

RIDGEFIELD AQUATIC CLUB

TEAM HANDBOOK

Revised September, 2011

This handbook is intended to provide an overview of the Ridgefield Aquatic Club, its policies and its procedures in the following sections:

1. Mission, Vision, Values, Goals & Governance
2. Practice Groups and Requirements
3. Competition
4. RAC Financial Requirements
5. Parental Roles
6. Communication
7. Team Equipment
8. Swimming Outside of RAC

Any additional questions should be directed to the appropriate staff member or Board member.

I. RAC's MISSION, VISION, VALUES, GOALS & GOVERNANCE

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Ridgefield Aquatic Club (RAC) is to empower young people to be champions in and out of the water.

VISION STATEMENT

RAC is a competitive swim program dedicated to:

- Promoting the sport of swimming
- Providing an enjoyable, team-oriented experience
- Recognizing each individual and value his or her role in the success of our club
- Teaching and developing life skills
- Providing each swimmer the opportunity to succeed at the highest level possible

VALUES

Our club members demonstrate:

- Commitment to the team
- A consistently strong work ethic
- Mutual respect
- Positive mental attitudes
- Self-confidence

TEAM GOALS

1. Engage and energize our membership

- Create a fun, open and inclusive environment
- Challenge swimmers so they learn how to set and achieve goals
- Improve timeliness and completeness of communication
- Develop a parent education process
- Encourage active parent involvement in all levels of USA Swimming

2. Recruit new swimmers

- Market club effectively through high quality recruiting material
- Enhance community awareness
- Increase team membership within pool space constraints

3. Attract and retain high quality coaches

- Ensure coaches are valued and respected by club members
- Provide continuing education
- Pay competitive salary and benefits

4. Compete at a high level

- Place among the top 8 Connecticut teams in USA Swimming's Virtual Club Championship & among the top teams at the Age Group and Senior Open championships consistently
- Regularly qualify a contingent of swimmers for zone and sectional competitions
- Send at least one swimmer annually to compete at the Junior or Senior Nationals

5. Ensure the long-term stability of the club

- Build long-term financial strength
- Guarantee facility access by maintaining strong relationships with area pools

RAC GOVERNANCE

The Ridgefield Aquatic Club is a private, not-for-profit corporation that is directed on a daily basis by a full-time Head Coach/CEO. The Head Coach/CEO oversees all members of the coaching staff. RAC's corporate affairs are directed by a volunteer Board of Directors which consists of six Officers, 2 squad representatives and the immediate past President. Despite the use of "Ridgefield" in its name, RAC has no relationship with the town of Ridgefield or with any of its municipal agencies beyond that of an outside group renting space in a municipal facility.

RAC Officers: The Officers of the Ridgefield Aquatic Club are the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Director of Communications and Head Coach/CEO.

Squad Representatives: RAC has two squad representatives. One represents the Power Up, Performanc, and Extreme Squads and the other represents the Premier and Elite Squads.

Immediate Past President: This person serves as a member of the Board of Directors at the completion of his or her term as President.

Board Elections: The Officers are elected for two year terms and are eligible to serve two terms in a particular office. The President, Secretary and Director of Communications are elected in even numbered years and the Vice President and Treasurer are elected in odd numbered years. The squad representatives are elected to one year terms and may not serve more than two consecutive years in the same position.

II. PRACTICE GROUPS AND REQUIREMENTS

LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

RAC is a USA Swimming program, which is the premier competitive swimming program available to young athletes across the country. There are many other types of competitive and recreational swim programs, such as YMCA and summer league programs. It is important to understand that the nature of the RAC/USA Swimming program requires a higher level of commitment from its swimmers than those in other types of programs.

Swimmers moving through the program are expected to demonstrate a progressively greater degree of commitment to competitive swimming. As progress is made, the number and length of the training sessions as well as the intensity of the competition at meets increases.

PRACTICE GROUPS & ATTENDANCE

Regular practice attendance is vital to success. It is not possible to effectively plan training sessions, set goals or achieve meet performances if a swimmer does not attend practice on a regular basis. Even short, unplanned absences can take a heavy toll on conditioning, endurance and swimming skills, which are important to a swimmer's success. The number of practices per week that a swimmer is required to attend is determined by the practice group to which a swimmer is assigned:

ELITE

Objective: To enable athletes to compete at the highest level possible. Swimmers will be expected to have the highest level of commitment and motivation to compete at the State and National levels. Swimmers will be preparing for the Senior Open, Sectional, and National level championship meets.

Practice Requirements: Swimmers must attend at least 7 practices per week with the goal of attending 8-9 on a regular basis. Swimmers must have mastered the fundamentals of all 4 strokes.

Required Training Intervals to Enter Elite

Timed 3000 freestyle (or equivalent training set) average of 1:20/100 meters
10 x 200 IM's @ 3:00

15 x 100's Freestyle and Primary stroke kick @ 1:50
8 x 200's best stroke @ 3:20 for breaststroke; butterfly/backstroke @ 3:00

Other:

Minimum Age: 13 years old
Maintain 80% attendance of all practices
Placement into Elite is also based on recommendation of the coaches.

EXTREME

Objective: To introduce advanced technical skills with approximately 50% emphasis placed on race preparation and endurance training. Swimmers in this group are preparing to swim at the Elite level while improving skills and conditioning. Swimmers in this group will compete at Age Group, Zone and Senior Open Championships.

Practice Requirements: Swimmers must attend 5 practices per week with the goal of attending 6 practices per week. Swimmers must have mastered the fundamentals of all 4 strokes.

Required Training Intervals to Enter Extreme

Kicking: Free – 100's @ 2:00 → up to 1500m
Breast or Fly – 100's @ 2:00 → up to 500m
Free: 100's @ 1:35 → up to 3000m
Back: 100's @ 1:45 → up to 2000m
Breast: 100's @ 2:00 → up to 800m
Fly: 100's @ 2:00 → up to 1000m
IM: 100's @ 1:45 → up to 1000m

Other:

Minimum Age: 11 years old
Maintain 80% practice attendance
Streamlines past flags automatically
Can read clock (prescription goggles if needed)
Placement into Extreme is also based on recommendation of the coaches

PREMIER

Objective: To continue to improve fundamental skills and conditioning. This group is designed for 13/O swimmers who are working to either (a) improve their training, speed and endurance to move to Extreme; or (b) stay in shape to continue to compete at Regional and Age Group Championships as well as High School Swim Meets.

Practice Requirements: Swimmers who want to swim at the Extreme level or be competitive at championship meets are encouraged to attend 5 practices per week.

Other:

Minimum Age: 13 years old
Must be able to complete 400 meter freestyle proficiently
Must be able to legally swim 100 meters of all 4 strokes

PERFORMANCE

Objective: To continue to refine competitive swimming skills while introducing basic training sets with an emphasis on competing well at the Regional, Age Group and Zone Championships.

Practice Requirements: Swimmers are encouraged to attend 3-4 practices per week.

Other:

Maximum age: 12 years old
Must be able to swim legal 200 IM and 200 freestyle
Be able to demonstrate proficient competitive starts and turns

POWER UP

Objective: To become proficient in the basic fundamentals of competitive swimming and gain an understanding of the sport of competitive swimming. Swimmers in this group are preparing to compete at Regional and Age Group Championships.

Practice Requirements: Swimmers are encouraged to attend 3 - 4 practices per week. Swimmers in this group must be able to legally complete 25 meters of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. The swimmer must also be able to complete 50 meters of freestyle and backstroke and have a basic understanding of competitive starts and turns.

Other:

Maximum age: 11 years old
Must be proficient in all 4 competitive strokes

OLYMPIC WAY

Objective: To refine stroke skills and teach the basics of competitive swimming in two 45-minute practices per week. Swimmers do not compete in USA Swimming meets. Sessions are 10 weeks long.

Other:

Maximum age: 10 years old
Must be able complete 25 meters of freestyle and backstroke without stopping

MASTERS

This program is for adults of all ages and abilities who are interested in competing and or just looking for organized fitness training. This program meets three mornings per week.

III. COMPETITION

MEET ATTENDANCE

As a competitive swimming team, competition at meets is an integral part of RAC's program. Swimmers are entered in meets and events that are consistent with their ability levels, individual goals and team goals. Swimmers are expected to attend all meets in which they are entered. If a conflict exists with a meet on the schedule, it is the responsibility of the parents to notify both the Head Coach and the swimmer's individual coach as soon as such a conflict is known. In order for a swimmer to be scratched from a meet, a meet scratch form must be filled out (see "Swim Meet Procedures" section of this document) and turned in prior to the scratch deadline as explained at the fall parent's meeting. Since schedules are issued well in advance of any competition, it is expected that swimmers will note meets on their calendars and not double schedule events. It is expected that once entries are submitted (approximately 30 days prior to the event) swimmers will be in attendance unless an unavoidable, last minute situation develops. If a swimmer is unable to attend a meet after the entries have been submitted, they are still responsible for any fees connected with their entry. *Failure to attend meets without notifying the proper staff personnel can be grounds for suspension from the program.*

SWIM SEASONS

Each year is divided into two swimming seasons. From September through March, swimmers compete in the *short course* season, racing in pools that are 25 yards long. This is the same sized pool that is used for most high school and NCAA competitions. From April through early August, swimmers compete in the *long course* season, racing in pools that are 50 meters long. This is the same sized pool that is used for international meets, including the Olympics.

Times, and even events, differ from short course to long course. Different championship qualifying times apply to each season. The Connecticut Swimming FAST database permits you to see your swimmer's championship meet qualifications, meet-by-meet progress, and best times. FAST can be found via the "Links" section of RAC's website or on Connecticut Swimming's home page. To convert times in the different courses (e.g., from short course yards to long course meters), there is a straightforward time converter in the "Links" section of our website and online at <http://www.swiminfo.com/results/conversions.asp>. Finally, the Barlow Mountain pool is 25 meters long, which is a different length than swimmers will compete in during either the short course or long course season.

CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITION

Swimmers are required to attend all championship competitions for which they qualify in individual events or as part of a relay. The following meets are considered championship competitions and are held during both the short and long course seasons (except for 8 & under championships):

- **8 & under championships** – short course championships for younger swimmers who compete vs. other 6-, 7- or 8-year olds (each year is a single age group).

- ***LSC Regional Championships*** – last chance for swimmers to post qualifying times for the state Age Group Championships. Generally, swimmers with four or fewer Age Group Championship qualifying times will compete in this meet.
- ***State Age Group Championships*** – many 12 & under swimmers train to be able to compete in these meets, held in March (short course) and July (long course), as their primary competition each season. To compete, swimmers must have swum at or faster than the published cut time for that event for their sex and age group. These times change annually and can be found on RAC’s website under “Time Standards” or on Connecticut Swimming’s website.
- ***Zone Championships*** – the championship age group meet for swimmers in the northeast region (Maryland to Maine). For the short course meet, Connecticut sends two swimmers in each event to the meet. For the long course meet (held in mid-August), any swimmer who makes the cut-off times may compete in the meet.
- ***Senior Open Championships*** – swimmers of any age must qualify for this meet by achieving a single set of standards that are more stringent than those for the Age Group Championships. This is the primary competitive focus of most of the team’s Senior Elite swimmers. This meet is also held in March and July.
- ***Speedo Sectional Championships*** – the premier senior level meet hosted in each region of the country, this meet is designed as a qualifying meet for the USA National Swimming Championships.
- ***USA National Championships*** – a long course meet held twice each year, this is the most competitive USA Swimming meet, outside of Olympic Trials. The summer long course meet has particularly difficult time standards. There is also a Junior National meet for swimmers aged 18 & under that has slightly slower time standards.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

In preparation for the swim season, here are some of the basic tenets of RAC’s philosophy of competition:

1. The team will enter each meet with a particular goal in mind. At most meets, we will emphasize improvement of one’s times in each event. Certain meets (primarily championship level meets) will also stress racing and place finishes.
2. In addition to seeking best times, the coaching staff will also attempt to have swimmers work on various race techniques and strategies that have been introduced in practice. When this happens, sometimes times do not improve the first time these new techniques are attempted. However, over the long haul with diligent practice, times will improve.
3. The swimmers are taught to set realistic goals. As a swimmer gets older and more experienced, he or she is taught to relate performance in practice to his or her goal times.
4. Often the coaching staff enters swimmers in different events. This not only helps promote versatility in swimmers, but often helps in the swimmer’s main events. Each coach is dedicated to developing well-rounded total swimmers that have not only mastered all 4 strokes but various races of varying distances.

5. Good sportsmanship is a must. All swimmers are to respect the officials, other competitors, coaches and the facilities that we use. RAC is renowned in Connecticut Swimming for its team spirit - all swimmers are expected to encourage and support their teammates.

USA SWIMMING MOTIVATIONAL TIME STANDARDS

USA Swimming publishes time standards every four years for each event in each group. The times are intended to motivate swimmers to achieve new performance standards. The motivational times are based on:

- Base time 16th fastest swimmer in each event for that age group. USA Swimming publishes Top 10 times for each event in each single age group (11-17 years of age) annually.
- AAAA 105% of the base time
- AAA 110% of the base time
- AA 115% of the base time
- A 120% of the base time
- B 125% of the base time

The motivational times for 2005-2008 can be found on the RAC website under “Time Standards” and also on USA Swimming’s website.

TRANSPORTATION TO SWIM MEETS/CHAPERONING

For most meets, RAC bears no responsibility for transporting and chaperoning the RAC swimmers at the meets or functions connected with the meet except for normal coaching activities. The exception to the above is a “team travel meet” which the team travels to the site together, is lodged together and does all activities together. For “team travel meets” all arrangements are handled by RAC and the coaching staff, and selected parents chaperone the trip.

For all other meets, it is the responsibility of each swimmer (or their parents) to have transportation to and from the site of competition and to handle their own lodging and meal requirements. At meets where lodging is necessary, RAC will block rooms at a team rate for the convenience of the swimmers, but it is the responsibility of each team member to make those reservations.

At any meet, practice or team activity, swimmers must abide by the team’s code of conduct which is signed each year upon registration. Among other things, swimmers are required to stay in proscribed areas and respect teammates, officials and other competitors. Vandalism, smoking, alcohol/drug consumption, inappropriate language and disrupting practice will not be tolerated, and may result in suspension or expulsion from the team.

SWIM MEET PROCEDURES

1. A meet schedule for the season is posted on the web site during the first few weeks of the season. In most cases, this schedule is final. Swimmers will be entered in each meet for which they meet the criteria for competition.
2. Parents should notify the individual coach and the Head Coach of any known conflict upon receiving the schedule. A formal "Scratch Sheet" should be submitted to the head coach via email with a subject line of "Scratch Sheet", or by completing a blank scratch sheet in the Barlow office. The Scratch Sheet should detail what meet or session your child will not be able to attend, and this must be submitted before entries are submitted to meet directors (generally at least 4 weeks prior to a meet) in order to avoid being billed for the meet entries.
3. Approximately 14 days prior to non-championship events and 7 days prior to championship meets, entry information is posted on the team website (www.racswimming.org) and e-mailed to each swimmer regarding particular meets in which they have been entered. This information includes events entered, directions to the pool, times to arrive and any other information about the particular competition. If parents would like to get basic logistical information (starting time, directions, etc.) about a meet in which their child is entered, this information can usually be found on RAC's website or on Connecticut Swimming's website (www.ctswim.org) in the "Meet Announcements" section.
4. Swimmers are expected to arrive at the proper time and be on the pool deck ready to begin at the time listed in the meet information. It is critical that swimmers be stretched and ready to get in the pool for the *start* of warm-up, as a proper warm-up is instrumental to competing well. If parents encounter a problem in getting to the meet on time, they should contact a coach since the coaches have to scratch any swimmers who are not known to be competing.
5. Swimmers should stay warm during winter meets by wearing the team shirt and/or warm-ups on deck. During outdoor meets, team members should stay in the shade (team tent) as much as possible.
6. Coaches will tell swimmers in which events, heats and lanes they will be swimming. Swimmers should check in with their coach before and after each race, and they should report behind the blocks several heats ahead of time. All swimmers will be expected to swim each of the events in which they are entered. **Only the coach can scratch a swimmer from an individual race(s). In the case of a prelim/finals meet, swimmers cannot scratch an event or session without the approval of the coach.**
7. Good nutrition is critical for swimmers to perform well. Swimmers should eat a sufficient, but not heavy, meal 2 to 4 hours before competition. Meals should include plenty of carbohydrates, while meet snacks might include fruit or energy bars. Swimmers should bring a water bottle and drink plenty of water throughout the meet to remain well-hydrated in the often humid pool buildings.
8. Electronic timing is provided in virtually all meets in which RAC participates. The times generated by the electronic timing system are the official times, while the buttons and stopwatches are used for back-up if the electronic system malfunctions. Only individual races or lead-off legs on relays count as official times, which are used as qualifying times, etc.

9. Swimmers are expected to remain until the end of the session in which they are participating, unless told differently by the coaching staff. In most cases, RAC will enter relays and most swimmers will be participating in these relays which usually occur as the last event of each session. As swimmers are expected to support one another, those not entered in relays will be counted upon to support their teammates until all events are completed. **Swimmers are prohibited from leaving a competition early without permission from a member of the coaching staff.**
10. Swimmers are expected to wear the appropriate team attire (suit, team t-shirt, cap, etc.) at the competition site.
11. **To comply with USA Swimming requirements, parents are not permitted on the pool deck unless they are serving in an official capacity at that time.** While often the temptation is there for a parent to come on the pool deck to “check on their child”, this is not permitted. If you need to visit with your swimmer during the meet, please designate a time and place to meet and they can come into the stands to meet with you.

IV. RAC FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

To participate as a member of the Ridgefield Aquatic Club, all swimmers must be determined to be in good financial standing by the club’s Treasurer. The following are the financial requirements of the club:

Program Fee: Each group has a particular program fee that covers participation in that group for the year. That fee may be made in one payment or by utilizing the RAC payment plan. Swimmers who have never participated with a USA swimming team have the option of signing up for either the short course or long course season only during the first season in which they participate with RAC. This option only applies to swimmers in the Gold, Silver, or Bronze Groups. After a swimmer has participated with RAC or another USA swimming team for at least 1 season they will be required to sign up for the entire year. A late fee is assessed to those participating in the payment plan whose payment is not received by the fifteenth of the month.

Fund-Raising Obligation: The Board of Directors will establish a fund-raising obligation each year. This amount is currently set at \$150 per swimmer or a maximum of \$300 per family. The team will establish a fund-raising plan and it is the responsibility for each swimmer and family to meet their assigned amount. Currently, the team conducts a swim-a-thon each February as its primary fund-raising activity.

Registration Fee: Each RAC swimmer is automatically registered with USA Swimming through Connecticut Swimming upon joining the team. This entitles the swimmer to participate in USA Swimming sanctioned events and provides insurance coverage to each swimmer. In addition, the registration fees provides each swimmer with a team t-shirt and a team bathing cap.

Swim Meet Accounts: Swimmers are charged for each individual and relay swim at each meet and a one-time meet surcharge (generally \$5). Swimmers will be billed each month

and meet fees must be paid by the 15th of that month or RAC will automatically bill the credit card on file. Once a swimmer has been entered in an event, RAC is charged for that entry even if the swimmer is unable to attend the meet at the last minute. Therefore the individual's meet account will still be charged if this should occur. Also, if a swimmer fails to attend a meet without notifying the coaching staff in advance or departs a meet early and this causes a relay to be scratched due to a lack of available eligible swimmers, the absent swimmer will be charged the entire relay amount.

Refunds: Any swimmer/family is entitled to a full refund (less \$110 registration fee) through the first week of beginning of the competitive year; 75% refund (less \$110 registration fee) through the 2nd week of the competitive year; 50% refund (less \$110 registration fee) through the 3rd week of the competitive year. Thereafter, RAC does not refund program fees.

Prorating: RAC does not prorate member fees for portions of the year. Exceptions are only made when a new family (which has not been involved with RAC in the past) joins the program after the starting date of the competitive year, or if that new family chooses to swim only short course.

Financial Hardship: RAC convenes a financial hardship committee to address cases of documented financial hardship which make it difficult for a family to meet their RAC financial requirements. This committee will work with families to keep their children involved with the club and the sport.

V. PARENTAL ROLES

RAC is a not-for-profit corporation that relies to a great extent on the volunteered time of its parent members to be successful. All parents are expected to support the team by attending team sponsored events, participating in team social activities and fundraisers, and volunteering their time. It is the nature of the sport of swimming, that when a child joins a team, so do his/her parents.

PARENT MEETINGS

RAC conducts two parents meetings each year. There is an information meeting held within the first month of fall practice and there is a meeting in July to conduct Board elections and to approve the budget for the next fiscal year. A parent from each family is expected to be in attendance at the RAC parent's meetings.

VOLUNTEERING AT SWIM MEETS

At most of the meets we attend, we are assigned worker positions in direct relation to the size of our entry. Each parent will be expected to assist at several meets during the season. Worker positions include meet officials (requires certification by Connecticut Swimming), timers, runners and marshals. The pool representatives will contact parents prior to or at the meets to ask for help.

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to working at meets, there are numerous areas that parents can volunteer to help with, including:

- Board members
- Swim-a-Thon
- Equipment/apparel managers
- Team publicity
- September potluck meeting
- Spring banquet
- Social coordinators for each practice group
- Travel coordinator
- Parade coordinator
- Web site management
- Grocery card sales

VI. COMMUNICATION

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Website - The RAC website (www.racswimming.org) will be the primary source of consolidated information about the team. The website has recently been overhauled to contain more timely information, better organization, and to be more visually appealing:



The tabs on the left side of the home page contain the following information:

- About RAC: team's mission, vision and values, coaches, board of directors, team alumni's college choices
- Contact Us: contact information, including an email link
- RAC News: Coaches' Corner, press releases, Swimmer of the Month, photo gallery and swim-a-thon information
- RAC Programs: description of different practice groups
- Practice Schedules: standard practice times, as well as current month (with exceptions)
- Meets: meet schedule, meet information, entries, directions, and results
- Team Handbook: this document along FAQ's, Code of Conduct and Practical Advice for Parents
- Time Standards: time standards for championship meets and USA Swimming motivational times
- Team Records: short course and long course team records by age group
- RAC Wet Shop: equipment lists, team attire orders, Metro Swim Shop portal
- Links: Connecticut Swimming, USA Swimming, time converter, Connecticut Swimming FAST database, CT high school swimming, CT Masters

The "Upcoming Dates" section on the top right of the home page will list upcoming meets, social events, scratch deadlines, etc.

Email - RAC will attempt to provide all necessary information through direct emails, but the website will be the primary means of communication. It is each family's responsibility to provide RAC with proper email addresses and with any changes in email addresses. RAC's email address is racswimming256@aol.com

Phone – RAC's phone number is 203-438-3951

Parent Mail Boxes - An individual box for correspondence to each swimmer is in the lobby of Barlow Mountain pool. Please check these boxes periodically. Information not transmitted electronically will be given out at the pool.

PRACTICE CANCELLATIONS

When inclement weather causes practice to be cancelled, every effort will be made to send emails and to post the information on the website. However, due to the nature of fast developing weather, call the team phone when in doubt. If a practice is cancelled, that information will be updated as soon as it is known

COMMUNICATION WITH THE COACHES

A parent may have the need to talk with a member of the staff about his/her child during the season. Please do not ask your squad representative questions regarding practice and technique – the coaches are best qualified to answer those questions and are very interested in each swimmer. However, they cannot stop what they are doing to talk with parents while trying to coach others. The best way to speak with a coach is by arranging a time either prior to or after practice is completed. **The Head**

Coach/CEO and the Head Age Group Coach may generally be reached at the team office at Barlow Mountain pool on weekday afternoons. Emailing the staff at the club email address or leaving voice mail is another way to communicate with a coach. Often it may be best to set up a time to speak with the coach one on one. Parents are not permitted on the pool deck during practice, and they should not come on the pool deck to talk with a coach then or during a meet.

VII. TEAM EQUIPMENT

REQUIRED TEAM ATTIRE

RAC requires that all swimmers be outfitted in team attire at competitions. This shall include RAC cap, RAC meet suit and RAC t-shirt. At the Senior Elite and Senior levels, a team warm-up suit is required at the Senior Open Championships and higher level meets. The warm-up is optional for all other groups. RAC will provide a t-shirt and a bathing cap to each swimmer at the beginning of short course season season.

REQUIRED TRAINING EQUIPMENT

Swimmers will be told by their respective group coach what equipment is necessary for practice. Swimmers will be expected to have that equipment within two weeks of the beginning of practice for that season. Equipment usually consists of kickboard, pull buoy, fins, and equipment to wear for dryland activities (t-shirt, shorts, and running shoes). Senior Elites and Seniors are also required to obtain paddles.

A team equipment day will be established during the early part of fall training. This will be an opportunity for all parents/swimmers to order necessary team equipment for the season. At other points during the season, orders can be placed directly with Metro Swim Shop, the team equipment distributor. Team members can access Metro Swim Shop through the club's website, and the retailer provides a rebate to the club for any items ordered via that channel. RAC currently wears only Speedo attire in meet competition.

VIII. SWIMMING OUTSIDE OF RAC

RAC is supportive of the swimmer's desire to swim in high school or for the various summer swim teams that our members belong to. These programs work in conjunction with what the RAC coaches are trying to accomplish with each swimmer. These programs are not a substitute for training/competing with RAC, but they may serve to complement the swimmer's growth. Swimmers are expected to communicate with their RAC coaches to discuss their outside swimming schedule and to make sure that they are still able to meet their RAC commitments.

GLOSSARY

(adapted from USA Swimming's website)

Age Group	Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16,17-18. Some LSCs have divided the swimmers into more convenient divisions specific to their situations: (i.e.) 8-under, 13-Over, 15-Over, Junior, Senior.
Alternate	In a Prelims/Finals meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalist are designated as alternates. The faster of the 2 being first alternate and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on a moments notice.
Backstroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swam as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter. (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd back)
Blocks	The starting platforms located behind each lane. Some pools have blocks at the deeper end of the pool, and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.
Breaststroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swam as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter. (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd back)
Butterfly	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter. (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yard back)
Button	The manual Timing System stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. The button is at the end of a wire, plugged into a deck terminal box. There are usually 3 buttons per lane. It is the timer's responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.
Car pool	The major transportation service provided by parents of a swim club, to shuttle swimmers to and from practices.
Cards	A card that may either be handed to the swimmer in the bull pen or given to the timer behind the lane. Cards usually list the swimmers name, USA-S number, seed time, event number, event description, and the lane and heat number the swimmer will swim in. Backup times are written on these cards. Each event may have a separate card.
Championship Meet	The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.
Championship Finals	The top 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the Finals. The fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held.
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.

Check-Out	The parents' job at the motel. This is listed here to remind parents to request "Late Check Out" times if offered at no charge by the motel. This makes the last day of the meet a little less hectic.
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 (Lane 4 in the final 3 heats).
Consolation Finals	After the fastest 6 or 8 swimmers, the next 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the Finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held and are conducted before the Championship heat.
Course	Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. (Ie) Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters.
Deck	The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one but an "authorized" USA Swimming member may be on the deck during a swim competition.
Distance	How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards (2 lengths), 100 yards (4 lengths), 200 yards (8 lengths), 400 yards (16 lengths), 500 yards (20 lengths), 1000 yards (40 lengths), 1650 yards (66 lengths). Distances for long course are: 50 meters (1 length), 100 meters (2 lengths), 200 meters (4 lengths), 400 meters (8 lengths), 800 meters (16 lengths), 1500 meters (30 lengths).
Disqualified	A swimmers performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with open hand above their head.
Dropped Time	When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time".
Dryland	The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.
Electronic Timing	The timing system usually has touchpads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers.
False Start	When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.
Flags	Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.
Freestyle	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M.
Gun Lap	The part of a freestyle distance race (400 meters or longer) when the swimmer has 2 lengths plus 5 yards to go. The starter fires a gun shot over the lane of the lead swimmer when swimmer is at the backstroke flags.
Heats	A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers time swam, after all heats of the event are completed.

Heat Award	A ribbon or coupon given to the winner of a single heat at an age group swim meet.
Heat Sheet	The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers seed times in the various events at a swim meet. These sheets vary in accuracy, since the coaches submit swimmers times many weeks before the meet. Heat sheets are sold at the admissions table and are used mainly to make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. Parents enjoy looking at the seedings prior to the race plus swimmers can tell the order the events will be conducted and get a rough idea how long the meet sessions will last.
High Point	An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet.
Horn	A sounding device used in place of a gun. Used mainly with a fully automatic timing system.
IM	Individual Medley. A swimming event using all 4 of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. Equal distances must be swam of each stroke.
Interval	A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.
Kick	The leg movements of a swimmer. A popular word to "yell" to encourage swimmers during a race.
Lane	The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim. (e.g., Lane 1 or Lane 2). Pools with starting blocks at only one end: As the swimmers stand behind the blocks, lanes are numbered from Right (lane 1) to Left (Lane 6).
Lane Lines	Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.
Lap	One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.
Lap Counter	The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.
Leg	The part of a relay event swam by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.
Long Course	A 50 meter pool.
LSC	Local Swim Committee. The local level administrative division of the corporation (USA-S) with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by the Corporation.
Mile	The slang referring to the 1500 meter or the 1650 yard freestyle, both of which are slightly short of a mile.
NT	No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.
Paddle	Colored plastic devices worn on the swimmers hands during swim practice.
Prelims	Session of a Prelims/Finals meet in which the qualification heats are conducted.
Prelims-Finals	Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session. The fastest 6 or 8 (Championship Heat)

	swimmers, and the next fastest 6 or 8 swimmers (Consolation Heat) return in the evening to compete in the Finals. A swimmer who has qualified in the Consolation Finals may not place in the Championship Finals even if their finals time would place them so. The converse also applies.
Psych Sheet	An entry sheet showing all swimmers entered into each individual event. Sometimes referred to as a "Heat Sheet" or meet program. However, a "heat sheet" would show not only every swimmer in an event, but also what heat and lane they are swimming in.
Pull Buoy	A flotation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice.
Relays	A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. 2) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle.
Scratch	To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.
Sectionals	Nickname for Speedo Championship Series.
Seed	Assign the swimmers heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.
Senior Meet	A meet that is for senior level swimmers and is not divided into age groups. Qualification times are usually necessary and will vary depending on the level of the meet.
Shave	The process of removing all arm, leg, and exposed torso hair, to decrease the "drag" or resistance of the body moving through the water. Used only by Seniors at very important (Championship) meets.
Short Course	A 25 yard or 25 meter pool.
Split	A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance, that is timed (e.g., a swimmer's first 50 time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 race. There are multiple splits for the longer distances.
State Qualifier	A swimmer who has made the necessary cut off times to enter the State meet.
Stroke Judge	The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified.
Swim-off	In a Prelims/Finals type competition, a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise ties stand.
Taper	The resting phase of a senior swimmer at the end of the season before the championship meet.
Timed Finals	Competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by those times.
Time Standard	A time set by a meet or LSC or USA-S (etc) that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.

Timer	The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.
Top 16	A list of times compiled by the LSC or USA-S that recognizes the top 16 swimmers in each age group (boys & girls) by each event and distance. The number 16 was arbitrarily chosen because it would normally fill the finals and consoles heats at a swim meet.
Touch Out	To reach the touchpad and finish first in a close race.
Touch Pad	The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race.
Unattached	An athlete member who competes, but does not represent a club or team. (abbr. UN)
Warm-down	The recovery swimming a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.
Warm-up	The practice and "loosening" up session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.
Watch	The hand held device used by timers and coaches for timing a swimmers races and taking splits.
Whistle	The sound a starter/referee makes to signal for quiet before they give the command to start the race.
Work Out	The practice sessions a swimmer attends.
Yardage	The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.
Zones	The country is divided up into 4 major zones: Eastern - Southern - Central - Western. At the end of the long course season (in August) the Zone Administration sponsors a championship age group meet.