



CROSS GATES GATORS

SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK

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Consult our website for meet results and other swim team information at www.cggators.com.

About Cross Gates Gators

Welcome to the Cross Gates Gators Swim Team! The purpose of our manual is to help swim team parents understand how our swim team is organized. We are a member of, and are regulated by, the St. Tammany Parish Swim League (STSL). "The STSL is a nonprofit organization, formed for the expressed purpose of furthering the sport of competitive swimming within St. Tammany Parish. The main goals of the STSL are twofold: to provide young athletes with opportunities to excel in the sport of swimming, and (2) to promote "fun" and good sportsmanship through family interaction and friendly competition."--STSL ByLaws.

This recreational league consists of 7 teams split into 2 divisions. "Dual meet divisions are determined by the final standing of the league championship meet." --STSL ByLaws. We will have dual meets with 2 teams (Picayune and Pinewood) during the regular season. In June and July we also compete against Lakeside, Magnolia Forest, Tanglewood, and Tiki in the A, B, and League Championship Meets.

Swimmers are expected to be able to swim the entire length of the pool and to be familiar with at least backstroke and freestyle. Ideally, swimmers are here for stroke refinement, not to learn them.

Costs

Cross Gates Athletic Club (CGAC) is our host. Our major cost is salary for the coaches (our only paid staff.) Other costs include the STSL fees, equipment, social events, ribbons, trophies and pool time. Our main fund raising event, which covers the costs beyond the registration fee, is hosting a championship meet. No refunds will be given after May 20th. Refunds before May 20th will be for 80% of the registration fee. A \$25 fee for each non sufficient funds check will be assessed. Your swimmer(s) will not participate in practices or meets until the matter is resolved with the Cross Gates Gators' Team Treasurer.

Equipment

The team suit can be purchased from www.agonswim.com at any time. Goggles and caps are mandatory. Fins are mandatory for intermediate and advanced swimmers. Team T-shirts may be purchased from our supply coordinator. They are recommended on meet days.

Team Communication

Our team consists of well over 100 swimmers and approximately 75 families. Communication with team members occurs in two ways. Emails will be sent out, as well as notices being placed in family folders. Check your folder and email often. A window on the pool house is dedicated to posting meet entries and volunteer sign ups. To have your child swim in a meet: a) initial the swimmer's name and b) sign up for a volunteer shift for that meet. If your swimmer is unable to participate in a meet, please draw a line through his / her name. If you know that your family will be away, we also have forms to fill out in the front of the family folders. Swimmers' names left unmarked will not be entered in the upcoming meet. To participate in the Championship meets, our team has to pay a fee for each swimmer. If you fail to scratch your child's name from the list, our club is paying for members who are not swimming. Paying unnecessary fees causes our dues to increase!!! Please check the window often.

Volunteering at Meets

Swim meets are run solely by volunteer help. It takes more than 60 adults to run a home meet. Because we are a large swim club, we are required to provide more volunteers at away meets as well. The number of volunteers is based on the number of swimmers entered in away meets. For each meet that your child swims in, you are responsible to fill one shift. If you have small children, please share childcare with other parents and work alternating shifts. We all need to work together to make the meet run smoothly. Volunteering is a way to ensure that your child will continue to swim and you get to meet some great parents and kids. Check the pool house window often. When you arrive at a meet, please check in with volunteer coordinator for your lane / task assignment. Please be advised that if you fail to volunteer, we will not enter your swimmer(s) in future meets. We will enforce this.

Meet Volunteer Positions

Clerk of Course: Announces and gathers swimmers by age group to give them their "cards" for their events. For each event, swimmers are grouped by heat and lane. This is a great way to get to know the team.

Timers: Three people per lane are needed to time each swimmer. This is done by using a stopwatch, which is provided for you, though you may use your own. The three times (one from each watch) are written on the participant's card. This is a nice way to get to know other parents and you get to see all of the events up close. If you love to watch your child and her / his friends swim, the timers have the best seats on the pool deck. Do not hesitate to sign up for this position even if you have never timed before. Our head timer will provide instructions at the pool party as well as during the warmup hour before each meet.

Runners: At least two people are needed to collect and bring the cards from the swimmers to the timers and from the timers to the check table. You need to be quick on your feet, organized and have lots of energy. You will get a workout!

Check table: The swimmers' cards are sorted by event, paired up with DQ slips, and sent to the computer group.

Computer: The completed cards are double checked, and the official time (middle time of the 3 times) is entered into the computer. Heat results, ribbon labels and reports are printed out and posted.

Awards: Most help with ribbons is needed about midway through the meet, and continues after the swimming ends. Labels with swimmers' names, times, and events are attached to ribbons and they are sorted by team.

Stroke Judges: Must attend a mandatory certification class annually, which involves viewing a swimming video. This is a great way to learn about stroke technique and disqualifications for every stroke. What a wonderful way to help your swimmer!

Parents in Charge of Relay Teams: When your swimmer is on a relay team, prior to the event, you may be asked to hold the card and to keep the relay team together before it is time to gather at the Clerk of Course's area. This is only for the under 10 swimmers.

Water Distribution: Distribute water to officials, volunteers, etc. This is an important job. It gets hot on the pool deck in the summer sun in Louisiana.

Meets are divided into two shifts so that no one has to work the entire meet. These positions offer on the job training by experienced people, and ALL PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO HELP!!! Being a stroke judge or a timer is a great way to see your swimmer compete!

Meets

There is no practice on the day of a meet. Dual meets are held during the week in late afternoon and can last up to 4 hours. Swimmers are expected to remain there for the entire meet. Consider bringing chairs, canopies or umbrellas, snacks, drinks, toys, games, books, etc. to ensure comfort. Do not forget the sunscreen! A team area is provided and the team is encouraged to stay nearby. Championship meets (B, A, League) are all day events held on Fridays or Saturdays, weather permitting. League Championship Meets are divided by age group; 10 and under compete in the morning and 11 and up compete in the afternoon. This year, the final meet, the League Meet, has been combined into a one day meet. A swimmer is eligible to swim at the League Meet provided that she/he has competed in at least 2 sanctioned meets (i.e., A, B, or dual). Swimmers who lack A times may swim 'unattached' (not affiliated with the Cross Gates Gators) in another team's dual meet. Swimmers may not earn points, but their times count. Your child is eligible to swim in both A and B Meets according to her/his times in each separate event. Swimmers who do not have an A time in

an event or events swim in the B Meet event(s). To participate in an A Meet event, a swimmer must have an A Meet qualifying time in that event. For each age group, this is determined each spring, according to the STSL ByLaws. Dual meets provide opportunities to achieve A times. The dates for these meets, as well as the A times, can be found on our website or on the pool house window. Swimmers and siblings / family members are asked to stay out of the other pools at CGAC and other meet hosts' pools during the warmup and meet events. Spectators are asked to not impede the flow of traffic on the pool deck. It is difficult for runners and swimmers to get around if the pool deck is crowded. Please cheer for your swimmer at a distance. Even though most of us are members of CGAC, during meets we may be asked to park across the street in the vacant lot. The influx of visitor traffic inconveniences the other members who are not here for the meet. Please do not park in the shopping center, as you may get towed.

Warmup Schedule

Prior to the meet, warmups are scheduled for our team. It is imperative to have your swimmer at the pool 15 minutes before that time. The warmup not only "gets their blood flowing," but it allows the coaches to identify who is present and absent. This is important for relay placement. Missing swimmers have to be scratched from relay events and replaced with others at the last minute. Heat sheets have to be adjusted on deck, which slows down the meet.

Swimmer Eligibility

"Each swimmer will swim in only one age group for the entire season. This may be his/her age on May 31st of the season, or the age group he/she will age into during the season."--STSL ByLaws. Each swimmer may swim a maximum of 3 individual events and up to 2 team relays. Sometimes your swimmer will be asked to "age up" on an older relay team. It is the coaches' decision who swims in what events.

How to Know What Events Your Swimmer is In

The host team provides "heat sheets" at meets for a nominal fee. There is usually a table set up for heat sheet sales. It lists the events and heats that the swimmers are in and is a necessary thing to have at a meet. The coaches enter swimmers into events that the swimmers will perform well in. In the days before the meet, swimmers are informed of what events they will swim in. Relay teams are not usually announced until the day of the meet. Some relays get cancelled because not enough swimmers are present to make up a team. That is not fair to those who want to swim in the event and it costs our team points!! Upon arrival, your swimmer needs to check in with the coach. This is important for placement on relays. We ask that all swimmers stay in the team area when not swimming. This is especially crucial when trying to get a relay team together and keep them together. Unless the coach tells you otherwise, expect to stay the duration of the meet.

How and Why Meets are Judged

To successfully swim in an event, it is necessary to swim the stroke properly. Stroke judges are required by the STSL to disqualify (DQ) those swimmers that are not swimming a stroke correctly, regardless of ability or age. If a swimmer is using improper technique, that could give the swimmer an unfair advantage over the other competitors. The STSL encourages stroke judges to give the swimmers the benefit of the doubt. A stroke judge will fill out a DQ slip if he/she observes a swimmer violating US Swimming rules. The DQ slip is attached to the swimmer's card for coach, swimmer, and parental review. Please consult our website (www.cggators.com) for descriptions of the strokes and sample DQ slip.

Sportsmanship

Cheering teammates and others on during races is highly encouraged. We want to promote good swimmers and also good sportsmanship.

Ribbons and Scoring

The swimmer's middle time of the 3 times is used for the official time. Heat winners are awarded ribbons. At dual meets, individual events finishing up to 4th place are awarded 6,4,2, and 1 points in descending order. Relays are awarded 6,4, and 2 points for the first 3 places. Swimmers receive ribbons for placing 1st-6th. At championship meets, 1st - 3rd places receive medals, and ribbons are awarded for placing 4th - 12th place. Medals are given only for individual events, not relays. For individual and relay events finishing up to 12th place: 13, 11, 10 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 points are awarded to teams. Meet high point scorers and runners up are given trophies for each age group. Team trophies for first, second, and third places are awarded. Preliminary meet results are posted at the host pool. They will be available on our website as well as on the pool house window soon after the meet. At the second practice after a meet, ribbons and doughnuts will be given out after practice. If swimmers are not present, their ribbons will be placed in their family folders. According to STSL ByLaws, records can be broken at the A and League Championship meets. It is necessary to inform the League Vice President and Meet Director 2 days before the meet that a record is to be challenged. Additional timers from 3 clubs must be present. If notice is not given, it is left to the discretion of the Meet Referee, Deck Referee, and Meet Director.

Social Events

The Gators Swim Team has 2 social events:

The Pizza Meet is a fun meet and is held near the beginning of the season. Its purpose is to introduce inexperienced swimmers to what a meet is like, as well as a vehicle to get measured "seed" times for placing them in heats at meets. Times obtained cannot be used to qualify for the A meet. This meet does not help meet the "two meet" participation requirement for the League Championship meet. Pizza will be provided following the meet for all participating swimmers.

Pizza and drinks will be available for purchase by family members. After the Pizza Meet, a Pool Party is held. This is meant for team members and their families only. Please bring a dessert to share.

The Awards Banquet is held to honor the swimmers at the end of the season. Each swimmer will receive a participation trophy or award from the Head Coach. To receive a high point award for the season, it is necessary to attend at least 50% of the scheduled practices. This event is intended for swimmers and their families. A head count will be required prior to the event. A nominal fee per family will be charged.

Fund Raising Event

Hosting a Championship Meet is our sole fund raising event. Parents are encouraged to work each day, even if your swimmer is not swimming. When we host a Championship Meet, parents are needed to help with set up, parking, water distribution, T-shirt and heat sheet sales, in addition to the usual volunteer jobs.

Weather policy

In case of inclement weather, please call CGAC (643-3500) forty-five minutes before practice time to determine whether it is being held.