



Team Handbook

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AWST is a member of the Northern Illinois Swim Conference (NISC).



INTRODUCTION

The Antioch Waves Swim Team (AWST) is a non-profit organization that provides competitive swim experience for youth ages 5-18. Competition is structured by age level (8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15+), with separate events for boys and girls. A swimmer's age as of June 1st determines his/her age class.

Previous swim lessons are highly recommended and encouraged prior to participation in this swim program. Early in June, coaches will evaluate new swimmer abilities to swim across the Antioch Aqua Center pool. A CHILD MUST BE ABLE TO SWIM 25 YARDS UNASSISTED IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM.

All practices and home meets are held at the Antioch Aqua Center. The pool has 6 lanes and is 25 yards long. No tryouts are required. Practices are M-F mornings beginning the first weekday after the final day of school (Districts 33 and 34). Swimmers are expected to practice a minimum of two times per week to swim in meets. The season ends in late July. Meets are on Wednesday evenings and some weekends. We swim rain or shine.

Parents are a key part of the team. They are expected to work one of many interesting volunteer jobs during each home meet. Swim meets are arranged by event, age, and gender. The meet follows the order of events determined by our conference (NISC). The events alternate by event, age group, and boys/girls for a total of 80 events.

FEES

The Antioch Waves swim team fee includes team participation, coaching, insurance, NISC conference meet fees, t-shirt, swim cap, and attendance award. Fees are revisited each year and can be found on the website.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

AWST is a member the Northern Illinois Swim Conference (NISC). Complete NISC Rules and By-laws can be found on the AWST website. Swimmers must participate in a minimum of 2 out of 5 conference meets in order to qualify for the Divisional Championship Meet which is held in late July. The NISC is comprised of 22 teams which are split into four divisions: Division A, Division B, Division C, and Division D. Ranking is determined after the end-of-season Divisional Championship meets held for each division. The first place team in each Divisional Championship meet shall be moved up to the next division and the last place team in each Divisional Championship meet shall be moved down to the next division. The 22 teams included in the NISC are:

- | DIVISION A | DIVISION B | DIVISION C | DIVISION D |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Arlington Heights "A" | 7. River Trails | 13. Zion | 18. Midtown Palatine |
| 2. Lincolnwood | 8. Norridge | 14. Lake Bluff | 19. Libertyville "B" |
| 3. Buffalo Grove | 9. Arlington Height "B" | 15. Vernon Hills | 20. Park Ridge |
| 4. Round Lake | 10. Rolling Meadows | 16. Prospect Heights | 21. Des Plaines |
| 5. Mount Prospect | 11. Libertyville "A" | 17. Hawthorn Woods | 22. Midtown Bannockburn |
| 6. McHenry | 12. Antioch | | |



SEASON

Our swim program begins in early June and will end in late July with a team picnic. We swim rain or shine. Only lightning and unfavorable pool conditions keep us out of the water.

MEETS: All home meets are held at the Antioch Aqua Center in Williams Park behind the library. Dual meets are held on Wednesday evenings. Special meets are held on weekends (such as invitational meets, Marty Berry Meet, or meets other than the conference meets). All swimmers must sign up at least one week prior to a meet on the Swimmer Meet Sign Up Form (available daily, poolside). If a swimmer commits to a meet but cannot attend, they must inform a coach of the change (preferably 24 hours prior to the meet but no later than Noon on the day of a meet).

PRACTICES: Monday through Friday mornings, according to team group levels. Daily practice is desirable. You must practice a minimum of 2 times per week to participate in the following week's meets. Practices run rain or shine. Do not assume that thunder at 7:00 a.m. will result in all practices being cancelled for the day! Swimmers should be at the pool at least ten minutes before the start of their practice. Practice 5 days a week is beneficial to all swimmers in improving their swim skills and endurance.

GROUP LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

Swimmers will be evaluated during the first few days of practices. The Head Coach will notify swimmers of their permanent practice times.

BLUE TEAM

Primarily ages 8 & under

The primary objective of the Blue Team is to teach competitive stroke mechanics, starts, turns and dives. Swimmers able to swim 25 yards of freestyle with fundamentally correct breathing mechanics or 25 yards of non-stop backstroke are eligible for the group. After the first week of practices, if the coaches feel you are at an ability level to handle a Red or Black Team practice, you will be notified.

RED TEAM

Primarily ages 9-12

Red Team swimmers will receive more intensive instruction in stroke mechanics and will experience more swim events. After the first week of practices, if the coaches feel you are at an ability level to handle a Black Team practice, you will be notified.

BLACK TEAM

Primarily ages 13 & up

This group will develop the training base and sense of commitment necessary for maximizing their abilities. These swimmers must demonstrate a complete range of competitive skills and a willingness to perform more physically demanding training regimens.



SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES

ATTENDANCE:

1. If you signed up for but cannot attend a meet, you must inform a coach of the change (preferably 24 hours prior to the meet but no later than Noon on the day of a meet). Swimmers missing their scheduled event at a dual meet may not be allowed to swim the following meet.
2. Swimmers should remain in their assigned team location during meets. Be in listening range and be ready for your events.
3. If you have to leave, you must notify a coach.
4. Unless you have prior approval from a coach, don't leave the pool until the end of a meet. You might be needed to fill in for someone else!
5. Swimmers must check in with their coach at the start of each practice session for attendance records.
6. Swimmers should be dressed and on the pool deck ready to swim at least ten minutes prior to their practice start time.
7. Swimmers should be on time to all meets according to the coach's instructions.
8. Swimmers must participate in a minimum of 2 out of 5 conference meets in order to qualify for the Divisional Championship Meet.
9. Please try to use the restrooms before and after practice (not during practice).
10. It is important to be on the block or in the bullpen and ready to swim your assigned events.

SPORTSMANSHIP:

Good sportsmanship is expected of every swimmer and parent, including:

1. Show respect for officials, judges, coaches, timers, and other swimmers.
2. Be courteous to guests at home meets. Be a polite guest at away meets.
3. Congratulate opponents and teammates for good efforts.
4. Demonstrate proper conduct in locker rooms and pool areas.
5. Avoid swearing, fighting, and horseplay.
6. Do not challenge an official's decision on deck. Protests or disagreements should be brought to a coach's attention so that he can determine what action should be taken.

ADVANCEMENT:

1. Know your best times and strive to beat them every race.
2. See the coaches after your event for feedback.
3. Always try to do your best.
4. Challenge yourself and your teammates to improve and work harder.
5. Keep a positive attitude.
6. Listen to the coaches and cooperate. They are there to help you.
7. Help teammates and encourage everyone, especially the younger swimmers and our new team members. At swim meets, cheer on your teammates. It's a great feeling to know your team is behind you!
8. Long hair can pose problems for a swimmer's stroke and increase times. Boys and girls with long hair must wear a swim cap.



CODE OF CONDUCT

- Swimmers must be respectful of all coaches, adults, officials, and other swimmers.
- When you win, win graciously; when you lose, lose gracefully. Always encourage your teammates to do their best and give them your full support.
- No foul language.
- No hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, towel snapping, etc.
- No lying, cheating, or stealing.
- No running on deck.
- Vandalism will not be tolerated.
- Alcohol is strictly prohibited at all times during AWST functions.
- All swimmers are bound by the code of conduct at all times, whether their parents are present or not.
- The Head Coach, Assistant Coach in charge, or chaperone has the authority to administer disciplinary action as he/she feels necessary at the time.
- Violations of the rules may result in a swimmer being sent home from a meet, being barred from participation in future meets, and/or in parents being held responsible for the actions of their child.
- Parents are required to enforce the code of conduct, or they and their child may be asked to leave the meet.

EXPECTATIONS

TEAM GOALS:

1. Assist each swimmer to set and then work toward his/her goals.
2. Instill a feeling of team spirit and individual confidence among swimmers in all age groups.
3. Introduce and/or refresh each swimmer's working knowledge of the rules of the United States Swimming Association.
4. Build an enjoyable learning environment for team members.

HEAD COACH EXPECTATIONS:

1. Swim Team Management:
 - a. Maintain strict swim team Conduct, Rules and Regulations as stated in the handbook.
 - b. Establish personal coaching goals as they relate to the team.
 - c. Maintain the concept of fun within the overall goals of competition.
 - d. Utilize all resources available to the team; swimmers, parents, Board, assistant coaches and community.
2. Practice Management:
 - a. Conduct daily practices in an organized manner with daily goals.
 - b. Provide a clear implementation of fundamentals with strokes and rules.
 - c. Discuss meet results after each meet with each age group.
3. Meet Management:
 - a. Provide an atmosphere of team unity prior to and during meets.
 - b. Provide immediate feedback to each swimmer after swimming his/her respective event and use this information constructively in the following practice session.
4. Individual Swimmer Management:
 - a. Emphasize technique and time improvement with each swimmer.
 - b. Develop and recognize individual responsibility and leadership with each swimmer.



5. Assistant Coach:

- a. Head Coach will assign assistant coach with specific responsibilities to be maintained throughout the season.
- b. Develop at least one personal goal and one team goal to be accomplished by the end of the season.

COMMON DQ'S

Disqualifications (DQ's) often crop up during the dual meet season. In fact, for younger swimmers, they are often an indication that an individual has progressed to take on the more difficult strokes of breaststroke and butterfly. In other words, they are a part of the learning experience. DQ's can also result from a lack of concentration on the part of a swimmer, or from "sloppy swimming." The following is a list of some common causes for disqualification:

GENERAL:

1. Pushing off from the bottom of the pool during a race, or touching the bottom of the pool during any stroke except Freestyle.
2. A false start.
3. Starting before a teammate touches during a relay event.
4. Swimming strokes in the wrong order during an IM (Individual Medley)
5. Pulling yourself along on the lane lines or the side of the pool.

BACKSTROKE:

1. Turning onto the stomach during the race, except as part of the backstroke turn.
2. Not touching the end of the pool during a turn.

BREASTSTROKE:

1. Flutter kick or scissors kick.
2. Not touching with two hands together during turns and at the finish. Hands must touch together.
3. Head does not break the water during one complete cycle of arm pull/leg kick.
4. Taking more than one arm pull or leg kick while submerged at the start or turn.

BUTTERFLY:

1. Flutter kick or scissors kick.
2. If arms do not leave and enter the water at the same time.
3. If arms do not come out of the water during recovery.
4. Not touching with two hands during turns and at the finish (as in BREASTSTROKE, above).
5. Not keeping both feet synchronized during the dolphin kick.

If you are disqualified during a meet, keep swimming to the best of your ability. If one member of a relay team is DQ'd, the team should still complete the relay. A stroke judge should inform you of the reason for the disqualification. Sometimes, if swimmers in more than one lane have been DQ'd, officials are unable to inform each swimmer prior to the start of the next event. If you have any question about a stroke judge's ruling, ask your coaches. They will be able to get an explanation for you.



PARENT BOARD

AWST is operated by a volunteer Parent Board. The Board meets monthly throughout the year and is responsible for registration day, concessions, newsletters, website, spirit wear and suits, running home meets, communication with other swim teams, end-of-season picnic, participation in Antioch's Fourth of July parade, and the day-to-day swim team operations. Contact a Board member if you are interested in becoming a member of the Parent Board.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

AWST depends on parent volunteers to run home meets. No parent is expected to be an expert, but all parents are expected to help during each home meet. When you help AWST, you are helping kids learn, grow, and have fun.

Volunteers can choose from a variety of jobs described at <http://www.antiochwaves.org/team/volunteers.shtml> on a first come, first serve basis. Simply print your swimmer's last name in one of the job positions available on each Parent Volunteer Job Sign Up Form (one for each home meet). These Forms are posted poolside along with the Swimmer Sign Up Forms. Please sign up early to ensure best selection of jobs and shifts. Any family that does not sign up for a meet in which they have a child swimming, will have a job assigned. Assignments will be made 48 hours prior to each home meet.

Each family will receive a reminder notice via email detailing their job assignment, date of the meet, and time frame. This will be your only reminder, so it is extremely important to check your email. A master job list will be posted on the swim team bulletin board at each home meet.

If a volunteer cannot help at their assigned meet, they are required to find a replacement. If a volunteer needs to switch a job assignment, the volunteer is expected to check the master list and work it out with another parent, or find a replacement prior to the meet. The coaches and Parent Board will not be responsible for making adjustments for parents. Volunteers who fail to find a replacement or are a "no show" will have to pay a \$50 fine before the volunteer's children will be allowed to swim again. We would much rather see parents help their child's team than collect a fine. All families are required to fulfill the volunteer commitment.

COMMUNICATION

FAMILY FILE FOLDERS: This is our primary form of communication with families throughout the swim season. Each family will have a file folder. Parents are expected to check their file folders daily for important information, meet ribbons, and various communication from the coaches and Parent Board.

NOTICES POSTED AT THE POOL: Coaches post upcoming meet events for individual swimmers prior to meets. You can confirm that your swimmer is on the lineup to swim and see what events they will swim. The Concessions Team also posts a sign up form to donate food for home meets.

EMAIL: Email will be used during the swim season in order to further communicate with parents. Please provide us with an email address that you check regularly as this is also our 'at the last minute' communication system. Newsletters and home meet volunteer job assignments will be sent out via email.

WEBSITE: The AWST website is at www.antiochwaves.org. The website has a variety of information. You can easily find new swimmer tips, maps to meets, current weather conditions, parent board and coaches contact information, and general AWST information.



QUESTIONS: All questions that are specific to your child's swimming skill should be directed to the coaches before or after - not during - practices. You can also leave coaches notes in their file folders. Please do not interrupt practice time. All other questions should be directed to a Parent Board member. We are happy to answer any questions, concerns and suggestions you have about the program. You can contact us in person at the pool, by phone, email or leave us a note in the family file folders.

VACATIONS

We understand that many swimmers will miss a portion of the season as a result of vacation, camp, clinics, etc. In order to prepare accurate swim meet line-ups, it is vital for us to have up-to-date information of each swimmer's schedule. Please indicate your swimmer's availability on the Swimmer Meet Sign Up Form (available daily, poolside).

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from practices and meets is the responsibility of the swimmer and his/her parents. **THE COACHES WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANY SWIMMER.** Please make sure you are prompt in picking up your swimmer when their practice time is over. Swimmers who "hang around" once their practice time is over can become a distraction to swimmers in the pool. If a swimmer must remain at the pool while a sibling practices, please make sure they have something to occupy their time. They will not be allowed on the pool deck.

A WORD ABOUT EATING

It is best for swimmers to eat about 3 hours before they swim, so that energy can go toward racing and not to digestion. Swimmers can snack between events on something light (fruit, crackers, string cheese), but should refrain from eating large quantities of food (i.e., pizza, burgers, nachos, pasta, etc.) until they are finished swimming. Most pools have food available for purchase, or you may want to send a sack lunch and purchase a beverage. **EATING BEFORE AN EVENT CAN CAUSE CRAMPING AND SLOW TIMES. EAT AFTER YOUR EVENTS ARE COMPLETED!**

HOW A MEET WORKS

All swimmers must arrive on time and check in. For home meets, parents also sign-in at the job assignment table. Swimmers should know what events they will be swimming, what numbers these events are (many swimmers write the numbers in ink on their hand), and the lane they will swim in. This information will be posted at the meet. It is important for the swimmer or parent to keep track of what event is in progress to avoid missing their event. If there is a bullpen at the meet, listen for your event number to be called and go to the bullpen promptly. A bullpen manager will let you know when to go to the block area for your event.

Warm-ups take place before the meet begins. At home meets, the warm-up time for Antioch is 4:00 p.m., so swimmers need to be at the pool by 3:45 p.m. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blanket, swim bag, etc. The team usually sits together at meets. After warming up, swimmers should go to the bathroom if necessary, get a drink, or simply settle in. Away meet arrival times will be communicated the day before and day of the away meet at morning practices.

Learn the definition of a meet, heat, event, and exhibition. New members are often surprised when they compete in their first meet but do not understand "exhibition swimming" and other terminology. You can find this and much more in our FAQ.



EQUIPMENT YOU NEED

TEAM SWIMSUIT: All swimmers are required to have a team suit. The team suit is to be worn to all meets. Practice suits should be worn for practices. Swimmers should rinse out their suit after every practice or meet. This will increase the life of the suit. Instructions for ordering Antioch Waves team swimsuits will be handed out as part of registration.

GOGGLES: Most swimmers prefer to wear goggles, especially if their eyes are sensitive to chlorine. It's a good idea to have a spare on hand in case one pair fails.

SWIM CAP: Long hair can pose problems for a swimmer's stroke and increase times. Boys and girls with long hair must wear a swim cap. Caps also protect hair from chlorine. Rinse the cap and dry well after every time in the pool. You may want to have a second one on hand.

TOWELS: Bring more than one towel (one for drying and another to sit on or wrap up in).

WARM CLOTHING: Even on super hot summer days, it gets cold in the evening. Parents and swimmers should bring a sweatshirt, team t-shirt, and pants or some type of warm up suit.

THINGS TO BRING TO THE POOL

There will be times when a swimmer waits quite a while between events. In order to pass the time and/or keep busy, it is a good idea to bring something to read, small travel games, coloring books, cards, or anything to help pass the time (this is true for parents too!). Remember to be smart about safely storing your stuff – AWST is not responsible for any losses.

Swimmers may also want to bring along snacks and drinks such as fruit, sandwiches, water, and non-carbonated drinks. It is especially important for swimmers to stay hydrated, bring drinking water. Drinking soda pop is discouraged. Most pools (ours included) have snack bars or concession stands if you would rather purchase items at the meet.

Swimmers (and parents!) should always bring warm clothes such as a hooded sweatshirt and sweatpants. Many times it gets very cold in the evenings, no matter how warm it is during the day. We also suggest bringing a sleeping bag or blanket to wrap in or to sit on. The swimmers will spend a lot of time on it. Parents should bring their own chairs to meets. The Antioch pool has some chairs available during home meets.

For an all-day event, it is important to keep your swimmer out of the sun. Consider bringing a tent or EZ-Up for all-day events.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Length of Our Pool?

The Antioch Swimming Pool is 25 yards. Most pools are 25 yards or 25 meters. “25” refers to one length of a pool, and “50” refers to one lap.

What is a Dual Conference Meet?

A dual conference meet is between two teams within the conference.

What is a Meet?

A meet is the name for the overall competition and it consists of “events.”

What is an Event?

An event is a specific type of race such as “11-12 year olds, 100 yard butterfly.” There may be many “heats” per event.

What is a Heat?

When there are more swimmers for an event than there are lanes in the pool (for example, 15 swimmers on a five lane pool), the first heat includes five swimmers. The second heat includes the next five swimmers. The third heat includes the final five swimmers. The best times from all the heats for an event determine the first, second, and third place finishers for the event. A swimmer can win their heat and still not place overall in the event. This format is used primarily at Invitational and Championship meets. In dual conference meets, the last heat is typically the scoring heat.

What is an Exhibition Ribbon?

The Conference representatives from each team agreed that there will not be exhibition swimmers in any event. This means the top six finishers will receive points for the team and place ribbons. If a swimmer doesn’t place sixth or higher, then they do not score points for the team, but the swimmer will get an exhibition ribbon, and more importantly, he/she will get a time for that event. The exhibition ribbons are for participation in the event.

What is a Heat Sheet?

This is the printed listing displayed before and during a meet that tells swimmers what events they will compete in. It also defines the swimmer's lane assignment per event. Lanes are typically assigned based on seed times, with the fastest swimmers in the center of the pool.

How do I Win a Place Ribbon?

Ribbons are awarded for dual meet individual event finishes (not heat finishes) in first through sixth place. Relay teams earn a ribbon for first through sixth place. Ribbons will be placed in your family folder.

How Many Events Can a Swimmer Swim at a Dual Meet?

This is determined by NISC. A swimmer is allowed to swim up to four events with a maximum of three individual events and one relay events or two individual events and two relay events.

What is the Divisional Championship Meet?

This is the last meet of the season and involves other division teams. This meet determines the order of finish for each of the teams, as well as champions in individual events and relays. Each team is also allowed one medley relay and one free relay in each age group.



What is a Bullpen?

Some meets, including all AWST home meets, utilize a bullpen to keep meets moving along as quickly as possible. A bullpen is a location that has been designated within a pool area for swimmers to check-in prior to their event. The announcer asks swimmers in upcoming events to go to the bullpen (by calling their event number) a few minutes before their event. By assembling everyone in advance, we avoid delays caused by missing swimmers.

What is a Block?

The block is a raised platform at the end of a pool lane. The swimmer stands on the block moments before a heat begins and dives into the pool.

Who Are the Officials at a Meet?

The basic officials include a referee, starter, stroke judge, turn judge, timers, and scorers. All of our officials are parents who volunteer.

What is a Stroke Judge?

The stroke judge determines if a stroke is properly executed. The stroke judge typically walks along the edge of the pool.

What is a Turn Judge?

A turn judge determines if the swimmer touches before starting another length and ensures the swimmer complies with turning rules applicable to the stroke. Turn judges stand at the opposite end of the pool from the starting blocks.

What is a “DQ” or Disqualification?

When a swimmer has an improper stroke, turn or start, a judge, referee, or starter issues a disqualification. If one person in a relay has a DQ, it eliminates the whole relay team. The swimmer will not “place” in the event; no points or awards are earned even if the person(s) finish the event in first place.

What is a False Start?

When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the start horn sounds.

What is Positive Check-in?

Some large meets (not AWST home meets) may require all swimmers to check-in prior to the meet. This minimizes empty lanes and speeds up the meet. Check-in usually closes 15 minutes after the start of warm-ups. If you do not check-in, you will be scratched (eliminated) from the meet. Coaches will inform the swimmers if a meet requires positive check-in.

What is Freestyle?

Freestyle is usually the front crawl with the flutter kick, but any stroke or combination of strokes is legal as long as you never touch the bottom of the pool and touch the walls on turns.

What is Backstroke?

Backstroke is done on your back. The head is back, the back is arched, and a flutter kick is used while the arms alternate (one then the other). Swimmers cannot roll past 90 degrees from their back as they stroke and cannot roll onto their sides or stomach when approaching the finish wall. (Many younger swimmers have a tendency to do this to see how close they are to the wall; they should learn to count the number of strokes they need to take after they pass under the flags.)



What is Breaststroke?

The breaststroke uses the whip kick (or frog kick is acceptable), while arms pull underwater simultaneously. Feet must stay below water and ankles must be turned out. The two hands must touch on the turn and finish level simultaneously.

What is Butterfly?

In the butterfly the feet and knees are together on the kick (dolphin kick), while arms move simultaneously. The two hands must touch on the turn and finish level and simultaneously.

What is an Individual Medley?

An event where the swimmer swims each stroke in a specific order: fly, back, breast, and free.

What is a Medley Relay?

It is a four-swimmer event in which each swimmer on the relay team swims one of the four strokes: back, breast, fly, and free.

What is a Free Relay?

It is a four-swimmer race in which each swimmer on the relay team swims the freestyle stroke.