have a working knowledge of all four strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly) and should be legal (i.e. have meet-qualified form) in at least two strokes.
- 11 and older swimmers must be able to swim two lengths of the pool (50 yards) in at least three strokes.

Swimmers must meet the eligibility requirements by the first Practice meet (a.k.a. Mock Meet) of the season. The Mock Meet is typically held during the last week in May, a few weeks after practices have begun.

Note that there are no eligibility dependencies based on the speed, ranking or any other performance-related metric. Swimmers that register for the team will be assumed to be participating on the Meet team unless either (a) the parent requests their swimmer(s) to be placed on the Practice team or (b) the maximum number of swimmers (by Age Group or the overall Team) has been reached.

Members that are unable to meet the eligibility requirements will be placed on the Practice Team. Members of the practice team will have all other team benefits such as trophies, banquet and social events. The Practice team will practice at the same time, with their same age group, as the Meet team. If at any time a swimmer on the Practice team demonstrates to a coach they can meet the eligibility requirements, they will be placed on the Meet team, if space is available.

# Team Communication & Information

Good communication is vital to a successful season. The Team has established several ways to provide information, updates, and alerts to ensure members are always aware of Team news and events.

Following are the ways to stay connected:

**Gators Official Website:** <http://www.scgators.com>

This will be your primary resource in which all other resources can be accessed. Additionally, each parent will create an account on the website with an email address that will be used to communicate team information. Additional details of the online account are provided in the My Account section below.

**SwimTopia Mobile App:**

The Team uses SwimTopia to manage many facets of the team, including most of the functionality on the website. SwimTopia has made available a mobile application that provides event information and swimmer's swim history. Download the iOS version from iTunes or Android version from the Play Store. Links to these applications are also on the Team website. Use the login credentials you established when registering.

**Email / Contact Us:** <http://www.scgators.com/contact-us/>

**Gators Facebook Page:** <http://www.facebook.com/groups/scgators/>

Facebook is used to share/view photos, read team/parent posts and discussions.

**Gators Twitter Account:** @BewareOfGators

Follow alerts and news about the team

**Text-alert system:** text the words scgators to 84483

Opt-in to the text alert system which will alert of rainout or other time sensitive information

## "My Account"

The first time you register your child(ren) with the Team you will setup an account using your email address and a password. The email address used for this account will be the primary means of communicating team information. This account will be valid as long as you are a member of the Team (season to season). In addition to Registration and communication purposes, the creation of an account allows families to do the following:

1. Notify the Team whether or not your swimmer(s) will be attending the Meets through the website (See "Meet Entry").
2. Sign-up for Volunteer jobs through the website (See "Volunteer Sign-up")
3. RSVP and pay for social events
4. View all of your swimmer(s) official swim history and swim times at Meets (Login, select My Account in upper right section of website and then click your child's name)
5. View your volunteer status including number of shifts worked (See "Family Volunteering Summary")

# Team Code of Conduct

There are some simple rules of etiquette for your swimmers that help make the experience better for everyone on the team:

- All swimmers, parents and spectators are expected to adhere to all pool, Team, and League rules. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the child not being allowed to participate.
- Swimmers and families will conduct themselves at practices and meets so as to exhibit good discipline and sportsmanship toward all swimmers, coaches, and meet officials. Any swimmer not adhering to this guideline, by the discretion of the Head Coaches, Meet Officials or the Board, may be suspended from practices, meets, social events, or expelled from the team.
- Swimmers must adhere to the Swimmer's Responsibilities / Meet Code of Conduct defined in the Swim Meets section below.
- Parents must honor their volunteer requirements to ensure their child(ren) are eligible for meets (including post-season) and social events.

## Team Members

Everyone involved with the Team is a member. The Team led by a Board of Directors and coached by qualified instructors. But the heart of the team is the swimmers and parents. The team is nearly 100% volunteer run, meaning the contributions by the parents are the real keys to a successful season.

### Board of Directors & Committees

The Board of Directors is made up of parents and volunteers who are dedicated to providing a positive summer swim league experience. The Team is always looking for parents who would like to help take a leadership role. If interested, please contact any of the Current Board members or send an email through the team website. The current Board members and Committee members are listed on the team website. Any questions, issues and/or concerns about the team can be directed to the Board.

In addition to the Board of Directors, the Team has several committees to assist with running the team. Committees include: Equipment, Membership (Registration), Merchandise (Gator Gear), Social, Sponsorship, Technology and Volunteers. It is very easy for parents to become involved in any of the committees.

For additional information about how the team is governed please read the Sugar Creek Gators By-Laws. This document is posted on the team website.

### Coaches

The Head and Assistant coaches are trained and qualified in youth coaching. As such, they are the only paid employees of the Team. Each are dedicated to fostering a solid foundation in swimming technique and sportsmanship. Nothing has a greater influence on the quality of children's sports than the excellence of the coach.

### Coaches Main Responsibilities Include:

1. Stroke instruction and physical training
2. Maintain discipline thus providing a positive environment for all swimmers
3. Making all decisions regarding in which events a swimmer will participate
4. Making all decisions regarding the make-up of relay teams
5. Supervises meets

Please keep in mind that you and all of the coaches have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are likely to enjoy a good rapport and constructive dialogue.

### Junior Assistant Coaches

Open swimmers who have spent at least one season as a Volunteer Coach are the top candidates for a Junior Assistant Coach position. Open Swimmers must apply for the position and selection determined by the Board and the Head Coach(es).

Junior Assistant Coaches are a skilled, passionate swimmers and instructors that typically have grown up through the summer program. They are vital to overall swim team experience.

### Volunteer Coaches

Older swimmers (13 & up) that enjoy helping with the younger swimmers may be asked to be part of the coaching staff as a Volunteer Coach. Volunteer Coaches are instrumental in helping the Head and Assistant Coaches primarily during meets. Any swimmer that is interested in becoming a Volunteer Coach should let the Head Coach know at the beginning of the swim season.

### Voicing Coaching Concerns

Concerns for your child's safety should be immediately brought to the attention of the Head Coach or a Board member. Other concerns like the events your child is entered in or other swimming related matters should be discussed with the Head Coach at an appropriate time. Due to the fact that practices run back to back, e-mail might be the most effective means of communication. It is never appropriate to discuss concerns on the pool deck or in front of swimmers or other parents.

Any concerns about the conduct of the Head or Assistance Coaches should be communicated with any member of the Board of Directors, who will in turn present the concerns to the entire Board to determine the recommended course of action.

## Swimmers

### Eligibility

Most of the swim team eligibility requirements are established by the League. The League has implemented the following eligibility and participation requirements:

The SHRSL Season is defined as March 31 of current season through the Post Season All Star Meet.

- A swimmer's age on May 31st of the current year shall determine the age group for competition.
- A swimmer may not change their team affiliation after May 15; after which, a swimmer shall practice and compete with only one SHRSL swim team per season.

- A swimmer participating in any NCAA Swimming program (practice OR competition) is ineligible for SHRSL participation.
- A swimmer may not participate nor compete in a non-SHRSL practice(s) or competition after March 31.
  - Allowed is participation for school related, academic grade in an Olympic Development program, such middle school or high school swimming programs, may continue to practice through the end of the academic year,
- No participation in competition or sanctioned meets including UIL, USA Swimming, CCAA or any other swimming competition is allowed.

### Age Groups

The swimmer's age on May 31<sup>st</sup> of the current season will determine their Age Group.

Your swimmer will compete against other children of the same age and gender at all swim meets. Practices will also be held by age group. The team is divided into six age groups, which are also split between Girls and Boys. The age groups are divided as follows:

#### *6 YO & Under (6U)*

6U team members will concentrate on the freestyle stroke. During meets they will swim freestyle individual event and may be selected to also participate in the freestyle relay. The coaches may use their discretion to enter a 6U swimmer in other strokes in the 7/8 Division should their abilities allow. All events for this age group are 25 yard or meters.

#### *7 & 8 YO (7/8); 9 & 10 YO (9/10)*

The 7/8 and 9/10 swimmers practice all four strokes including freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. They are allowed to swim two individual events and two relays at a meet. The coaching staff decides which strokes each swimmer will participate in during a meet. All events for this age group are 25 yards or meters.

#### *11 & 12 YO (11/12); 13 & 14 YO (13/14); 15 – 18 YO (Open)*

The 11/12, 13/14 and Open swimmers practice all four strokes as well as the individual medley. They are allowed to swim 3 individual events and 2 relays during a meet. The coaching staff decides which strokes each swimmer will participate in during a meet. All events for this age group are 50 yards or meters (except the individual medley, which is 100 yards or meters.)

### Registration

Registration for the summer season typically starts 2 – 3 months prior to the start of practices. Returning swimmers are given an opportunity to register prior to opening up registration to new members. Registration is done online through the Team website ([www.scgators.com](http://www.scgators.com)). Swimmers must meet the eligibility requirements defined above.

Once the 200 swimmer maximum (or a maximum number of swimmers in a specific age group) is reached a waiting list will be created. Swimmers on the wait list will be admitted on a first-come first-serve basis based when a spot becomes available.

## Parents / Volunteers

Other than the coaching staff, Parents and Volunteers run every aspect of the team. To get involved in the management of the team please contact any of the current Board members. The Team has several Committees in addition to Board positions for interested Parents to become part of.

As such, parents are the most important members of this team. It cannot be understated the importance of Parent Volunteers. Swimming is not like Little League Baseball, Upwards Basketball, Pee Wee Football or any other youth organized team sport. Each swim meet requires between 50 and 80 volunteers (depending on away or home meets), which means every family must contribute. The Team has made every effort to make volunteering as easy as possible. Following is Volunteer Agreement that must be accepted during registration.

### *Volunteer Agreement*

*I understand that the Sugar Creek Gators is a volunteer organization and that my participation is essential to the efficient operation of our team. I further understand I am required to work a minimum of 4 shifts (1/2 of a meet) during our 5 regular swim meets and 1 mock meet. I understand that I may have to fill different positions than the ones I select during registration. I also understand if I do not select a volunteer job that I will be assigned one by the Volunteer Coordinator. If my swimmer(s) choose to participate in the final meet of the season (Meet of Champions), I understand that I may be asked to work an additional shift.*

Volunteer jobs/shifts required during meets are defined in the Volunteer section below as is the process for signing up to volunteer and how to check your volunteer status.

## Team Gear & Equipment

Team suits are used by the Team and typically change every other year. Team suits are available at Finish Line Sports, located in Sugar Creek Shopping Center (Southwest Freeway and Sugar Creek Blvd.) The purchase of a team suit is optional, but highly recommended. If your child does not wear a team suit, we request swimmers wear a dark color, such as navy blue, royal blue, or black. Wearing suits that identify swimmers as part of the Gator team helps promote unity.

Swim caps and goggles are not mandatory. However, swim caps are encouraged for the purpose of protecting the swimmer's ear by minimizing the amount of water that enters. The team does offer team swim caps for purchase but swimmers may choose to wear any color/style of swim cap they desire. Goggles can help prevent burning, red eyes during practice and meets. Swimmers should clearly mark all of their belongings with their name.

The team offers Team spirit merchandise online and at the Gator Gear booth at meets. Goggles, swim caps and other equipment will also be sold at meets in the event something is lost or broken.

Kickboards and swim aids are provided by the team during practice. There are no other equipment requirements beyond swimwear.

# Team Practices

Daily practices are held after school during May until school is dismissed for the year. After school is out, practices are held in the morning. A practice schedule is posted on the website and may change after the season begins depending on membership.

Swimmers are expected to participate in practices. As a general rule, the least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success. Swimmers should arrive at the pool no later than 10 minutes prior to their work out time. They should be picked up no later than 15 minutes following the conclusion of the practice. Parents who disregard this policy and leave children unattended will be reminded of the policy and ultimately, if abuse of the policy continues, the swimmer may be removed from the team.

Swimmers should be suited up and ready to swim on time. It is distracting to the coach and other swimmers when someone arrives late. Furthermore, the swimmer may not receive the appropriate warm up to avoid injury.

If a swimmer has an ongoing conflict with their practice time, a written request to change practice groups will be considered by the coach. The coach should be contacted via e-mail.

Parents should not discuss concerns or comments with coaches or swimmers during practices.

Parents are allowed to watch practices from the pool deck as long as their presence is not disruptive to the practice.

Swimmers who go to the club house before or after practice should be aware of the dress code. Shirts, pants and shoes are required (no swimsuits, cover-ups or bare feet are allowed).

During practice, the entire pool (including the lagoon/shallow end) is off-limits to anyone other than the age group practicing. No siblings or others are to be in the swimming pool.

## Practice Meet (Mock Meet)

A Mock meet is generally held prior to the first league dual meet. There are several purposes to holding a Mock meet:

1. Swimmers are timed in each stroke. These times are used to seed swimmers for the first meet.
2. Swimmers get to practice with a starter and a horn.
3. Volunteer timers can be trained and practice timing races.
4. Stroke judges can be on hand to review strokes and make coaches aware of violations.
5. Swimmers can be more relaxed during the first meet because they have experienced meet conditions.

Swimmers who are not able to participate in the practice meet will need to make arrangements with the coaches to be timed prior to the first meet.



# Swim Meets

## Types of Meets

Three types of meets occur during the summer swim season. These include Dual Meets, a Division Finals Meet and All-stars.

### Dual Meets (Home & Away)

The League organizes the teams into divisions based on the team size (enrollment) and past performance. This allows for more equitable competition between teams. Depending on how the league organizes the Divisions, the Team will participate in 5 or 6 Dual Meets during the season. Dual meets are simply defined as two teams swimming against each other. **Dual Meets will be held on Monday nights.**

Dual Meets will take place either at Sugar Creek Country Club (Home Meet) or at the competitor team's pool (Away Meet)

#### *Home Meets*

1. Warm ups for home meets begin 1 hour prior to the Meet. Swimmers are asked to arrive 30 minutes prior to warm ups (1.5 hours before the Meet).
2. Remember we are hosts. Please be pleasant and helpful to our guests.
3. We swim in EVEN numbered lanes.
4. Please keep swimmers and siblings out of all areas of the pool.
5. Proper attire is required in the club house. Swim suits and bare feet are not permitted.

#### *Away Meets*

1. Warm up begins 30 minutes prior to the Meet. Swimmers are asked to arrive 30 minutes prior to warm ups (1 hour before Meet).
2. Remember we are guests. Please be respectful and display good sportsmanship.
3. We swim in ODD numbered lanes.
4. Allow extra time if you are unfamiliar with the directions or parking conditions.
5. Leave the tent area the way you found it.

Dual meets consist of 70 events (13 relays, 57 individual events). Most events will have multiple heats, especially in some of the younger age groups that have a large number of swimmers that swim a limited number of strokes. Swimmers are seeded by time. The fastest three swimmers from each team swim in the first heat. Only first heats are used for tabulation of team point totals. Points are awarded as follows for a 6 lane pool:

#### Individual Events

1st Place –	7 points
2nd Place –	5 points
3rd Place –	4 points
4th Place –	3 points
5th Place –	2 points
6th Place –	1 point

Relays (coaches often decide to distribute the best swimmers on the two teams to gain the most meet points)

1st Place – 5 points

2nd place – 2 points.

### Division Finals

Finals is a Championship Meet for each Division held at the end of the Season. Swimmers and Relay teams must qualify to participate in the Finals Meet based on individual and relay team swim times recorded during Dual Meets. Swimmers from all teams in the Division are present. Events are held in the same order as regular season meets. It is a great accomplishment to qualify to swim at the Finals Meet. The first place individual in each event as well as each first place relay team qualifies for the All Star Meet.

### All-stars

All Stars is the Championship meet for the entire SHRSL League. From the Finals meets, the top swimmer in each stroke and the first place relay team automatically qualify for the All Star Meet. There are 16 participants in the individual events, thus in addition to the automatic qualifiers, the remaining qualifiers are pulled from the top times from the Finals meets (referred to as “call-ups”). Each swimmer will receive a medal. Qualifying for the All Star Meet is quite an accomplishment. Only the top swimmers out of the over 4000 athletes in league qualify. Swimmers who are unable to attend the All Star Meet must notify their coaches immediately.

### Meet Entry / Swimmer Sign-up

#### Why Sign-up?

Starting several days before the swim meet the coaches start compiling a heat sheet. This sheet lists the heat and lane assignment for each swimmer, for each event. Swim meet events are heated (division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time) by time. In addition, each heat is seeded, faster swimmers swim in the first heat and so on. Swim lanes are also seeded with the first fastest in lane 4 (at home meets) the second fastest in lane 2, etc. Some events could have 6 or more heats. Relays are also heated. The “A” relay team is made up of the four fastest swimmers. The “B” team of the next four and so on. Keep in mind that there are approximately two hundred swimmers on the team. Each swimmer has a time in four different events. Times are recorded to the one hundredth of a second. You are now working with over 800 swim times. Heats sheets put all these times in order for each event and each lane.

In order for the coaches to put together an accurate heat sheet it is imperative that they know who is and is not swimming at a meet. Removing one child from an event requires shuffling of all the other swimmers heat and lane assignments. Removing a swimmer from a relay team means that another swimmer must replace them. Most likely the replacement will come from another relay team and once again, everyone is shuffled around.

Compiling a heat sheet that is fair, balanced and competitive is one of the most challenging aspects of the coach’s job. Having swimmers no show or forget until the day of the meet that they have a conflict, causes considerable hardship to the coach and the team.

### How to Sign-up (Meet Entry)

We understand that with summer travel plans it is often impossible to make every swim meet. To accurately track which swimmers will be available for meets, parents are required to log-in online and indicate whether your child will be attending each upcoming meet. This is called “Meet Entry”. This process is extremely easy and should take just a few minutes. Typically Meets are opened up a few weeks in advance to allow plenty of time to sign-up.

STEP 1 Log into the Team website with the email address and password you created during registration. *If you have forgotten your password, you can request a password reset on the login page.*

STEP 2 On the homepage a “Next Meet” section will be located on the right side of the page. Simply start the process of declaring your swimmer(s) attendance by clicking on the Meet Entry button for that Meet.

STEP 3 A list of your swimmer’s will appear on the check-in page under “Your family swim met status”. Simply click the edit button to indicate their attendance. You have a few options when entering them into the meet. For example, if you will be running late or need to leave early from the Meet you can modify their participation in the Relay events. Here’s your options:

- Undeclared (no selection made)
- Attending (if selected you will be prompted for relay availability):
- Not Attending

Once you’ve selected the correct attendance for the meet simply click the Save button.

A confirmation page will now indicate your family swim meet status based on your entries. You will also be prompted to sign-up for a job shift. Volunteering is a vital part of Swim Meets and discussed in detail in the Volunteering section.

Additional step-by-step directions including images are available on the Team website.

### Deadlines & Consequences

The deadline for Entries are due the Saturday before the upcoming Meet. Swimmers marked as undeclared (attendance not submitted) will be considered not-attending. They will not be placed on relay teams or placed in first heat events. They can still attend the meet and will be allowed to swim, but they will be placed in the last heat of the individual events that the coaches select for them. Only if absolutely needed (e.g. no other swimmers available) will they be placed on the last created relay team. Again, it cannot be stressed enough how important it is for the Coaches to have an accurate account of what swimmers will be attending and/or missing.

The Team Calendar (under Schedule) on the website will have all the Meets listed and will provide the ability to Sign-up for more than just the upcoming meet. A “Meet Entry” button will be displayed when the Meet is available for sign-up. The same steps as outlined above apply.

## Swim Meet Basics

- PLAN TO ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 3:00pm at home meets and 3:30pm at away meets. We will warm-up first and the meet will officially begin at 4:30pm. Swimmers should wear their suit to the meet and have their goggles properly fitted. When you arrive, take your children to the Coaches. There, the Coaches will mark their swimmer number and meet events on their back/shoulder/arm. Once marked up, the swimmers will warm-up before the meet begins.
- PLEASE DO NOT PUT SUNSCREEN ON SWIMMERS BEFORE THEY ARRIVE. The marker won't write on top of sunscreen. The Tent Parents will help apply it after marking them up if you send it with them.
- HOME TEAM WILL BE ASSIGNED EVEN NUMBERED LANES.
- 6 AND UNDERS WILL COMPETE IN THE FREESTYLE AND FREESTYLE RELAY. Some may participate in the 7/8 Backstroke. (Check with the head Coach) They may leave after their last event, Event 20.
- 7/8's AND 9/10's MAY COMPETE IN UP TO TWO INDIVIDUAL EVENTS AND TWO RELAYS. The Coach will determine in which events they will participate.
- 11/12's, 13/14's AND OPEN (15 thru 18) MAY COMPETE IN UP TO THREE INDIVIDUAL EVENTS AND TWO RELAYS. The Coach will determine in which events they will participate.
- EVERY SWIMMER RECEIVES A RIBBON FOR EVERY EVENT THEY SWIM. Even a disqualified swimmer receives a Participation Ribbon.
- A SWIMMER MAY BE DISQUALIFIED (DQ'd) BY A STROKE JUDGE FOR IMPROPERLY PERFORMING A STROKE. This happens to even the best swimmers at times. If you want to understand stroke technique and help your child develop, please attend a League Stroke Clinic. Use of lane ropes, pool sides, or bottom of pool will result in a DQ.
- EARLY TAKE-OFF BY AN INDIVIDUAL IN A RELAY WILL RESULT IN A DQ FOR THE ENTIRE RELAY TEAM.
- THE HALFWAY POINT IS USUALLY AROUND EVENT 30 OR 35. This is when first half volunteers are released and second half volunteers begin. Second half volunteers - PLEASE report on time.
- SWIMMERS SHOULD STAY IN THEIR TENT THROUGHOUT THE MEET. The Tent Parents assigned to the tent need to know where the swimmers are at all times. They must be available for their events. If you want to take them to the Concession Stand or elsewhere, please "check them out" with the Tent Parents.
- THE MEET WILL LAST UNTIL AT LEAST 9:00-9:30pm.
- At Home meets, we have a concession stand to provide food and drinks at a reasonable cost. Most other teams also have some sort of concession stand. It's a good idea to pack water and healthy snacks/sandwiches, though, to get you and your gang through the meet. Pack separately for each swimmer since they will be eating with their groups.
- FEEL FREE TO BRING THINGS TO ENTERTAIN YOUR CHILD DURING THE MEET. Books, coloring books, cards, are all good ideas. Don't bring anything valuable, or anything you don't want to lose. LABEL EVERYTHING.
- GATHER YOUR THINGS BEFORE IT GETS DARK. Once the sun goes down it is hard to find things in the dark. Please, please, please help pick up trash and keep the area clean.
- PARENTS MAY BRING LAWN CHAIRS TO SIT IN.

- PER SHRSL BY-LAWS, NO ALCOHOL, SMOKING, PROFANITY OR VERBAL ABUSE IS ALLOWED AT SWIM MEETS.
- SWIMMERS / SIBLINGS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN OR NEAR THE POOLS!
- SWIMMERS MUST COMPLY WITH RESTRICTIONS OR REGULATIONS SPECIFIED BY THE HOME TEAM POOL.

### Meet Preparedness (what you need at a Meet)

1. Team swim suit
2. Cap and goggles (extras are a good idea)
3. Towels (2 or 3)
4. Something to sit on. (folding chair, extra towel, blanket)
5. T-shirt to prevent sun burning
6. Sunscreen and bug spray (but do not apply until the swimmer signs in and get their number)
7. Activities (There is a lot of down time between events. Ideas: markers/paper, game boys, books, personal music, cards, games, etc. )
8. Healthy snacks/drinks and or money. Snack and drinks can be purchased from the concessions stands; however you are allowed to bring your own. Personal coolers are allowed.
9. Remember it is very hot at most swim meets. Swimmers and spectators should drink a lot of water.

### Swimmer Responsibilities / Meet Code of Conduct

1. Report to the Coaching staff to sign into the meet and get your events as soon as you arrive.
2. Arrive promptly. If you know you will be late to a swim meet the Head Coach MUST be notified as early as possible. Please keep their cell phone number handy in case of unforeseen delays or absence.
3. Swimmers should never leave a meet prior to its conclusion without notifying the Head Coach.
4. Swimmers are to stay in their age group area so that the Team Parent does not have to search for them. If the Team Parent is not able to find the swimmer they may lose their place in the heat. Tardiness is detrimental to the team and the swimmer.
5. Team Parents are to report any lack of cooperation or disrespect to the Team Parent Coordinator.
6. Foul, abusive or otherwise unseemly language will NOT be tolerated.
7. All pool safety rules shall be followed during and after practices and at meets.
8. Swimmers should never enter the water unless instructed to do so by a coach or event starter.
9. Unruly behavior such as pushing, fighting, running or dunking will not be tolerated.
10. Each swimmer/parent will be held financially responsible for damage to any pool or piece of swim team equipment caused by the swimmer.
11. Swimmers should treat all adults with respect, especially Stroke Judges, Team Parents and Coaches, including Opposing Coaches and Team Parents.
12. Keep your area clean and pick up trash.

# Team Social Events

## Gator Breakfast

Typically, on the first morning Friday practice of the season the team sponsors a pizza party for all of the swimmers. It's a great way to kick off the season and have some fun with your teammates. Be sure to check the website for specific date and time.

## Gator Pizza Party

A mid-season celebration at the pool. Be sure to check the website for specific date and time.

## Gators Post-season Banquet

A banquet is generally held the Sunday following Finals. It is a seated dinner held at Sugar Creek Country Club. It is the culmination of the swim season and is a really fun evening. It's a great time to see all the swimmers in something other than their swim suits. There is typically a slide show so be sure to get your photos in. Swimmers receive their trophies and awards are given out.

# Team Awards & Recognition

Two types of Team Awards are presented during the season: Meet Awards and Post-season Awards.

## Meet Awards

All swimmers will receive a ribbon for the races/heats they swam, even if disqualified. Participation ribbons are awarded for a disqualification. First through Sixth place ribbons are awarded based on a swimmer's finish in their heat. For example, a single event may have 5 heats. A first place ribbon will be awarded to each of the 5 swimmers who place first in their heat for that event. Only the order of finish of the First heat is counted toward team scoring.

The coaching staff will select a male and female "Swimmer of the Meet" to be announced on the Tuesday following the Meet. The Swimmer of the Meet will be recognized on the Team website and at the Post-season banquet.

## Post-season Awards

**Most Improved Swimmer:** Awarded at the banquet to one girl and boy in each age group who has shown the most improvement over the current swim season.

**Most Valuable Swimmer:** Awarded at the banquet to one girl and boy from each age group that help the swim team the most in the season. Typically the award is given to a swimmer who earned the most points during the season.

# Volunteering

## Types of Volunteers

**We would not be able to host meets without the assistance of our parents.** There are numerous ways to help. Below are the various jobs that are required to run a successful meet.

**AGE GROUP COORDINATORS:** Supervises the waiting area for a particular age group during meets, keeps track of swimmers - as best as they reasonably can - between events, and gets swimmers to the

ready bench on time with caps and goggles. For most age groups, several parents will share this job. This position is obviously more important for the younger swimmers, and the Age Group Coordinators for the youngest ages (6 & under and 7-8) are especially critical to the timely start of the meet. This job keeps you with your swimmer during the whole meet. The Team typically designates only a few to this position.

**HOSPITALITY:** Several volunteer positions are needed during each HOME meet to help with various team responsibilities. These include:

- Provide water to other volunteers unable to leave their post (stroke judges, timers, etc.)
- Ensure bathrooms have toilet paper and replace full trash bags
- Help monitor the Country Club's athletic gym (located next to the pool) during home meets to ensure the gym is kept clean and the equipment is not used or played with. Attendees will have access to the gym to use the rest rooms. This is the only air-conditioned volunteer job!

**VOLUNTEER SIGN-IN:** Work at the sign-in table at the meet to check-in volunteers and provide them assignments. Works with the volunteer coordinator at the meet. Works from about 30 minutes before meet starts until the 2<sup>nd</sup> volunteer shift begins (approximately ½ of the meet).

**GATOR GEAR:** Assist with the setup and selling of Gator merchandise during meets. Since handling Team money, a limited number of designated volunteers will be selected.

**ANNOUNCERS:** Using a microphone, the Announcer announces first, second and final calls for each event. Works closely with the starter to keep the meet running smoothly and makes required announcements as needed throughout the meet. This position is only needed during home meets.

**STARTER:** Responsible for ensuring swimmers and timers are ready, starts the race, determines when a race needs to halt and restart, and informs timers when a stroke judge deems a swimmer disqualified. Training is required for this position

**STROKE JUDGES:** Stroke judges monitor swimmers to ensure each stroke is being performed correctly, including turns and finishes. They also monitor for false starts on relays. Training is required for this position.

Additional Stroke Judges are needed during relays to monitor exchanges of swimmers. Relay Stroke Judges are assigned for an entire meet, but work only the relays at the beginning and end of the meet.

**TIMERS:** Timing is a very easy job. In addition, you have the best possible view of the meet! There is also very little pressure as three timers and a backup timer are assigned to a lane. Times from all 3 timers are recorded by a Timer Scribe and the middle time becomes the official time.

Timers need to be able to use a stop watch in order to be successful. You clear the time at the start of each race, start the stopwatch when you hear the air horn, and stop the watch when you see any part of the swimmer's body touch the wall.

**TIMER SCRIBES:** One Scribe is assigned to each lane. The Scribe records the swimmer number and the three times from the Timers for each event and heat on a timing sheet. Also records any disqualification for their lane announced by the Starter. The timing sheets will be given to a Runner.

**RUNNERS:** The Runner takes the timing sheets from the Timer Scribes after each heat and delivers them to the scoring table. This job keeps you moving around at the poolside and the time passes quickly. This position is only needed during home meets.

**SCOREKEEPERS:** Scorekeepers tally & record results of races. With this job, you see the race results before anyone else. There are two types of scorekeepers required:

- Data Entry - Responsible for entering data from time cards and verifying data entered. This position requires training to operate the team's software.
- Sorter/Recorder –
  - Sorts time sheets from Runner, separating by team and age/event.
  - Compares event time sheets to find finishing place of swimmers.
  - Passes the results to the Awards/Ribbons

**AWARDS/RIBBONS:** The results of each individual event heat is provided and the Awards/Ribbons volunteer awards each swimmer with a ribbon based on their finish. This position is only needed during home meets.

**PHOTOGRAPHERS:** We do have a few official photographers dedicated to catching photos of the entire team and uploading them to the team Facebook page. Photos are also used for the year-end banquet video.

### Volunteer Sign-up

STEP 1 Log into the Team website with the email address and password you created during registration. *If you have forgotten your password, you can request a password reset on the login page.*

STEP 2 On the homepage a "Next Meet" section will be located on the right side of the page. Simply start the process of signing up for a shift at next meet by clicking on the Job Signup button.

STEP 3 A list of family members will appear on the check-in page under "Job Assignments". Simply click the "Sign-up for jobs" button next to the person in your family that you would like to sign-up.

STEP 4 A list of jobs/shifts you can sign-up for will be displayed. Some Team jobs require certification or training (e.g. Stroke Judge.) You will only see jobs that you are qualified to sign-up for. For each job/shift the following information is provided:

- Job Name. You can mouseover the "i" icon at the end of the Job Name for a description of the job.
- Start & End time. Most jobs are divided into 1<sup>st</sup> half and 2<sup>nd</sup> half shifts. There are 70 events in a Meet. So 1<sup>st</sup> half is event 1 – 35 and 2<sup>nd</sup> half is 36 – 70.
- Filled spots. Displays the number of spots filled vs. the number needed. You can mouseover these numbers to display who else has already signed up for this shift.
- Points. All shifts are weighted evenly as earning 1 point.



If a job/shift has the maximum filled spots, it will appear as grayed out, prohibiting you from selecting it.

Simply check the box next to the job/shift you would like to sign-up for and click the Save Assignments button.

Check to sign up	Name	Start	End	Filled	Points
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scorekeeper - Sorter/Recorder - Shift 1 ⓘ	Event #1	Event #35	(0/2)	1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scorekeeper - Sorter/Recorder - Shift 2 ⓘ	Event #36	Event #70	(0/2)	1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Timer - Shift 1 ⓘ	Event #1	Event #35	(0/12)	1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Timer - Shift 2 ⓘ	Event #36	Event #70	(0/12)	1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Check-In - Shift 1	Event #1	Event #36	(0/1)	1.0

Save Assignments

 or [Cancel](#)

### Confirmation / Make Changes

After clicking “Save Assignments” or “Cancel” you will be redirected back to the “Job Assignments” page mentioned in STEP 3 above. If you made a selection you will now see the job/shift you just signed up for listed under that family member. To sign-up additional family members or to change the job/shift already signed up for just click the “Sign-up for Jobs” button and repeat the steps defined in STEP 4 above.

### Family Volunteering Summary

The Team manages the number of times a family has volunteered through the website. Families can track their own summary through their account on the website. Login to your account on the website and click My Account in the upper right section of the site. In addition to listing Family Members and Contact Information, you will see a list of the Job & Shift Sign-ups for your family for the season. If you notice any discrepancies, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

It is important to note the Team does have a Volunteer Check-in booth at the swim meets. It is important that you check-in to ensure that you get credit for the shift you signed up for.

## Glossary

A Glossary of those strange and wacky words we use in the sport of swimming. Parents! You may or may not find these words in the English Dictionary, and if you do, their definitions will probably be radically different than the ones listed in this Glossary. Relax and take your time reading. Soon you'll be understanding and maybe even speaking some "SWIMSLANG".

**Anchor** The final swimmer in a relay.

**Backstroke** One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swam as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M.

<b>Blocks</b>	The starting platforms located behind each lane. Blocks are not used during dual meets. Blocks may be used at All Stars.
<b>Breaststroke</b>	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swam as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M.
<b>Butterfly</b>	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M
<b>Cap</b>	The latex or lycra covering worn on the head of swimmers. The colors and team logo's adorning these caps are limitless
<b>Course</b>	Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. (i.e. Long Course = 50 meters, Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters.
<b>Deck</b>	The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one may be on during a swim competition.
<b>Dehydration</b>	The abnormal depletion of body fluids (water). The most common cause of swimmers cramps and sick feelings.
<b>Disqualified</b>	A swimmers performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising a white flag.
<b>DQ</b>	Acronym for Disqualification. Swimmers may be DQ'd for improper stroke, start or turn
<b>Dropped Time</b>	When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time".
<b>Dryland</b>	The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.
<b>Event</b>	Stroke of the race; Butterfly, Breaststroke, Backstroke, etc. over a given distance
<b>False Start</b>	When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun.
<b>Final Results</b>	The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.
<b>Fins</b>	Large rubber fin type devices that fit on a swimmers feet. Used in swim practice, not competition.
<b>Flags</b>	Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.
<b>Freestyle</b>	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M.
<b>Goggles</b>	Protective eyewear worn by swimmers to keep their eyes from being irritated by the chlorine in the water.
<b>Heat</b>	A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. This is the order in which the swimmer is placed in the event

<b>Heat Sheet</b>	Is the time line of the meet. It tells the swimmers what events they are swimming an in what order. The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers seed times in the various events at a swim meet.
<b>High Point</b>	An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a championship swim meet.
<b>Illegal</b>	Doing something against the rules that is cause for disqualification.
<b>IM</b>	Individual Medley. A swimming event using all 4 of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle.
<b>Jump</b>	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.
<b>Kick</b>	The leg movements of a swimmer. A popular word to "yell" to encourage swimmers during a race.
<b>Kick Board</b>	A flotation device used by swimmers during practice.
<b>Lane</b>	The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim
<b>Lane Lines</b>	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.
<b>Lap</b>	One length of the course.
<b>Medley Relay</b>	Relay event with 4 swimmers where each swimmer does a different stroke in the following order: Back, Breast, Fly, Free
<b>Meet Director</b>	The official in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet. This is usually the home team's President of the Board of Directors.
<b>NT</b>	No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.
<b>Officials</b>	The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition.
<b>Practice</b>	The scheduled workouts a swimmer attends with their swim team/club.
<b>Prelims</b>	Session of a Prelims/Finals meet in which the qualification heats are conducted.
<b>Relays</b>	A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team, each swimmer swimming 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. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle.

<b>Starter</b>	The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.
<b>Stand-up</b>	The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.
<b>Step-Down</b>	The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.
<b>Stroke Judge</b>	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.
<b>Swim-off</b>	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.
<b>Timer</b>	The volunteers behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events. There are three times posted at each lane. The official time is the middle time.
<b>Warm-down</b>	The loosening a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.
<b>Warm-up</b>	The practice and loosening session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.