

# **Pflugerville Piranhas Swim Team Team Handbook 2024**

**[www.pfpiranhas.org](http://www.pfpiranhas.org)**

**Gilleland Creek Pool**

700 Railroad Ave

Pflugerville, TX

# **Pflugerville Piranhas Team Handbook**

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## **Welcome to the Piranhas!**

The Pflugerville Piranhas is a competitive, summer league swim team offering high quality professional coaching and technique instruction for kids ages 4 - 17. The goal of our team is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at his or her level of ability, from novice to international competitor.

The Pflugerville Piranhas were established in 1990. It is run by its elected Board of Directors which meets each month. All members are welcome at each meeting and encouraged to be involved in team activities and fundraisers. We will be swimming at the Gilleland Creek Pool and anticipate having around 250 swimmers this year.

The Piranhas Swim Team is a charter member of the Northwest Swim Circuit (NWSC), which provides a summer program of fun and recreational swimming for more than two thousand young swimmers in the North Austin, Round Rock, Pflugerville, Cedar Park and Georgetown areas. The objectives of the NWSC are to help young swimmers develop physical fitness, self-discipline, self-confidence, proficiency in compete swimming strokes, a determination to do one's best, good sportsmanship, and to provide an enjoyable summer activity for all of its members.

We receive no financial support from any public agency. Membership fees, fundraising projects and donations from civic-minded businesses and professionals cover our expenses. Our sponsors are recognized in a number of ways (sponsor name on banners, sponsor name on the back of team T-shirts and/or verbal recognition and thanks at all home meets). Please keep in mind that the team fundraising opportunities help pay for the swim team's expenses.

An annual Awards Ceremony is held at the end of the season. At this meeting, the membership votes on the Board of Directors for the following season if needed. The Nominating Committee recommends the Board of Directors. Any parent wishing to serve on the Nominating Committee and/or the Board of Directors should contact the team president or any other board member. A list of current board members, their positions and contact information is located on the team's web site [www.pfpiranhas.org](http://www.pfpiranhas.org).

## Volunteers - The Piranha Swim Team Parent Organization

As with other youth sports there is a need for volunteer staff to fill positions at swim meets and to participate in fundraising activities. Swimming needs more staff than most other sports. Our summer swim program literally could not operate without the generous work of parent volunteers. All of the work from bringing together a team of volunteers, to keeping within a financial budget, to arranging all the meet & practice schedules, to providing information for parents & updating the website, to actually conducting the swim meets is up to **ALL OF US**. It takes a great amount of time for the Piranhas to be as successful as we are, and being a part of a successful swim season requires a commitment not only from your children but from you as well.

A swim meet requires the coordinated efforts of between 70 to 80 volunteers per team. Circuit rules require each participant club to furnish a specified number of volunteers, so it is critical for us to count on your help and support and every family needs to share in the responsibility of filling these positions. We will have one practice meet, six dual meets, plus a Divisional meet at the end of the season. **Every meet your swimmer is signed up to swim will require at least one parent volunteer per family. Additionally, every swimmer is required to participate in a minimum of 2 meets each season.** FAILURE TO SIGN UP FOR AND FULFILL YOUR VOLUNTEER POSITION WILL RESULT IN YOUR CHILD(ren) NOT BEING ENTERED INTO THE MEET AND/OR BEING SCRATCHED FROM REMAINING EVENTS AT THE MEET ITSELF .

## The Parent's Role in the Piranha Swim Team

**Communication:** Our main form of communicating with parents is through the Pflugerville Piranha website, [www.pfpiranhas.org](http://www.pfpiranhas.org). All team news updates, meet information & sign up, volunteer sign-up and meet results will be posted on our website. It is critical that we have your current email address in order for you to receive updates throughout the season. Please make sure your account information is kept up to date and check your spam folder to make sure team emails are not getting hung up.

**Practice Expectations:** It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of your child's performance. Parents should offer love, support, recognition, and encouragement outside of practice. Swimmers in practice deserve not to be distracted and to be given the opportunity to concentrate. Therefore, parents are asked to let the coaches do their jobs. Parents are not coaches and our coaches are not expected to be parents or babysitters.

**Meet Attendance:** Parents MUST not be one of the coaches, board members or pit parents ASAP if their child is not going to be able to swim in a swim meet that they have been signed up

for. It is understandable that an illness or personal problem may arise; however, communication is crucial to the success of our team and meets. Not letting anyone know your child will not be there can lead to confusion on the morning of the meet and disappointed swimmers who must be scratched from relay events when their team members do not show up.

**Parent Expectations:** It is important for a swimmer's parents to have realistic expectations.

Every swimmer will have high and low points. At some point in time, every swimmer will reach plateaus in both competition and training, and may be inconsistent in performance. A parent's constant love and support are crucial. Parents should keep a record of best times so their child will have a concrete idea of their progress and will be able to set realistic goals.

**Good Relations and the Proper Place to Complain:** To have a successful program there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coaches. The progress a swimmer makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. The coaches and board members want you and your swimmer to have a positive and enjoyable swim team experience. When something is not going well for an individual or group of people, please discuss the problem with a board member so that they can aid in finding an acceptable solution.

## **Registration Information**

Part of belonging to any organization includes the responsibility to raise the money necessary for the group to operate. Each year the Piranha Board evaluates the team's projected budget, sets the registration fees and determines goals for local business sponsorship and fundraising events. This year's registration fees are as follows:

1st Child \$165

Each Additional Child \$155

These fees are the team's primary source of financial support and help cover the following expenses: pool rental for practices and swim meets, Northwest Swim Circuit fees, coach's salaries, lifeguard fees, team t-shirt, swimmer insurance, ribbons, end of season awards, computer and printing supplies, and divisional swim meet entry fees.

The cost of the team swimsuit and equipment is in addition to the registration fees. Each swimmer will need to purchase the required swimsuit package which includes the team swimsuit and cap (new team suit designs are chosen every 2 years). Please note that team suits

are to be worn during swim meets—not during practice.

## Refund Policy

Voluntary withdrawal up to 2 weeks before practice begins will result in a full refund of registration fees. Voluntary withdrawal between the 2 weeks prior to the start of practice and the 2 weeks after practice starts will result in a 50% refund of registration fees. Withdrawals at the start of the 3rd week of practice will not qualify for a refund

**\*\*Please note:** Because all of our team suits are special ordered specific to each swimmer and are non-returnable to our distributor, we are unable to offer any refunds on purchased suits.

## Swimmer Evaluation and Group Assignments

New swimmers who are swimming with a swim team for the first time will undergo a try out during their first practice. The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that swimmers have basic swim skills and are comfortable enough in the water to have a successful swim season.

Swimmers do not need to be able to swim the length of the pool at this time, but they must demonstrate the ability to do so by the end of the 2nd week of practice, or they will be removed from the team at the coach's discretion. Registration fees minus a \$30 processing fee will be returned to swimmers who do not pass this evaluation. **Team suits are non-refundable.**

## Our Practice Schedule

**The practice schedule is posted on the team website.** Coaches will assign swimmers to a lane within their practice time and are given an initial evaluation period. This organization of practice groups is tentative in the preseason. Adjustments may be necessary if the profile of our team proves different than expected. Coaches may reschedule some swimmers in order to have swimmers with similar needs and abilities in the pool at the same time.

Our practice program is designed to acquaint and teach young swimmers the strokes and training involved in today's competitive swimming. Emphasis is placed on learning the proper stroke, start and turn techniques as well as the improvement of each swimmer's "personal best".

Swimmers should come prepared to each practice with a swimsuit (not their team suit), swim cap, goggles (in good working order), and a towel. Swimmers are asked to send as many training sessions as possible. Let's face it, getting up early on a summer morning for practice may not always seem like a lot of fun. However, being there for me, every me, is how

individuals learn self-discipline and how to be a responsible, contributing member of a team. Please do your part and make sure your child takes practices seriously.

## **Swim Meets**

Our swim meets are held on Saturday mornings with the site rotating among the home pools of the NW Swim Circuit member teams. All of the Piranha home meets are held at the Gilleland Creek Pool. Links to all the away meet pool locations can be found on the website under the "Resources" tab.

Swimmers are required to participate in a minimum of 2 meets per season; however, we strongly encourage all swimmers to participate in every swim meet if possible. Swimmers who do not participate in the required number of meets will not be eligible to early register the following season. Meets provide the opportunity for swimmers to gauge their progress and see the results of their hard work during practice. Each and every swimmer is critical to the team's overall performance and is therefore expected to participate in as many meets as possible. Team rules require each swimmer to have swum in a minimum of two dual meets during the regular season in order to be eligible to swim at the Divisional Meet in July. It is a team goal to have 100% participation at the Divisional Meet.

All regular season home swim meets are scheduled to begin promptly at 7:15 AM. Check-in time for the swimmers and volunteers for a home meet is typically at 5:30 AM. Most away meets will start sometime between 7:00 AM and 7:30 AM. Check-in time for away meets is typically between 6:00 AM and 6:30 AM. An email will go out before each meet to let you know the exact meet start and check-in times.

All swimmers should come prepared with the following items to every meet: team suit, team swim cap, team t-shirt, 1 - 2 towels, 2 pairs of goggles (always good to have a 2nd pair for a backup), nutritious food and drinks, something to keep them entertained between their races (hand held games, books, etc) and a chair or blanket to sit on in their pit. We recommend labeling EVERYTHING with a permanent marker.

## **Meet Sign-Ups**

Swimmers must sign up for each swim meet by noon on the Monday prior to each meet. This sign-up indicates whether a swimmer will or will not attend each meet. A parent must be signed up for a volunteer position in order for your child(ren) to be entered into each meet. All of our meet and volunteer signups are done through the Piranha website, and each meet is listed under the "Schedule" tab on our website.

Our coaches will enter swimmers in events best suited to the swimmer and the team. Parents may indicate preferred events to swim for each meet, but it is ultimately up to the head coach to determine which events are most beneficial to each swimmer and the team as a whole. Failure to sign up for a meet means the swimmer will probably not swim in that meet. It is the parent and the swimmer's responsibility to sign up. It is not possible for coaches to check with all swimmers to ensure that they sign up. Even if you are not intending to swim in a meet, please indicate on the sign-up that you won't be swimming.

## **How to Report a Meet Absence after Swimmer Sign Up**

Our coaches must start "seeding" the swimmers -- deciding who will swim which event(s) -- at the beginning of each week and will assume that all team members who have indicated they are sending a meet will be there on Saturday unless notified otherwise. Simply not showing up at a meet without warning is not only just plain rude, it is unfair to other swimmers. "No shows" can and do cause relays to be canceled. Our "heat sheets" are unofficial, but it is obviously more than helpful when they are, in fact, accurate. More importantly, absolutely no substitutions may be made later than 10 minutes before a meet starts. If one relay heat has to be scratched because of a surprise "no show", three other children will not be able to swim that event.

That being said, we understand that plans can change quickly and unexpectedly and that emergencies do occasionally arise between any given Tuesday and Saturday morning. In such cases, please click on the link found on the homepage of our website titled "Report a Meet Absence".

## **Meet Eligibility Requirements**

The Northwest Swim Circuit (NWSC) bylaws dictate the eligibility of the swimmer and various rules which the Piranha Swim Team abides by. Some of these bylaws are as follows: The swimmers age on May 1 of the current swim season shall determine the age group in which the swimmer may compete for that season.

Swimmers compete against others within their own age group. In the NWSC the age groups are: 6 & under, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-17. All age groups are open to swimmers of that age group or younger. If a swimmer swims in an age group older than his or her own, then that swimmer must swim in that age group for each event in which he or she may compete in that meet. Two exceptions to this exist:

If a swimmer competes in an older age group in an individual event which is not offered in his or her age group, the swimmer is then not required to compete in the older age group for other events.



A swimmer may "swim up" for a relay and then return to his or her own age group for the individual events. The swimmer may not swim on two different age levels in relay events with one exception - 6 & under swimmers may compete in the 6 & under free relay and the appropriate 7 & 8 medley relay.

The NWSC has voted to eliminate the Swim Up Rule. year-round swimmers can swim with the Piranhas and compete in their appropriate age group. The new by-law reads: "Swimmers may practice and/or compete concurrently with other organized swim clubs, swim organizations, and swim camps without affecting their eligibility to practice and compete with Member Clubs."

Swim meets have two events for swimmers - individual and relay. NWSC rules permit a swimmer to be entered in a maximum of 3 individual events and 2 relay events. The standard course is 25 yards. Because the various circuit pools are different lengths, swimmers' times must be adjusted accordingly in order to have a consistent measure. The pool lengths and adjustment factors are used to determine adjusted times. The information on each of the NWSC pool's conversion factor is located next to each pool name under the "Resources" tab on our website. Times posted at dual meets and recorded on ribbons are the adjusted times.

## **Meet Structure**

In most age groups six individual events are offered: short freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, fly, 100 individual medley (IM) and long freestyle. Swimmers through age 8 do not swim the IM or long freestyle. The rest of the swimmers may swim all strokes mentioned above. The 13-17 year olds swim 50 yard events. The 12 and unders swim 25 yard events. The IM (Individual medley) requires the swimmer to swim one length of each Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle.

Relay events begin and end the meets. A relay consists of 4 swimmers from the same team swimming in the same lane in succession. Starting the meet is the six and under Freestyle relay (all swimmers swim one length of the pool). All other age groups swim the medley relay which has 4 swimmers doing one length only (first swimmer swims backstroke, second swimmer breaststroke, third swimmer butterfly and the fourth swimmer freestyle). At the end of the meet, all age groups except six and under swim a freestyle relay. It is necessary for coaches to make changes in the relay teams on meet days when an assigned swimmer does not show up. Please understand our coaches make every attempt to be fair to each swimmer and sometimes have to make quick decisions to meet deadlines for the computer rep.

Official event finish results will be posted as soon as possible at a place accessible to both

teams. Each pool that we swim in is not exactly 25 yards; therefore each pool has a conversion factor. The mes that are posted are converted mes, the "clock me" is the me from the stopwatch and is an "unconverted" me.

The order of finish in dual meets is based on themes of all swimmers in all heats, except those swimmers who have been disqualified. Three stopwatches are used for timing each lane; the middle me becomes the official me.

In regular season meets, points and ribbons are awarded on the following basis:

**Individual Events: Relay Events:**

1ST	4 points and a Blue Ribbon	1ST	5 points and Blue Ribbons
2ND	3 points and a Red Ribbon	2ND	2 points and Red Ribbons
3RD	1 point and a White Ribbon	3RD	1 point and White Ribbons
4TH	Yellow Ribbon		
5TH	Green Ribbon		
6TH	Purple Ribbon		
7TH	Orange Ribbon		
8TH	Teal Ribbon		
9TH	Peach Ribbon		
10TH	Gray Ribbon		

Disqualified swimmers receive no awards or points. Time improvement ribbons are awarded to swimmers in recognition of their improved mes. Participation ribbons are awarded to all swimmers who compete in a swim meet and do not receive any other ribbon. Another award a the swimmer may earn the heat winner ribbon. It is given to the swimmer who comes in first place for the heat in which they participated. Each heat will have a winner, and the heat ribbon is awarded immediately following the race.

The NWSC swimming season ends with a Divisional Championship Meet held at the Divisional Host Pool. A swimmer must have entered two dual meets to be eligible to swim at Divisionals. They must also have recorded time in an event from the current season to swim that event at Divisionals. Scoring for the Divisional Championship is based on official scores with 9-7-6-5-4-3-3-2-1 points awarded for 1st through 8th places, respectively. Medals are awarded for 1st-3rd place and ribbons for 4th-12th. Individual high point awards are given to the top three places in each age group. Team trophies are also awarded.

Our swim meet season will conclude with an Invitational Swim Meet. This meet is truly an invitational meet and is open only to those swimmers who equal or better than the qualifying standards in a NWSC dual meet or in the divisional swim meet. The qualifying times are set by the NWSC and are posted on our website under the "Resources" tab. Participation in the Divisional swim meet is required for a swimmer to swim in the Invitational swim meet. Any exceptions require Head Coach approval.

## **How a Swim Meet Works**

Your first swim meet -- the first several, actually -- can be confusing because you don't know what to expect. This section of the Handbook represents an honest attempt to help prepare you for the "swim meet experience." The first thing to remember is that it only seems as if everyone else knows what they're doing. Some do and others don't. So, don't be shy -- ask your fellow parents about whatever might seem confusing to you.

Our swim meets are informal affairs for the spectators. They offer plenty of opportunities for visiting and change, even reading if you can withstand the chaos around you.

**SET UP:** The night before and early the morning of a meet the pool is physically set up by volunteers (the set-up crew) with lane ropes, starting blocks, tents, tables and supplies put in place. The Home Meet Director oversees this. They are the chief official and see that all other officials (volunteers) are lined up and ready to go.

**ARRIVAL:** Showme for home meets is typically at 5:30 AM. When you arrive there will be a Volunteer Check-In table at the entrance of the pool. All parents must check-in here before the start of the meet regardless of which half of the meet they are working. Swimmers must go and

check in with their Pit Parent at their appropriate age group pit (white tents where the swimmers will hang out during the meet; they are organized by age group and gender - look for the sign hanging from the front of each tent). Home teams will take the first warm up while the visiting team will check in a little bit later and take the second warm up.

**PARKING:** For our home meets, parking becomes sparse very quickly. Assuming there has been no rain to make the lot muddy, the city will usually let us park in the back lot behind the pool. The front lot is reserved for the visiting team. When the lot fills, parking can be found in the surrounding neighborhoods and at the Lion's Club adjacent to our pool. The Lion's club has donated their lot as a fundraiser to the boy scouts. It is possible that the boy scouts will be charging a small fee to park in the grass area in front of the Lion's Club. Parking is only permitted

in the grass area in front of the Lion's Club; the pavement parking is for their members only. There is no parking permit along Railroad Avenue. Parking Volunteers will be out to direct you on where open spots are available. Please be nice to the parking volunteers! Yelling at them because the lot is already full when you get there is not their fault, but yours.

**IN THE PIT:** Arriving swimmers will need to find a place in the pit to set up their chair or blanket and begin getting ready for warm-up (pump up caps and goggles). Pit Parents will verify each scheduled swimmer is accounted for and will begin to mark your child's arm with each of their scheduled races. Arms will be marked with a Sharpie in order for the markings to last throughout the day (Note - Sharpies do not write on top of sunscreen; please wait until your swimmer has been marked to apply sunscreen). These marks will consist of a series of 3 numbers (example 24-3-6). The first number represents the event (i.e. 25 yd backstroke), the second number represents the heat they are in for that event and the third number is the lane they will be swimming in. These numbers help the kids know which event (s) they are swimming in and help the pit parents line them up in the correct order to go to the ready bench. It is very important that the kids stay in their assigned pits during the meets. Help out by stressing to your children that they need to stay in their pits as long as they all have events to swim and to please inform the pit parent where they are going if they need to leave for some reason.

**READY BENCH:** As the meet progresses, the announcer will call swimmers to the ready bench by event. Pit parents will organize the swimmers before their events and escort them to the ready bench as they are called. This is a good reason to strongly encourage swimmers to remain where they're supposed to be during meets. It's not that hard to completely miss a race, and it is NOT the pit parent's job to leave the pit in search of your child if they are not there when it's time to head to the ready bench. At the ready bench the swimmers are checked in and seated on benches in order by heat and lane. Certain heat and lane assignments may be changed to speed up the running of the meet. A ready bench volunteer will escort the swimmers to the blocks.

**EVENTS:** Dual meets consist of 87 different events. Boy/girl, age group, and individual stroke or relay separates these events. There are from one to four or more heats per event, depending on the number of lanes and swimmers entered. The swimmers are automatically seeded according to their best time for that event for the season. The fastest swimmers of each heat are assigned to the middle lanes of the pool and will usually swim against other swimmers of their own caliber. The starter directs all swimmers in the heat in the following sequence:

"Swimmers on the blocks" (or in the water) - means for the swimmer to step up onto the starting blocks (or enter the water feet first).

"Swimmers take your mark" - which means to assume the starting position.

“Whistle or electronic tone sounds”- the race begins

The three refs in each lane start their watches at the sound of the start. During their swim, the swimmers are observed by the stroke and turn judges who will disqualify swimmers that perform strokes or turns illegally. The three times are recorded on the cards and the scoring/computer group computes the official time. The order of finish is determined by the official times of all swimmers in the event. Therefore, if a swimmer is in the first heat and finishes third, for example, it is possible for a swimmer in the second heat to beat him/her with a faster time. The official results of the event are recorded at the scoring table, and team points are awarded accordingly. These results are passed along to the awards table where the names and times of the swimmers are placed on appropriate ribbons which are sorted by club for later distribution to the swimmers. The results of each event are posted at the pool as they become available and are posted on our website at the conclusion of the meet.

**WHAT IS A DQ?** "DQ" means "disqualification." The stroke judges are responsible for recognizing and recording stroke and turn infractions. The Northwest Swim Circuit has instructed all teams in the circuit and their stroke judges to treat the younger swimmers the same as the older more experienced athletes. We want the children to enjoy their swimming experience and learn the correct way to swim all the strokes. The “DQ” is a learning experience that all swimmers, from beginners to Olympic Champions, have encountered. Swimmers should learn from their mistakes and not let it affect their upcoming events, and they may need parental support to accomplish this. There will be a lot of disqualifications, especially early in the season when some of the younger children are just learning the strokes. Parents should encourage their swimmer to keep trying and then celebrate with them once they have achieved stroke mastery. This is how the swim team really pays off in self-discipline and self esteem.

**AFTER THE MEET:** Depending on the number of events in which your child is entered, they may be finished with their swimming well before the last event of the meet. They are encouraged to stay with the team and cheer on the remaining swimmers until the last event has been completed. However, if you do need to leave early, feel free to do so but have your child let their parent know they are leaving. Also, please remember that all the freestyle relays (with the exception of the 6 and unders) are the last events of every meet. Please make sure that your child is not scheduled to swim in the relay before you leave early. If your child **IS** scheduled to swim and you'll leave early, that means three of their teammates will have to be scratched from the relay leaving three very disappointed kids. The meets are structured so the 6 and under age group is finished at the halfway point of the swim meet. They are not required to stay for the entire meet. Please make sure your child cleans up their area prior to leaving including gathering all their belongings and throwing away all their trash.

Dual meets typically run about 5 hours. Per city regulations our pool must be completely

cleared out by 1:00 PM, so they may open the pool to the public. Most other teams we swim against have the same type of restrictions; however, there are some teams who do not and the meets may run a bit longer.

#### **OTHER HELPFUL MEET INFORMATION:**

**SEATING:** Parents are highly encouraged to bring their own chairs to all meets. None of the pools we swim at have any kind of permanent seating offered. Shade may or may not be available, so come prepared with hats, sunscreen, etc.

**REFRESHMENTS:** It is very common for spectators to bring their own coolers packed with snacks and drinks of their choice (remember, no glass containers are allowed around the pool area). At most meets, including all our home meets, parent volunteers from the home team operate snack stands offering different varieties of items such as coffee, soft drinks, Gatorade, doughnuts, hot dogs, burgers, pizza and even breakfast tacos and other homemade treats. Swimmers should minimize the consumption of anything resembling "junk food". Most parents provide their child with a small cooler stocked with healthy selections including fresh fruit, sandwiches, Granola bars, and drinks like fruit juice, Propel, Gatorade and the like.

### **Swimmer's Ear**

Swimmers Ear is fairly common among swimmers, and it is no fun! In many cases, swimmers ear can be prevented. The following are two of several suggestions. If you have any doubts, please get a prepared product from your drug store or consult your family doctor: (1) MIX - one (1) part white vinegar with one (1) part rubbing alcohol

(2) One Packet of Domeboro Solution mixed with 3 oz. of clear vinegar and 1 pint of distilled water, or a 50-50 mixture of vinegar and water.

Mix together and pour into two containers: keep one at home and the other with the swimmer's gear. Use this solution by placing 2 to 3 drops in each ear after every swim practice or meet. For best results, use it as soon as the swimmer is out of the water.

### **Swimming 101**

NWSC has adopted the start, stroke and turn rules of USA Swimming. The following stroke descriptions are for general use only. Swimmers will be taught specific techniques during practice.

**STROKES AND TURNS:** Four strokes are swum in compeon, each with its own rules enforced by Stroke Judges, who walk the deck observing the swimmers during a race. Breaking the rules results in disqualification (DQ) in the event.

**FREESTYLE:** The swimmer may swim any style. As in other races, the swimmer cannot propel themselves along using the side, boom or the lane ropes. Unlike other strokes, a hand-touch is not required in freestyle events. An experienced swimmer will do a “flip turn,” touching the wall only with their feet as they push off for the next lap. A beginning swimmer may do an “open” turn touching with a single hand, using it to spin themselves around to begin the next lap.

**BACKSTROKE:** The main requirement is that the swimmer remain on their back. No particular arm or leg motions are specified. To aid swimmers in locating the end of the pool, flags are suspended overhead five yards from each end of the pool. The swimmer must touch the wall with some part of their body and then may use either a flip turn or a touch turn. Backstroke flip turns are very specific and can easily result in a DQ if done incorrectly. After their turn, the swimmer must return to their back by the time their feet leave the wall.

**BREASTSTROKE:** This is the oldest stroke and the most encrusted with rules. It is also the slowest of the competitive strokes. The swimmer must remain on his/her breast. Except for one pull and one kick immediately after the start or turn, the swimmer’s head must break the surface at least once during each arm cycle. The arms pull back symmetrically, recovering forward beneath the surface. The legs do a type of frog kick, again symmetrically, without a scissors or flutter kick motion. At the wall, a swimmer must touch with both hands simultaneously.

**BUTTERFLY:** This stroke is seldom seen outside competitive swimming, but when done well it is the most beautiful to watch. It evolved out of the breaststroke about 30 years ago, and in speed is already second only to freestyle. The major differences between Butterfly and Breaststroke are that in fly the arms recover forward above the surface of the water and the feet kick up and down together in a kick known as the dolphin kick. The feet must not kick separately or do a scissors or frog kick. Swimmers must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously.

**INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY (IM):** This event is for swimmers from age 9-17. The IM requires the swimmer to swim one length each of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle - in that order. There are no flip turns in the IM.

**RELAYS:** Relays are important team-building events. Many considerations apply when the coaches are deciding on relay swimmers. Normally, the swimmer’s times in individual events are decisive – not always. Good relay swimmers must develop special skills. Occasionally a swimmer with a slightly slower time will excel at those skills, and respond particularly well to relay

membership, thus faster split times. Most swimmers enjoy relays and want to swim in them. During the course of the season, the coaches will attempt to strike a balance between giving many swimmers an opportunity to participate on relays, seeking the best combinations of swimmers in each age group to represent our club and allowing our top relays a chance to compete together in preparation for the Divisional Championship Meet.

**RACING STARTS:** All but the backstroke events require the forward start – swimmers standing on the blocks or the deck, facing the water, their toes on the edge. The backstroke events and the Medley Relay (which begins with a backstroke leg) have the swimmers starting in the water with their back to the course with all their feet including the toes under the surface of the water. Swimmers must await permission from the starter before entering the pool for this event. In both type of starts, the starter will announce the event and give swimmers the command “Swimmers Take Your Mark!” When all the swimmers have assumed their starting position and ceased moving the starter blows the whistle (or uses a horn or other device) to start the race. If a swimmer fails to respond promptly to the command, or fails to stop moving, or begins moving again before the sound of the start, this will cause a false start to be called. If the start sound has sounded, the starter will recall the heat by sounding the horn/whistle repeatedly. A rope will be dropped across all lanes at mid-pool. The first false start in a heat is called on the field. Any swimmer in that heat false starting there is disqualified.

Swimmers who have finished swimming their legs must immediately get out of the water and may not re-enter the pool. If the pool is less than four feet deep, swimmers in the 100 yard relays will have to do an in-water start, leaving one hand on the edge of the pool until the incoming swimmer touches.

## **Volunteer Job Descriptions**

Listed below is a brief description of the volunteer positions that need to be filled for every meet. None of the jobs are especially difficult and simple training is provided as needed; however, some of the positions do require sending special training sessions and some positions are better suited for our more experienced swim parents (ready bench and announcer for example). If you are brand new to the summer swim league, the jobs of mer, runner, set up, take down, pit parent, ribbons and concessions are pretty good places to start.

**ANNOUNCER:** Announces first, second and final calls for each event. Works closely with the starter to keep the meet running smoothly. The announcer will need to anticipate flow based on the number of swimmers, the stroke, the number of lengths to be swum, and the age of the swimmers.



**STARTER:** Starts each event with the announcement of the age and stroke and the words "SWIMMERS TAKE YOUR MARK", pauses to make sure that all swimmers are moonless, and then gives an electronic sound or a blast of a whistle. He/She shall be the sole judge of FALSE STARTS and all false starts shall be restarted. This individual must be trained for this position.

**STROKE JUDGE:** Work in pairs on each side of the pool with one member of a pair being from each team. Judges only rule on infractions on their side of the pool. They observe strokes, turns, and finishes to see that swimmers comply with requirements for that stroke. Training is required for this position (a training clinic will be scheduled at our pool prior to the first meet of the season).

**EXCHANGE JUDGE:** Required for relay events. One exchange judge from each team shall be positioned at the corners of the pool and be responsible for observing exchanges. Training is required for this position (a training clinic will be scheduled at our pool prior to the first meet of the season).

**HEAD TIMER:** Organizes and briefs the Lane Timers on their duties prior to the meet and is in charge of the lane timers throughout the meet. The head timer has the authority to remove and replace any lane timer, with the approval of the home meet director.

**LANE TIMERS:** Records the swimmer's time. Each timer is provided a stopwatch and assigned a lane; there are three timers for each lane. All three times are recorded and the middle time becomes the official time. Timers are assigned to work for one half of the meet. This job gives you the best view of the pool and the swimmers during their races.

**PIT PARENT:** Supervises the waiting area for a particular age group during meets, marks arms of swimmers with event/heat/lane, distributes event cards for relays, 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 pit parents 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.

**READY BENCH:** They are the key to keeping a meet on schedule. Responsible for lining up the swimmers by event, heat and lane and getting them to the starting blocks in the correct order and on time. Assigned to work for one half of the meet. This job gives you the chance to see your swimmer immediately before his/her event.

**RUNNER:** Responsible for obtaining the completed event cards and DQ forms for each race from the refs and judges. The cards and DQ forms are delivered to the scoring table. The job title is very descriptive. Runners should have good tennis shoes that work well on slippery wet surfaces. Assigned to work for one half of the meet. This job keeps you moving around at the poolside and the me passes quickly.

**DATA ENTRY:** Responsible for entering data from me cards and verifying data entered. Assigned to work for one half of the meet. With this job, you see the race results before anyone else.

**SCORING:** Marks the official me for each swimmer, records the order of finishes and verifies the computer results. Assigned to work for one half of the meet. With this job, you see the race results before anyone else.

**HEAT RIBBONS:** Determines the winner of each individual event heat and awards that swimmer a heat winner ribbon. Assigned to work for one half of the meet.

**RIBBONS:** Places labels on ribbons; sorts and files ribbons into swimmer file folder. Assigned to work for one half of the meet. This job keeps you out of the sun but may require you to keep working for a short while after the meet is over.

**CONCESSIONS:** Sells concessions. Helps set up and tear down concession stand. Assigned to work for one half of the meet.

**SET UP:** Sets up the pool area for the swim meet. Moves deck chairs, starting blocks, sets up canopies, announcer stand and ready bench. This position requires me on Friday evenings prior to home meets and either Friday evenings or early Saturday mornings prior to the start of away meets (depending on restrictions of various teams regarding set up times). May also require picking up equipment such as tarps and canopies from Gilleland Creek Pool to transport them to away meets.

**TAKE DOWN:** During the last few minutes of a meet the crew begins taking down and storing items in preparation for vacating the pool immediately after the meet. Away meets may also require transporting the equipment back to Gilleland Creek Pool for storage.

**PARKING ATTENDANT:** Directs traffic and parking in the parking areas before the start of the meet.