

Uncle Sam



Swim Team

**Team
Handbook**

2011-2012



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History

The Uncle Sam Swim Team was founded in 1963, was developed as a means of developing competitive swimming skills in Southern Rensselaer County.

Throughout their history, the Uncle Sam Swim Team has grown, thanks to the support of the residents of Rensselaer County; Troy School District; Rensselaer's government officials; and the club's excellent coaching staff, dedicated swimmers, and their hardworking parents.

We are one of the oldest swim clubs in the Capital Region, celebrating our 48th anniversary this 2011 swim year. We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote the sport of age-group swimming. The Uncle Sam Swim Team is registered with USA Swimming, the national governing body for amateur swimming in this country. All members of the Uncle Sam Swim Team, our coaches, and all officials at swim meets are registered as members of USA Swimming. As members of USA Swimming, we compete only with registered clubs.

Mission Statement

We strive to provide a safe, positive atmosphere in which to learn and develop the skills of competitive swimming. We emphasize the swimmer's individual character, physical development and technical ability through personal victories and daily improvements.



About Our Coaches

All Uncle Sam coaches must meet the high criteria set forth by USA Swimming. Each coach is a certified lifeguard and has first aid and CPR training for the professional rescuer. Coaches are also required to take a safety training class for swim coaches. All the above requirements must be kept up to date for a swim coach to remain in good standing with USA Swimming and the Uncle Sam Swim Team.

Rob MacLeod

Our full-time head coach is Rob MacLeod. Rob came to us in September 2005. His responsibilities include supervising the assistant coaches and ensuring that each coach knows every swimmer. Rob sets the practice schedules and coaches' schedules and establishes groupings for the team.

Rob came to Uncle Sam with more than 10 years of swim coaching experience. Formerly a competitive swimmer himself, he serves as the assistant coach of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) swim team.

Meg Hanna

Assistant coach Meg Hanna joined Uncle Sam in fall 2007. Meg swam competitively through high school and has coached the Albany Country Club for the 2009 and 2010 seasons. And has assisted at the high school swimming level as well.



Organizational Structure of the Uncle Sam

The Uncle Sam Swim Team operates according to bylaws, which explain the purpose of the club, membership, and board of directors. The board of directors manages the swim club. It consists of four officers—a president, vice-president, secretary, and a treasurer—and other volunteer members.

The coaching staff includes a head coach, Rob MacLeod, and additional part-time assistant coaches.

Each parent member of the Uncle Sam Swim Team is invited and encouraged to attend monthly meetings of the board and participate in its work.

Board of Directors

2011-2012

President: Beth Flanigan

Vice President: Denna Hughes

Treasurer: Teri Urbano

Secretary: Despina Brosnihan

Coach Representative: Rob MacLeod, Meghan Hanna

Athlete Representative: David Connor, Mary Kate Weaver



Grievances and Complaints

As in any organization involving significant numbers of parents and their children, Uncle Sam cannot always be all things to all people. Although conflicts in our club are few, they occasionally arise, and we have a protocol for dealing with them.

If you have a complaint about administration of the club, coaching, finances, other swimmers' behavior, other parents' behavior, or other related matters, please contact any member of the board of directors. Your concern will be addressed by the board.

A group consisting of a board member, coach, parent and 13 and over swimmers with parental permission will be asked to discuss complaints and grievances so all participants of the organization are involved.



Membership

Membership in the Uncle Sam Swim Team is contingent on available space and is open to individuals who meet all the following criteria:

- ❖ Between the ages of 5 and 18
- ❖ Able to pass a swim test administered by the coaching staff
- ❖ Payment of Uncle Sam Swim Team dues (\$65 or \$40 respectively, are due at Registration to cover insurance coverage)
- ❖ The benefits of competitive swimming include the following:
 - ❖ Opportunity to meet people and make new friends
 - ❖ Participation in one of the most beneficial forms of cardiovascular exercise
 - ❖ Development of the lifetime sport of swimming
 - ❖ Development of time management skills, self-discipline, and sportsmanship, etc.

Your swimmer will continue to reap the benefits of participation long after his or her association with the Uncle Sam Swim Team.



Team Structure

Uncle Sam offers training and practice groups for swimmers of all ages and ability levels. Uncle Sam Swim team offers five levels of training, all having their own goals. Swimmers will be placed in groups based on their relationship between their current level of ability and the training group's goal.

Red Group

The Red Group is a learn-to-swim group where the main focuses are learning the basic techniques of the competitive strokes, racing starts, flip turns and having fun in swimming. What we hope to build in that group is a solid base, either for swimmers who hope to swim competitively in the future, or just for swimmers who want to learn how to swim for safety.

Requirements

- ❖ “Swim” 25 yards unassisted
- ❖ Attend as many of the 4 practices/week as possible
- ❖ Compete in a minimum of 1 swim meet in a season
- ❖ **Practices: Monday thru Thursday from 5:00 PM to 5:45 PM**

It should be noted that in the Red Group, although practice and technique are the key points, a big part of being on a USA Swimming sanctioned team is participating in a meet. By meeting the minimum requirement of being able to swim 25 yards unassisted, your child will be fully ready for at least one event, either the 25 or 50 yard freestyle depending on their age. Our coaches do an excellent job of preparing them for the other races within a matter of weeks. So please do not hold your child out of a meet under the thought that they aren't physically ready for the events.

White I Group:

The White I group is for children with previous swimming experience who may not have had any competitive experience. The main emphasis is stroke technique. However, there will be emphasis on improving the aerobic base of the swimmers in this group. Sprints will allow the swimmers to learn how to swim at race pace with proper stroke technique. We also try to instill a love for the sport in the White groups. This is where we would like for swimmers to “fall in love with swimming”.

Requirements

- ❖ Swim freestyle and backstroke legally and show ability to learn breaststroke and butterfly
- ❖ Legally perform flip turns and show ability to learn breaststroke and butterfly
- ❖ Encouraged to attend a minimum of 2 practices per week*
- ❖ Encouraged to compete in a minimum of 2 meets per season**
- ❖ **Practices: Monday-Thursday from 5:00 pm to 6:00pm**

White II Group:

The White II group is for children with some previous competitive experience. Swimmers at this level must be at least 9 years old and be able to legally perform all aspects of the four competitive strokes, turns and starts. The understanding of a pace clock will be necessary as the group will be using interval training. As a White II, the swimmer will work towards being able to successfully complete the 200 freestyle and 200 Individual Medley races. Competing in meets is strongly encouraged at this level as well as participating in other activities outside of swimming.

Requirements

- ❖ Be a **MINIMUM** of 9 years of age
- ❖ Be able to pass the test proving the ability to swim all four strokes and to read and use a pace clock
- ❖ Encouraged to attend a minimum of 3 practices a week*
- ❖ Encouraged to compete in a minimum of 3 meets per season**
- ❖ Compete in Adirondack Swimming Silver and/or Gold Championships (Qualify times)
- ❖ **Practices: Monday-Thursday from 5:00p to 6:15 pm**

Blue Group

The focus of the Blue Group is split between developing stronger stroke mechanics and developing endurance in the swimmers in these groups. The number of laps swam during practice will increase in this group as it is a training based group. Sets are swum for training the swimmer's aerobic pace regularly swum in practice. As a Blue, the swimmer will work towards being able to successfully complete the 400/500 Freestyle and 200 distances of the strokes. Competition in swim meets is expected at this level as athletes at this level must display a desire to become more committed to the sport.

Requirements

- ❖ Be a **MINIMUM** of 10 years old
- ❖ Achieve one A time or better in USA time standards.
- ❖ Encouraged to attend 80% scheduled practices*
- ❖ Compete in 4 meets during a season**
- ❖ **Practices: Monday – Friday, 6 pm – 7:45 pm**

Senior Group

The Senior Group is for swimmers who are experienced and proficient, qualify for state level meets and are working towards sectional and national level qualification times. Coaching equally emphasizes conditioning and fundamentals offering the determined swimmer an excellent opportunity to improve rapidly. At this level, commitment to swimming is expected. The swimmers are expected to act as examples for the lower levels and uphold a level of maturity when in the pool setting.

Requirements

- ❖ Be a **MINIMUM** of 13 years old
- ❖ Achieve three BB or better times in USA Time Standards.
- ❖ Encouraged to attend 90% of scheduled practices*
- ❖ Competes in a minimum of 4 seasonal meets and 1 championship meet per season**
- ❖ Practices: Monday – Thursday 6:00 pm – 8:15 pm, Friday 5 pm-7:30 pm and Saturday (Time TBA).
- ❖ Dryland – 15 minutes before practice Monday-Thursday, Friday 30 minutes, Saturday TBA



The Parent's Role

As the parent of a competitive swimmer, your main responsibility is to provide a caring environment for your swimmer. This support will encourage your swimmer to feel good about his or her interest in competitive age-group swimming. Show your support by ensuring your swimmer's attendance at practices and swim meets.

Parents are not participants on their child's team but contribute to the success experienced by the swimmer and his or her team. Parents serve as role models, and children often emulate their attitudes. Strive to be a positive role model. Most important, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents, and teammates.

Be enthusiastic, but remember that your child is the swimmer. Swimmers need to establish realistic goals. Parents should not impose their own standards. It is far better to set goals of improvement than goals of winning.

Volunteering

All parents registering with Uncle Sam are required to participate in volunteer support services. There are many options. Throughout the year, at swim meets we need family's involvement for success. We also ask that you participate in fund-raising as it occurs. It is the volunteer efforts of individual parents that allow for the existence of the team.



Attendance Policy (new09)

There is no attendance policy for our Red and White Groups but it is always suggested for most improvement participants need to be at practice to get better. This attendance policy has been created to show our participants the importance of making a schedule and keeping it and the importance of being on time for events, as well as being on time. We hope that all families understand the importance of this life skill that will help each participant realize in the future its importance.

We asked our Blue and Senior groups to take the next step in competitive level swimming.

We are asking as coaches and a program that Blue group swimmer to be at practice 10 minutes early so that they are ready to get in on time and come to 75% of practice so 3 out of 4 a week. If participant in blue group is taking part in another sports program a 50% practice attendance is considered acceptable. Swimmers coming late will be required to make up work at end of practice.

We are also asking that the Senior group members be at practice 10 minutes early to be prepared to get in the water on time. Our Senior Group we are asking a minimum 80% attendance at practice which means 4 out of 5 practices a week, again a participant who takes part in another sport will be given a 60% or 3 out of 5 practices a week. Swimmers coming late will be required to make up work at end of practice. If swimmer is chronically missing practice a meeting will be held to ascertain if a solution to late and missing practice can be alleviated. If not we will ask that swimmer to step down to the next group until they can better commit themselves to the group and program.

Attendance suggestions

The club sets no requirement regarding a minimum number of practices, although coaches may suggest a practice guideline for individual swimmers. Our head coach recommends the following:

- ❖ 7 years and younger: 2 to 4 practices a week
- ❖
- ❖ 8 years: 3 to 4 practices a week

- ❖ 9-10 years: 4 to 5 practices a week

- ❖ 11-13 years: 5 to 6 practices a week

- ❖ 13 and older: 5 to 8 practices a week

There are obviously more practices listed than offered, so it is suggested that if you fall in these guidelines to talk to your coaches about dry-land and other activities you can do on weekends or at home to get the greatest benefit from the program.



Equipment

In addition to a team suit for competitions, your swimmer will need **at least one practice suit**. Team racing suits should not be worn as practice suits, they will wear out faster and lost its fit style for the swimmers.

Goggles are needed for better visibility and protection against the irritation of pool water. Be sure the goggles you buy are comfortable and watertight.

Uncle Sam encourages the use of the official team suit and a swim cap at all USA Swimming meets. Suits are ordered each fall. It is recommended that the team suit be worn **only** for competition to avoid natural deterioration from exposure to pool water. Wearing the team uniform at meets helps create a team atmosphere and enables coaches and spectators to observe and cheer our on Uncle Sam.

Lost and Found

You are strongly encouraged to label all your swimmer's equipment. Labeled equipment found at practice can easily be returned to the swimmer. Unlabeled equipment floats around the pool deck and pool office and generally disappears. Swimmers should keep all swim bags and personal belongings on the pool deck and **not leave** anything in the locker rooms during their practice session. The locker rooms may be used simultaneously by others. The club is not responsible for lost items.



Locker Rooms

Uncle Sam coaches are not in charge of supervising swimmers once they have entered the locker rooms. Individual families must be responsible for their own swimmer in the changing areas. Locker rooms should be used with expedience and left in the same state in which they were found. Any swimmer caught defacing property at any Uncle Sam-related activity will have membership privileges suspended, and the board of directors will review the situation to determine whether the suspension should lead to termination of membership rights.

Practices

Generally, Uncle Sam uses the Troy High School as its primary practice locations. The club does not guarantee any practice location or steady schedule. These should be expected to change on a regular basis. The club depends on the school district for pool time and space at the high school. The pools are occasionally not available for reasons such as swim meets, chemical imbalances, and so on. In these cases, practice will be moved to an alternative location or dry-land activity or other educational activity.

The head coach determines specific practice groups. Swimmers are placed according to what is appropriate for their ability. The head coach makes this determination. Parents should not expect that their swimmer will be placed in the group of the family's choosing for other reasons, such as car pool purposes, established friendships, preference for time and days of a practice group, or parents' opinion regarding the swimmer's ability. Swimmers who show steady improvement will be moved as necessary to another group. These moves can occur at any time in the season to accommodate the individual swimmer. An assistant coach, with the approval of the head coach, may do this.



Safety and Behavior

The board of directors and coaches want all Uncle Sam activities (practices and social activities) to be safe for swimmers, coaches, families, and spectators. To this end, we ask that all members follow the rules of the facility being used, listen to coaches, and follow directions.

Practice is not a time for fooling around. Swimming can be one of the safest sports available to youth. Yet, just one incident can turn it into a dangerous or deadly activity. Swimmers must act responsibly for their own safety and for the safety of others. Disruptive behavior and not following protocol set forth by the coaches are detrimental to the swimmer and the team. Coaches receive the support of the board of directors in benching swimmers during practice. If swimmers are benched for the evening, they are not allowed to leave practice early. They must participate in any cleanup of equipment their group is responsible for, and they must stay until their group is dismissed.

Uncle Sam board of directors reserves the right to terminate the membership of any individual whose behavior places Uncle Sam in an unfavorable light or jeopardizes our participation in any pool use or sporting event. All Uncle Sam swimmers are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and act as appropriate ambassadors for the club. They should act as role models for other swimmers when wearing the Uncle Sam logo. No refunds are permitted for members who are terminated from the program.



Behavior Guidelines for Swimmers and Parents

The following behavior guidelines identify principles the coaches and board members of the Uncle Sam Swim Team expect from all members (swimmers and parents) to demonstrate and uphold. These remind us of why we are involved in youth sports, especially in the midst of competition.

1. Strive to make every team activity as training for life.
2. Respect the integrity of swim officials by assuming decisions are based on honest, objective evaluations of performance. Only coaches may approach meet officials for clarification of rulings.
3. Promote good sportsmanship by setting an example and by helping others to do likewise. Uncle Sam swimmers will congratulate opponents no matter what the outcome of a competition is. Uncle Sam swimmers win gracefully and lose graciously.
4. Assist the coaches in conducting effective practices by ensuring swimmers arrive and leave on time.
5. Arrive to meets in time for check-in and warm-ups.
6. Assist the coaches by not talking with or motioning to swimmers during practices unless clearing it with a coach first.
7. Opposing teams, including their swimmers, coaches, and fans, want the same positive experiences for their swimmers as we do. Help us achieve these goals by avoiding criticism either verbally or with gesture. Look for opportunities to build rapport with teams that we compete and work with.
8. Know and uphold Uncle Sam rules, regulations, board and coach directives, and by-laws that are designated to maximize the experience for all swimmers and parents.



2011 Season

USA Swimming recognizes three seasons within each calendar year. The season beginning around Labor Day and ending mid-March is referred to as the short course swim season. During the short course swim season, practices are indoors only and all meets are recognized to include “yard” events. There are as many as 20 or more opportunities each year to compete in USA Swimming meets. In the short course season, most meets occur during the winter months. There is also a long course swim season which begins for Uncle Sam in April and ends in early August. The long course season uses both the indoor pools and the meter pool at the park. Meet events are recognized as “meter” swims. Uncle Sam practices are offered during April through August, in ten week increments. The practice is at the Troy City Public Pools. These practices are available to all Uncle Sam swimmers. [During the morning practice session at the Troy City Public Pools, Uncle Sam runs a six to ten week swim program (Summer Morning Program) geared toward scholastic swimmers. A typical participant would be a scholastic swimmer looking to prepare physically for the upcoming scholastic season.]



Financial Obligations

Team Discounts

Families with two or more swimmers may take a \$25 discount off, each additional beyond the first fully paid child.

Uncle Sam gives a discount in short course swim season fees to any member who participates on a scholastic swim team (varsity or modified); varsity girls receive a \$25 discount, and girls begin practice in August and thus miss less of Uncle Sam season). This discount is given to eligible swimmers who register at the beginning of the short course season. Any swimmer who does not participate on the scholastic team after having received this discount will not be able to register for another Uncle Sam season until the discount is repaid. Families with multiple swimmers are entitled to both the scholastic discount and the multiple swimmer discount, but not for the same child, only one discount per participant.

Refunds

Refunds are only eligible in the first 3 weeks of training. After that it will be based on a case by case basis, but you should not expect a refund unless a medical condition stops you from participating. Refunds if given will be based on a pro-rated basis. Insurance fee's can not be refunded.

Incentive Program

For every participant that you refer and once that swimmer has paid in full, USAM will give a \$25 credit to that family, which can be used for USAM Equipment orders or meet fees. New swimmer must notify I at registration of who has referred them for discount to be given. Credit is only given after payment in full from referred swimmer.

Outreach Program

(Adirondack Swimming – see attached form in appendix)

This program allows for a waiving of the USAS fees to only \$5, and the LSC will waive all its fees. A form must be completed and submitted to team registrar (see appendix).

Adirondack Swimming also offers a grant to help those that demonstrate a financial need. (see attached form)

USAM GRANT PROGRAM

In an effort to diversify and open up swimming to more swimmers even those who may not be able to pay all fees. USAM has established the following guidelines for a \$100 grant that will waive fees and will assist in lowering the amount of fees for an individual. (Adirondack Swimming will match this \$100 grant at this time [2011-2012 short course Season]). WE NEED TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES~~~use example from adirondack

Fundraisers

USAM needs the continued support of its members and local business as part of the program each swimmer will be required to raise \$50 in fundraising dollars as part of the membership. We will offer a minimum of two fundraisers throughout the year (\$25 per event).

Another required fundraiser event is Swim for USAM, basically a swim-a-thon style event that will help keep our memberships dues low, this event cannot be used as part of the \$50 fundraising.

If you wish to forgo fundraising you can make an additional donation to USAM prior to the end of each regularly scheduled fundraiser or all at one time, we ask if you are forgoing taking part in fundraiser that you pay an additional \$25 to cover increase expense of not taking part in activity as it cost the team more money.

Meet Account Fees

This will be our second year USAM will create an account for each Blue and Senior Group Member. A \$25 fee is to be paid by September 30. This will allow an easier method of paying for and getting swimmers registered for meets quickly. The coaching staff will create a list of meets we will be attending that we would like to see certain swim groups to take part in. Red and White group are not required to take part in meets at this time, but if your child is interested then we will also set up an account for them. As the meet fees are used up you will be notified to deposit more money in the account. Events will be chosen by the coaching staff members and will be at least 2 events per meet up to the maximum allowed. Coaching staff is opened to suggestions but will have the final decision. Meet fees range from \$3.50 to \$5.00 an event.

Trial Memberships

Trial memberships are available to new members. Prior membership in the club disqualifies any swimmer from trial eligibility. The purpose of the trial membership is to give families an opportunity to try the sport of age-group competitive swimming prior to making a substantial financial commitment. Trial memberships last for two swim weeks; the fee for the 2011 swim season is \$85. This includes a required \$40 insurance fee. If you decide to join the team after this you will just need to pay the difference of the cost of your child's program.



Philosophy of Competition

The Uncle Sam Swim Team engages in a multi-level competition program with USA Swimming that provides challenging, and success-oriented competitive situations for student-athletes of all ages and abilities. Swim meets are an opportunity for swimmers to measure training progress, develop and use sportsmanship skills, and to give and receive team support. We believe competition enhances the overall experience of each swimmer in the following ways:

1. We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not the main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. Each individual's improvement is our primary objective.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance to improved performance. Respect for officials, congratulating opponents and teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded by the Uncle Sam coaching staff.
3. A Swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.
4. Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice to direct their training efforts.
5. Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming.



Competitive Swimming

USA Swimming Age Group programs and rules govern participation in competition. The USA Swimming program provides fair and open competition for USA Swimming members age 18 and under. Its purpose is to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Participants compete in different age groups depending on their age on the first day of the meet. Uncle Sam belong to the Adirondack district. Typically, meet competition falls in the following age groups: 8 and under; 10 and under or 9/10; 11/12; 13/14; and senior. Swimmers always compete with their own sex. Graduating up to the next age level of competition is referred to as “aging up.” This occurs on the swimmer’s odd-year birthday.

Time Standards

Knowledge of USA Swimming time standards helps swimmers and their families chart progress and realize personal goals. They also provide swimmers with an opportunity to find out how they measure up against other USA Swimming age-group swimmers. They are available from USA Swimming's (<http://www.usswim.org>), and are included in the back of the printed version of this handbook and can be found on the bulletin board.

Officials

All USA Swimming meets have swim officials on deck. These are the people you see wearing white shirts and blue shorts. They start the events and also walk up and down the sides of the pool watching the swimmers. They are all volunteers, trained by and registered with USA Swimming. Most of them are parents just like you. If you are interested, the procedure for becoming an official is simple:

- Attend a three-hour training clinic.
- Complete a take-home, open book test on USA Swimming rules and regulations.
- Perform an apprenticeship with an experienced official for several meets.
- Training clinics are usually held each fall.

Swimming the Strokes

There are specific standards set forth by USA Swimming for all strokes, starts, and turns. For details, refer to the publication "USA Swimming Rules." Rules are modified from time to time, and coaches will keep swimmers informed.

In **freestyle**, the competitor may swim any stroke he or she wishes. The stroke most often seen in freestyle events is the front crawl stroke. The alternate overhand motion of the arms and alternating up-and-down flutter kick characterize this stroke. The forward start is used. Any type of turn is acceptable, but when turning, some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall. The swimmer finishes when some part of the body touches the solid wall or timing pad at the end of the pool. A common reason for disqualification is failure to touch the wall when turning.

In **backstroke**, the swimmer swims on the back using an alternating motion of the arms and a flutter kick. Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the end of the pool on turns. The swimmer is not permitted to turn over onto the front during the race except when performing the backstroke front flip turn. The coach will teach this turn to your swimmer when he or she is ready. The coach will let the swimmer know when he or she is ready to use the turn in competition. The finishing of the backstroke occurs when some part of the swimmer touches the solid wall or timing pad at the end of the pool. A common reason for disqualification is failure to remain on the back.

In **butterfly**, the swimmer performs a simultaneous overhand stroke of the arms while doing an undulating dolphin kick with the legs. In the kick, the swimmer must move the legs together and may not use a flutter, scissors, or breaststroke kick. The swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously when turning and when finishing. Underwater recovery of the arms and one-hand touches on turns and finishes are common reasons for disqualification in both the butterfly and the breaststroke.

In **breaststroke**, the swimmer is required to move both arms underwater simultaneously in the same horizontal plane. The kick is similar to the action of a frog. No flutter, scissors, or dolphin kick is permitted. Except on the pullout after the start and on each turn, the swimmer's hands are not allowed to pull past the hip line. On the turn and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously with the shoulders in line with the surface of the water.

In the **individual medley**, the swimmer swims one, two, or four laps of each of the four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle(crawl stroke-this is the only true option).

Meets

By its very name, the purpose of competitive swimming is to compete and that means attending swim meets! Individuals seeking membership in Uncle Sam should understand that we are a competitive team, not a recreational team. Swimmers should be willing to accept the responsibility of membership and participate in meets.

For many new swimmers, taking the first step and going to their first competitive meet is a big undertaking. Our coaches understand this and are happy to share information about each meet and what meets may be good for beginners.

When you are notified of meets, you should read the meet announcement carefully and ask your child's coach whether that meet would be appropriate for your swimmer. If your coach suggests that your swimmer's friend participate in a meet but doesn't make the same suggestion to your swimmer, the coach surely has a good reason. There are appropriate and inappropriate meets for all swimmers.

NOTE: If a swimmer is attending a meet, that swimmer must have a parent or guardian in attendance; it is not acceptable to drop off a swimmer at a meet and leave him or her unsupervised.

Uncle Sam participates in the following types of meets:

❖ Interclub meets

❖ **Intracub meets** are practice meets that acquaint new and old swimmers with the competitive process. They reinforce the skills necessary for meets and do not involve any non-Uncle Sam swimmers. Intraclub meets are held several times throughout the season to assist swimmers at all levels to prepare for USA Swimming competition. They are meets at which Uncle Sam swimmers attempt to improve themselves or try events they have never swum before. Intraclub meets help our youngest and newest swimmers learn more in preparation for USA Swimming meets. They also provide an opportunity for our seasoned, more capable swimmers to mentor the newer swimmers. The intraclub meets are an excellent opportunity to nurture the abilities of all our swimmers.

❖ Dual meets

❖ **Dual meets** take place between two clubs. They are low key and informal. Swimmers sign them-selves up on the Uncle Sam bulletin board. There are no fees associated with dual meets. Ribbons are generally awarded to each heat winner

❖ Development Meet

❖ A **developmental meet** is a USA Swimming meet, following all rules and regulations set forth by the governing body. Fastest swimmers are generally excluded. Swimmers who swim faster than the established cutoff time are typically awarded a certificate announcing their achievement. At USA Swimming meets, the swimmers' awards are given to the coach at the end of the meet. The coach will then distribute them to individual mailboxes at the next practice.

❖ Invitational Meet

❖ An **invitational meet** is for any swimmer, unless cutoff times are listed in advance. Swimmers are placed in heats according to their seed times, swimming slowest to fastest. The swimmers with the fastest six or eight times, without regard to heat assignments, win awards.

❖ Championship Meet

❖ At a **championship meet**, events are first swum as preliminary heats for ages 11 and up. Heats are mixed, with the fastest swimmers in the same heats as the slower swimmers. The fastest six or eight from preliminaries will swim in a finals heat later in the day. Often, the next six or eight after those will swim in a consolation finals heat. Younger swimmers participate as in an invitational meet.

❖ District Championship Meet

❖ Participation in a **district championship meet** is restricted to swimmers who are members of that district. Cutoff times are established for championship meets. Adirondack typically offers a developmental championship meet and a Junior Olympic championship meet at the conclusion of the short course season in March as well as a championship meet for all swimmers at the conclusion of the long course season in July.

USA Swimming Registration Number

Each swimmer is assigned a personal USA Swimming registration number. This number is used to identify swimmers when they sign up for meets. The ID number is easy to remember. It is composed of:

- Swimmer's date of birth: (mm/dd/yy)
- First three letters of swimmer's legal first name
- First letter of the swimmer's middle name
- First four letters of the swimmer's last name
- Example of a registration number: 011108ANTMMACL

About Entering USA Swimming Meets

Announcements for USA Swimming meets can be accessed by clicking the Meet Schedule button on the home page of the Uncle Sam web site; some hard copies will also be available at the pools for those who don't have access to the web. Uncle Sam's coaching staff will decide swimmer entry per meet. A minimum of 2 events for meet will be assigned up to a maximum that the meet will allow. The coaching staff takes into consideration swimmers request. A meet information sheet will be handed out to all swimmers with meet dates and locations, once this is done the coaching staff will put together meet entry sheets.

A list of all entries will be posted on the web site and on the bulletin board at the high school. Parents and swimmers should check the entries carefully. Results of all meets are posted on the web site.

Coaches, not parents, sign swimmers up for relays. **Relays** consist of four swimmers of the same sex and age group. The coach will determine the swimmers for each relay, submit the entry form, and the club will pay the fee. When swimmers are chosen for relays, they need to plan to stay for the event. Swimmers who do not stay for relays may be excluded from subsequent team relays. It is very difficult for the other swimmers when one leg of their relay departs from the meet, leaving them unable to participate. Relays are usually same sex and same age-group swimmers. They are offered in distances of 100, 200, and 400 yards and meters. USA Swimming teams will offer both freestyle relays and medley relays, in which each swimmer is assigned a stroke as his or her leg of the relay. Relays can be very exciting for both the swimmers and the spectators.

Zones

USA Swimming divides areas of the country into small units for organizational purposes. Uncle Sam is a member of a Local Swimming Committee (LSC) known as Adirondack Swimming. The Adirondack swimming district is defined as that portion of New York State east and north of Oswego, Onondaga, Cortland, Broome, Sullivan, Orange, and Dutchess counties. The Adirondack district is one of 12 districts in the eastern zone.

Each of the 12 districts conducts a championship meet at the end of the short course season. The fastest two swimmers in each age group, each sex, and each event from each district are chosen to compete against each other at a location within the zone for the Eastern States Zone Championship Meet. (Long course zones are also conducted. Entry requirements are slightly different, so swimmers should check with their coach.)

To be eligible for zones, it is necessary to sign up in advance and qualify for the team by meeting all the minimum criteria. In the past, some swimmers have been excluded because they, or their parents, underestimated their ability or rate of improvement. If you think that your swimmer may be close, it is always best to take a chance and apply.



USAM Travel Policy

In accordance with USA Swimming rules/305.5 Travel:

1. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
2. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
3. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.
4. Clubs and LSCs shall develop their own travel policies. USA Swimming will provide a model club travel policy as an example. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.

Going to a Swim Meet

- ❖ Find out where you're going. Most meet announcements will have directions. If not, check the Uncle Sam web site. Consider car pooling, convoying, and so on.
- ❖ Find out what time warm-ups begin for your swimmer and when the meet begins. Most meets are held in two sessions—morning and afternoon. You need only attend the session in which your swimmer swims. Allow for plenty of time to get where you are going.
- ❖ Wear something cool because pool areas are usually beastly hot. You should also bring a sweater because the bullpen (the area in which you hang out until your swimmer swims) is usually a gym or cafeteria and may be chilly.
- ❖ Some meets require that swimmers check in, a procedure called “positive check-in.” Make sure your swimmer checks in with the clerk of the course when you arrive. This is usually right inside the entrance to the meet. Failure to check in at a “positive check-in” meet usually results in the swimmer being disqualified from his or her first event or possibly all events.
- ❖ Purchase a meet program. You will find all your swimmer's entry information listed in the meet program along with that of all other participants. Use a highlighter to mark all your swimmer's events, as well as those of other Uncle Sam Swimmers.
- ❖ Locate the Uncle Sam assigned area of the bullpen. This is the area where you and your swimmer may stay between events. Swimmers roll out their sleeping bags and parents set up lawn chairs in this area. (Occasionally the swimmers are asked to stay on deck with the coaches.)
- ❖ Parents assist with timing. USA Swimming meets are timed electronically with the assistance of two backup human timers. Each swim club represented at a swim meet is required to provide timers for the entire meet. For large meets, parents will get timing assignments in advance; they will be notified of these assignments by phone or e-mail, and the assignments will also be posted on the web site. At smaller meets, parents present at the meet informally decide on timing shifts to cover the assignment. All parents are expected to participate. It's the best seat in the house. Don't worry about lack of experience. It's simple, and stopwatches are provided.
- ❖ Parents should make sure their swimmer warms up. The swimmer should go down on deck prior to the beginning of the warm-up session and consult with the coach. It is important to follow the recommendation of the coach. After warm-ups, your swimmer should dry off and keep warm. Find out where events are being seeded. Seeding means preparing the swimmers in their correct order. Swimmers should always have their cap and goggles handy.

- ❖ When your swimmer's event is called for seeding, he or she should report to the seeding area, where the swimmer may be given a card with name, seed time, and heat and lane assignment. Swimmers keep these cards and, at the start of their meet, present them to the timer at the end of their lane. At some meets, cards may not be distributed; swimmers are told their heat and lane assignments. Swimmers may have to check posted sheets for this information. Parents do not go to the seeding area but rather to the pool to find a seat to enjoy the race.
- ❖ After the race, the swimmer goes immediately to the coach for feedback. If the coach is with another swimmer or watching another Uncle Sam compete, your swimmer needs to be patient while waiting. A printout of the electronic results will be posted in a specified area near the pool, usually within 15 minutes of the race. Check the results and record your swimmer's time in your program.
- ❖ About the coach: At all USA Swimming Adirondack district meets at which five or more swimmers per session are in attendance, there will be every effort made to supply a coach. It is a rare experience that a Uncle Sam coach is not available to coach a meet. Remind your swimmer to talk with the coach after the swimmer's events.
- ❖ Swimmers are occasionally disqualified (DQed) during their event. Reasons for a DQ range from false starts to performing strokes, turns, or finishes incorrectly. DQs are judgments made by the USA Swimming officials. The official will explain to the swimmer the reason for the DQ. The coach will reinforce this judgment. Parents should not question the judgment of an official. DQs can be difficult for swimmers and parents to accept, but they do happen to every swimmer sooner or later. It is helpful if the parent accepts the fact that USA Swimming has high standards and that the same standards apply to every swimmer. Performing the skills of swimming in accordance with USA Swimming standards is part of the discipline process that makes swimming a character-building sport.

Writing on a Swimmer's Hand

By writing information in waterproof ink on the back of the swimmer's hand, the swimmer can watch and listen for his or her events to be seeded and remember what the events are. This also allows the swimmer to check whether he or she is in the correct heat and lane.

The information on the hand represents the swimmer's individual events at the meet the swimmer is attending. Make up your own shorthand; for example, "1/4/3 100fr" might mean 100-yard freestyle: event #1, heat #4, lane #3.

Stuff to Bring to the Meet

Experienced Uncle Sam swimmers recommend bringing the following:

- ❖ Team suit
- ❖ Goggles—well-adjusted and leak proof
- ❖ Extra goggles just in case
- ❖ Team swim cap—or two in case one rips
- ❖ Sweatshirt and sweatpants—maybe two sets
- ❖ Team jacket, if you have one
- ❖ Towels—two or three are needed because the swimmer dries off after warm-ups, between events, and when changing to go home
- ❖ Plastic water bottle and/or drinks in containers other than glass
- ❖ Sleeping bag
- ❖ Pillow (optional)
- ❖ Folding lawn chair for parent
- ❖ Quiet activities: homework, books, walkman/i-pod, playing cards, and so on
- ❖ Highlighter to mark your swim program
- ❖ Ballpoint pen to write on your swimmer's hand
- ❖ Stopwatch (optional)
- ❖ Food (almost all meets sell inexpensive concessions: coffee, juice, soda, hot dogs, pizza, sandwiches, baked goods, and so on)
- ❖ Money for a program (\$2 to \$10)—they're helpful, but you're not obligated to buy them; equipment is usually for sale
- ❖ For summer meets: sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, sunglasses
- ❖ Good luck charms!!!
- ❖ Some of these items may seem unnecessary, but when you arrive at your first meet, you will soon understand the value of each and be glad you brought them.

Recruiting Conduct

The Adirondack District LSC Board wants to remind all involved in area swimming that violations to USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding recruitment are defined in Article 304.3.13. This Article establishes that “Action other than through general advertising, by a coach, officer, volunteer, representative, or employee of a swim club, or a USA Swimming or LSC employee, either through direct contact with an athlete or the encouragement of others, to recruit or otherwise encourage an athlete who is already a member of a USA swimming member swim club to compete for or become a member of the swim club with which the acting party is affiliated, unless the acting party receives the prior written approval to recruit or encourage the athlete from the coach of the athletes existing USA Swimming member swim club or contact is initiated by the athletes parent or authorized representative. Any member or prospective member of USA Swimming may be denied membership, censured, placed on probation, suspended for a definite or indefinite period of time with or without terms of probation, fined or expelled from USA Swimming if such a member violates the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, set forth in 304.3 or aids, abets or encourages another person to violate any of the provisions of the USA Swimming Code of Conduct.”

Use of Illegal Substances

In accordance with USA Swimming and other World organizations interested in fairness within sports, we will hold swimmers accountable for substance they are taking. Please refer to USA Swimming Website (usaswimming.org) under Tips and Training, followed by Doping Control Section on USADA, FINA, WADA banned substances list. Testing will only be done at the national level but we still hold all our athletes accountable and recognize there are consequence for our actions which can lead to suspension from swimming and training opportunities.



Team Communication and Notification

The most important link in the swimmer, coach, and parent triangle is the parent-coach communication line. The Uncle Sam Swim Team employs a wide variety of communication tools, which are described below. However, if any questions or problems should arise, the lines of communication between coaches and parents are always open.

The main means of communication is via email and the team web site: www.unclesamswimteam.com. It is important for parents and swimmers to get into a daily habit of checking email and web site for the latest information on practice schedules, schedule changes, meet announcements, newsletters, awards, and so on. Other means of communication include a mailbox system at the pool.

Red, White, and Blue News: The team's newsletter is published weekly and provides specific information on upcoming events like projects, meets, timer schedule, achievements, tidbits, ideas, philosophy and changes in practice schedules. In short, it is our main means of communicating with team parents. It is posted on the web (under the "NEWS" heading) and is mailed via email. We urge parents to read the "Red, White, and Blue News" carefully and faithfully.

Web Page: www.unclesamswimteam.com is the address of our club website. It contains recent news and is often updated during the season. The site has meet recaps and results, the meet schedule, information on each facility including staff and practice schedules, records, various time standards and more. Be sure to add it to your bookmarks! Please take the time to familiarize yourself with what the website can do for you and ask your coach if you are having difficulty finding information.

Glossary of Common Swimming Terms

Age Group Swim Meet: all USA Swimming registered swimmers, 14 years of age and under, who have met the qualifying time standard for a specific event(s) are eligible to participate in their age category. Age on the first day of competition shall govern the entire meet. (See also: Senior Swim Meet)

Age Group Swimmer: all USA Swimming registered swimmers age 14 and under

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

Circle Seeding: a method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes.

Clerk-of-Course: an area at the meet where swimmers report before their event to be arranged into their heat and lane assignments. The clerk of course is generally located near the starting area.

Deck Seeding: a procedure of assigning swimmers to proper lanes and heats immediately before each event at the Clerk of Course on the deck. (See also: Psych Sheet)

IM (Individual Medley): a race done by an individual swimmer consisting of one leg of each of the competitive strokes – butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and any other stroke (generally freestyle), in that order.

Finals (Championship or Consolation): the session of a meet where the meet winner is determined. It is generally swum in the evening. Finalists are determined by the fastest swimmers in the preliminary rounds (generally swum earlier in the day).

Heat Sheet: a listing of all swimmers by event number, heat, and lane assignments in the meet. These are available for purchase at the meet.

Long Course: a type of competitive pool, which measures 50 meters in length. The standard size for all international competition and all world record swimming in the 50-meter course. Typically meets conducted from the end of April through August are swum Long Course.

Prelims (Preliminaries): in certain meets, the qualifying rounds held for each event to determine finalists.

Proof of Time: a requirement at some meets to make certain that all swimmers have legally met the time standards for that meet.

Psych Sheet: a ranking by seeding times for all swimmers entered in each race of a meet, sometimes used at meets in place of a heat sheet.

Referee: the USA Swimming official who has the authority over all other officials at the meet. He/she makes all final decisions and sees to the efficient running of the meet.

Seeding Times: the time a swimmer uses to enter a meet. This time, which is written on the entry card, determines one's heat and lane in the particular event.

Senior Swim Meet: all USA Swimming registered swimmers who have met the qualifying time standard for a specific event(s) to compete.

Senior Swimmer: all USA Swimming registered swimmers age 15 and over

Short Course: a type of competitive pool, which measures 25 yards or 25 meters in length. Typically meets conducted from October through the end of March are swum Short Course.

Split: a per lap time that coaches often record for teaching the concept of pacing. For instance, a swimmer's time for each 25-yard leg of a 100-yard event is his split.

Starter: the USA Swimming official at a meet responsible for starting each heat and calling the next to the blocks.

Stoke Judge: a certified USA Swimming official, who determines the legality of swimmer's strokes and disqualifies those who do not conform to USA Swimming rules.

Swim-A-Thon: a swim to raise funds in which each team members solicits pledges per length for a maximum 200 lengths or 2 hours time period. A portion of the proceeds goes to USA Swimming and the rest of the team.

Time Standards: certain qualifying times which have been set up annually by USA Swimming for all events in all levels of meets to insure that all competitors are of reasonably the same ability in their respective meets. The swimmer's goals should be betterment of his time progressing from the "B" standard to Nationals.

Touch Pad: the part of an electronic timing system that rests in the water at the finishing end of each lane. Swimmer's times are electronically recorded when the pad is touched.

USA Swimming: the governing body for all amateur swimming in the United States. National headquarters are in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

USA Swimming # (ID): the personal registration number of each athlete member in USA Swimming. The formula for deriving your USA Swimming # is: birth date (6 digit format MMDDYY), first three letters of first name, middle initial, and first four letters of the last name. For example: John A. Smith was born September 1, 1959. His USA Swimming # is 090159JOHASMITH

Application for Uncle Sam Swim Team Scholarship

The Uncle Sam Swim Team provides a scholarship program to families in need or those for whom special consideration has been granted. Scholarships will cover the monthly fees for a year and can be renewed on an annual basis following reapplication by the swim family. Cost associated with registration, meet entries, and equipment are the responsibility of the swim family. In addition, the swim family is expected to provide volunteer service to the club in accordance with the current volunteer policy.

Please complete the following form and submit to the President of the Uncle Sam Swim Team. (Attn: Scholarships, Uncle Sam Swim Team, Winter Street Ext. Troy, NY 12180)

Last name(s) of family

Mailing Address, City, Zip Code

Telephone Number

1. Swimmer(s) information. Please print each swimmer's first and last name.

2. Please list all adult members of the household.

Proof of Income

Provide that your income is below the following level in the following table:

(Source: Federal Reduced/Free Lunch income eligibility guidelines 2011-2012)

Number in Family	Gross Yearly Income
2	\$27, 214
3	\$34,281
4	\$41,348
5	\$48,415
6	\$55,482
7	\$62,549
8	\$69,616

Must attach a photocopy of an approved application for one of the following: Food Stamps, Free/Reduced Lunch, Section 8 Public Housing

	Earnings from work before deductions	Welfare, Child Support Alimony	Pensions, Retirement Social Security	Other	Check if NO income

I certify (promise) that all information provided on this application is true and that all income is reported. I agree to inform the President of the Uncle Sam Swim Team should this information change at any time during the year. I understand that my swimmer(s) will be considered for a scholarship (i.e., monthly fees for the period of one year) based on the information provided. I understand that I will be responsible for additional fees related to registration, meet entries, and equipment. I understand that I will be expected to provide volunteer service to the organization in accordance with the current volunteer policy

Sign here _____

Date _____



Uncle Sam

Code of Conduct



Dear Parents and Swimmers,

**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN BY THE END OF THE
FIRST WEEK OF PRACTICE.**

Thanks!

I have read the Uncle Sam Swim Team Code of Conduct
and understand the behavior that is expected of me.

Swimmer's Name: _____

Swimmer's Signature _____

Date _____

I have read the Uncle Sam Swim Team Code of Conduct
and understand the standard of behavior that is
expected of both swimmer(s) and parents.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____