

SEPTEMBER 2008

# TWST PARENT GUIDE

TO CONTACT TWST, VISIT [WWW.TWST.ORG](http://WWW.TWST.ORG) AND SELECT 'CONTACT' OR 'FEEDBACK ZONE'. A MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE WILL CONTACT YOU. YOU CAN EMAIL ANY COACH OR BOARD MEMBER — ALL EMAILS ARE LISTED ON THE WEB SITE.

## WELCOME TO TWST!

WE ARE GLAD THAT YOU AND YOUR SWIMMER ARE BECOMING PART OF THE TRADITION HERE AT THE WOODLANDS SWIM TEAM. THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE SOME "QUICK TIPS" THAT WILL HELP YOU NEGOTIATE YOUR WAY THROUGH PRACTICES, MEETS, SOCIAL EVENTS

AND ALL OF THE OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR GREAT SWIMMING PROGRAM. PLEASE REVIEW THE INFORMATION AND CONTACT YOUR COACHES OR OTHER PARENTS IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS. AGAIN, WELCOME!

**COACHES SHANA, VALERIE AND THE REST OF THE 14 & UNDER AGE GROUP COACHING STAFF.**

## USA SWIMMING / GULF SWIMMING / TEXAS SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

TWST, LIKE MOST YEAR ROUND SWIMMING PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IS A MEMBER OF USA SWIMMING, THE GOVERNING BODY FOR THE SPORT. USA SWIMMING HAS 59 LOCAL SWIMMING COMMITTEES (LSC). TWST IS PART OF THE GULF SWIMMING LSC (GU). GULF SWIMMING IS MADE UP OF 35 TEAMS LOCATED IN THE HOUSTON AREA AND BEYOND, EXTENDING FROM BEAUMONT TO MATAGORDA COUNTY AND FROM COLLEGE STATION TO GALVESTON. GULF SWIMMING CONDUCTS MANY MEETS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THE FALL/WINTER SHORT COURSE (25 YARD POOLS) SEASON RUNS FROM OCTOBER TO MARCH. THE

SPRING/SUMMER LONG COURSE (50 METER POOLS) SEASON RUNS FROM APRIL TO JULY.

HERE IN TEXAS, THE TEAMS THAT MAKE UP THE FIVE LSCS IN THE STATE ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE TEXAS SWIMMING ASSOCIATION (TSA). EACH YEAR TSA HOSTS THE TEXAS AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS OR "TAGS". TAGS MEETS ARE HELD IN MARCH AND JULY. TAGS IS THE ULTIMATE MEET FOR 14 & UNDER AGE GROUP SWIMMERS IN TEXAS. TWST HAS WON THREE OF THE LAST FOUR TAGS MEETS!



## MEET TYPES

SOME SWIM MEETS ARE OPEN TO SWIMMERS OF ALL LEVELS. OTHERS LIMIT PARTICIPATION ACCORDING TO QUALIFICATION TIMES. THESE MEETS “LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD”, ALLOWING SWIMMERS OF ALL SKILL LEVELS TO FACE APPROPRIATE COMPETITION AND THEREBY RACE AND IMPROVE.

FOR TWST SWIMMERS MOST OF OUR MEETS FALL INTO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- OPEN MEETS: SWIMMERS OF ALL LEVELS MAY PARTICIPATE.
- BB & UNDER MEETS: NO MINIMUM QUALIFICATION TIMES. THESE MEETS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR YOUNGER OR LESS EXPERIENCED SWIMMERS. SWIMMERS WHO HAVE ATTAINED AN “A” TIME IN AN EVENT MAY NOT SWIM THAT EVENT AT A BB & UNDER MEET. THESE MEETS OFTEN INCLUDE AN 8 & UNDER AGE CATEGORY.
- A & UP MEETS: SWIMMERS MUST HAVE ATTAINED AN “A” TIME IN ORDER PARTICIPATE IN THESE MEETS. IF A SWIMMER HAS THREE OR MORE “A” TIMES THEY CAN TYPICALLY SWIM THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ALLOWABLE EVENTS AT AN A&UP MEET, EVEN IF THEIR OTHER TIMES DO NOT MEET THE “A” STANDARD. THE YOUNGEST AGE GROUP FOR A & UP MEETS IS 10 & UNDER.
- WINTER, SPRING AND SUMMER CHAMPS MEETS: GULF SWIMMING HOSTS A CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS IN DECEMBER, FEBRUARY, AND JULY. SEPARATE MEETS ARE HELD FOR B, BB, AND FASTER SWIMMERS.
- GULF CHAMPS: TWICE PER YEAR, IN DECEMBER AND JUNE, GULF SWIMMING HOSTS GULF CHAMPS MEETS. SWIMMERS MUST MEET QUALIFICATION TIMES THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THE GULF CHAMPS MEET.
- TAGS: TWICE PER YEAR, IN MARCH AND JULY, THE TEXAS SWIMMING ASSOCIATION HOSTS THE TAGS CHAMPIONSHIPS. SWIMMERS MUST MEET QUALIFICATION TIMES THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THE TAGS MEET.

## TIME STANDARDS

MEET QUALIFICATION TIMES FOLLOW STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY USA SWIMMING. THESE STANDARDS BEGIN WITH “B” TIMES AT THE SLOWER END OF THE SCALE AND ADVANCE TO BB, A, AA, AAA, AND AAAA TIMES.

TIME STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY USA SWIMMING COVER AGE GROUPS RANGING FROM 10 & UNDER TO 17-18 YEAR OLDS. THE STANDARDS CHANGE ANNUALLY IN AUGUST AND CAN BE FOUND ON THE USASWIMMING.ORG WEBSITE.

FOR TWST SWIMMERS, THREE OTHER UNIQUE TIME STANDARDS ARE SET EACH YEAR:

- 8 & UNDER GULF TIMES: GULF SWIMMING SETS ITS OWN B AND BB TIME STANDARDS FOR 8 & UNDERS. THESE CAN BE FOUND ON THE GULFSWIMMING.ORG WEBSITE.
- GULF CHAMPS TIMES: GULF SWIMMING SETS UNIQUE STANDARDS FOR ITS GULF CHAMPS MEETS. THE TIMES MAY NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH USA SWIMMING TIME STANDARDS.
- TAGS TIMES: TSA SETS UNIQUE STANDARDS FOR ITS TAGS MEETS. BEGINNING IN 2007, THESE TIMES WERE ESTABLISHED FOR SINGLE YEAR AGE GROUPS. TAGS QUALIFICATION TIMES CAN BE FOUND ON THE TSASWIM.ORG WEBSITE.

SWIMMERS WHO QUALIFY FOR GULF CHAMPS OR TAGS, EVEN IF ONLY IN A RELAY, SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND THESE MEETS. YOUR TEAMMATES NEED YOU!

## SWIM MEETS

FOR THE UNINITIATED, SWIM MEETS CAN BE CRAZY AND CONFUSING. BOTH SWIMMERS AND PARENTS CAN FEEL OVERWHELMED. THE FOLLOWING ARE A FEW QUICK TIPS TO HELP YOU NEGOTIATE YOUR WAY THROUGH TWST MEETS:

- **MEET ENTRIES:** ENTERING MEETS IS EASY AND FAST THROUGH ITWST.ORG, OUR TEAM WEBSITE. **LOOK FOR EMAILS ANNOUNCING EVENTS AND LOG INTO ITWST TO CHECK THE EVENTS SECTION. ALL MEET ENTRY IS DONE THRU ITWST.**
- **CIRCLING IN:** SWIMMERS MUST “CIRCLE IN” ON THE MORNING OF THE EACH MEET DAY. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN A SWIMMER BEING SCRATCHED (DROPPED FROM HIS/HER RACES). THE CIRCLE IN BOARD IS USUALLY POSTED NEAR THE POOL ENTRANCE AND SHOWS ALL SWIMMERS ENTERED IN EACH EVENT. MAKE SURE THAT A PARENT OR THE SWIMMER CIRCLES THE NUMBER NEXT TO YOUR SWIMMERS’ NAME, DOING SO FOR EACH EVENT ENTERED. CIRCLING IN SHOULD BE THE **FIRST THING** YOU DO UPON ARRIVING AT THE MEET!
- **WARM UPS:** WARM UPS OCCUR BEFORE THE START OF EACH MEET SESSION. WARM UP TIMES AND LANE ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE FOUND ON THE GULFSWIMMING.ORG WEBSITE’S “MEETS” SECTION. WARM UPS ARE SOMETIMES CRAZY, OVER-CROWDED AND INTIMIDATING, PARTICULARLY FOR YOUNGER SWIMMERS. MAKE SURE YOUR YOUNG SWIMMER FINDS A TWST COACH, WHO WILL HELP CALM YOUR SWIMMER AND PLACE THEM IN A LANE.
- **MEET PROGRAMS / PSYCH SHEETS:** PROGRAMS HELP YOU TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE MEET AND ARE WELL WORTH THE COST. A “TIMELINE” PROVIDES AN ESTIMATION OF WHEN EACH EVENT WILL OCCUR. USE THE TIMELINE AS A GUIDE BUT RECOGNIZE THAT MEETS ARE UNPREDICTABLE AND MAY PROGRESS MORE OR LESS QUICKLY THAN PREDICTED. THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD DOES NOT MISS AN EVENT IS FOR YOU AND YOUR SWIMMER TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE PROGRESS OF THE MEET! PSYCH SHEETS, ALSO PART OF THE PROGRAM, SHOW YOU WHERE YOUR SWIMMERS’ TIMES RANK IN COMPARISON TO THE OTHER SWIMMERS ENTERED IN THE MEET.
- **LANE ASSIGNMENTS:** YOUR PROGRAM WILL NOT SHOW HEAT AND LANE ASSIGNMENTS. LANE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE POSTED APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTES BEFORE EACH EVENT ON THE POOL DECK AND IN THE SPECTATOR AREA. FOR YOUNGER SWIMMERS YOU MAY WISH TO WRITE THEIR NAME, HEAT AND LANE ON THEIR ARM WITH A “SHARPIE”.
- **LINING UP:** AT TWST MEETS THERE IS NO “READY BENCH” AND SWIMMERS ARE 100% RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING TO THE STARTING BLOCKS ON TIME. WELL BEFORE THEIR EVENT, SWIMMERS SHOULD CHECK IN WITH THEIR COACH. THEY SHOULD THEN PROCEED TO THEIR ASSIGNED LANE AND INFORM THE TIMERS THAT THEY HAVE ARRIVED.
- **POST-RACE:** SWIMMERS SHOULD CHECK IN WITH THEIR COACHES AFTER EVERY RACE. IF A WARM-DOWN POOL IS AVAILABLE COACHES MAY INSTRUCT SWIMMERS TO SWIM A FEW EASY LAPS.
- **IN BETWEEN EVENTS:** SWIM MEETS CAN BE LONG AND TEDIOUS, WITH A LOT OF DOWN TIME BETWEEN EVENTS. BRING ACTIVITIES, GAMES, ETC. TO HELP PASS THE TIME. ALSO BRING CHAIRS, COOLERS AND OTHER COMFORTS; MOST POOLS HAVE A SET UP AREA WHERE SWIMMERS AND FAMILIES CAN PASS THE TIME. TRY TO SIT WITH YOUR TWST TEAMMATES. FINALLY, ENCOURAGE YOUR SWIMMERS TO KEEP ENGAGED WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE POOL: CHEERING THEIR TEAMMATES, CIRCLING IN ON THEIR OWN, AND MANAGING THEIR OWN WARM UPS, LANE ASSIGNMENTS, ETC.

## PRACTICES

YOUR SWIMMER'S COACHES WILL PLACE YOUR SWIMMER INTO A TRAINING GROUP. EACH TRAINING GROUP HAS VARIED REQUIREMENTS REGARDING SWIMMERS' AGES AND TIMES, AS WELL AS THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH SWIMMERS SHOULD ATTEND PRACTICE. MOST AGE GROUP SWIMMERS ATTEND PRACTICE THREE TO SIX TIMES PER WEEK. PRACTICES ARE HELD EACH WEEKDAY AND ON SATURDAYS WHEN MEETS ARE NOT SCHEDULED.

TWST WILL BE TRAINING OVER THE HOLIDAYS. PRACTICES HELD DURING THE THANKSGIVING AND HOLIDAY BREAKS ARE VERY IMPORTANT. WHILE WE DO NOT EXPECT YOU TO CANCEL ESSENTIAL HOLIDAY PLANS, TWST COACHES DO EXPECT YOUR SWIMMER TO ATTEND HOLIDAY SEASON PRACTICES REGULARLY.

MOST SWIMMERS NEED THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT FOR PRACTICE; CONSULT WITH YOUR COACHES TO SEE IF YOUR SWIMMER'S NEEDS VARY:

- GOGGLES — YOU CAN'T HAVE TOO MANY AS THEY TEND TO GET LOST EASILY; WHERE THEY GO NO ONE KNOWS!
- FINS
- KICKBOARD
- PADDLES AND PULL BUOYS — NOT NECESSARY FOR YOUNGER AGE GROUPS
- CAP

SWIMSHOPS OF THE SOUTHWEST SETS UP A SMALL "STORE" AT THE WAC AND THE NAT. PLEASE SUPPORT THIS GREAT SHOP.



## GREAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

USA SWIMMING WEBSITE: [WWW.USASWIMMING.ORG](http://WWW.USASWIMMING.ORG)

THIS WEBSITE PROVIDES A WEALTH OF INFORMATION. ALL OF YOUR SWIMMER'S TIMES ARE AUTOMATICALLY ENTERED INTO A NATIONAL DATABASE HOSTED ON THE USA SWIMMING WEBSITE. YOU CAN SET UP A "MY USA SWIMMING" SHORTCUT AND THEREBY TRACK ALL OF YOUR SWIMMERS TIMES, ALLOWING HIM/HER TO TRACK IMPROVEMENT OVER THE YEARS. YOU CAN ALSO SEE HOW YOU SWIMMER RANKS AGAINST HIS/HER PEERS IN THE GULF, THE STATE AND THE USA. FINALLY, YOU CAN ACCESS ALL USA SWIMMING ESTABLISHED TIME STANDARDS.

GULF SWIMMING: [WWW.GULFSWIMMING.ORG](http://WWW.GULFSWIMMING.ORG)

THIS WEBSITE PROVIDES DETAILED INFORMATION ON ALL LOCAL SWIMMING ACTIVITIES. SIGNIFICANTLY, THE "MEETS" SECTION OF THE WEBSITE CONTAINS A CALENDAR OF ALL SWIM MEETS PLANNED FOR THE YEAR, ALONG WITH LINKS TO MEET INVITATIONS, MAPS, WARM UP TIMES, AND RESULTS (USUALLY AVAILABLE THE WEEK FOLLOWING EACH MEET).

THE WEBSITE ALSO CONTAINS INFORMATION ON GULF SWIMMING ESTABLISHED TIME STANDARDS FOR 8 & UNDERS AND GULF CHAMPS MEETS.

TWST WEBSITE: [WWW.ITWST.ORG](http://WWW.ITWST.ORG)

THE TEAM WEBSITE CONTAINS A WIDE VARIETY OF INFORMATION ON UPCOMING MEETS AND SOCIAL EVENTS, PRACTICE SCHEDULES, PHOTOGRAPHS, PARENT INFORMATION AND MANY OTHER ITEMS. CHECK IT REGULARLY! WATCH THE NEWS AND EVENTS SECTIONS FOR IMPORTANT UPDATES AND KEEP YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS CURRENT.

PRACTICE GROUP REPRESENTATIVE:

EACH PRACTICE GROUP HAS ONE PARENT VOLUNTEER TO BE THE "PRACTICE GROUP REPRESENTATIVE" FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR. THE IDEA BEHIND THIS CONCEPT IS TO SPREAD OUT THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE TEAM WITHIN EACH PRACTICE GROUP AND MAKE BEING PART OF TWST A MORE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE. THIS VOLUNTEER WILL BE THE MAIN CONTACT PARENT TO ASSIST THE OTHERS IN THE PRACTICE .

## SOCIAL & SPECIAL EVENTS

TWST HOSTS MANY SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR FOR BOTH SWIMMERS AND PARENTS. WATCH iTWST AND OUR OTHER TEAM COMMUNICATIONS FOR INFORMATION ON THESE FUN OPPORTUNITIES TO GET TO KNOW YOUR TEAMMATES AND FELLOW PARENTS.

A BRIEF SAMPLING OF SOCIAL EVENTS INCLUDES:

- GREEN AND BLACK MEET – FUN, NON-COMPETITIVE MEET IN THE SPRING
- SNEAKY SNOWMAN – GIFT GIVING BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS
- HOLIDAY SKATING PARTY ON DEC. 24<sup>TH</sup>
- HOLIDAY DANCE PARTY
- AWARDS BANQUET – APRIL
- CHAMPIONSHIP PARTIES- GET PSYCHED UP BEFORE THE BIG MEETS!
- DRAGON BOAT RACES – SENIOR SWIMMERS COMPETE FOR TWST
- TRAVEL TRIP – ANNUAL OUT OF TOWN TRIP FOR 9 YEAR OLD AND OLDER SWIMMERS

## GET INVOLVED!

A CORNERSTONE OF OUR SUCCESS AS A TEAM IS THE TWST VOLUNTEER. WE BELIEVE THAT ALL PARENTS ARE OBLIGATED TO PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER EFFORTS AND IT'S THIS EFFORT AND COMMITMENT THAT ALLOWS OUR PARENTS TO SHARE IN THE SUCCESS OF THEIR SWIMMERS AND THE ENTIRE PROGRAM. THERE SIMPLY ARE TOO MANY WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH TWST TO MENTION THEM ALL HERE BUT FOR NEW FAMILIES WE'LL SUGGEST A FEW. IF YOU ARE NEW TO THE SPORT OF SWIMMING, THERE IS AN EVER PRESENT NEED FOR TIMERS AT ALL OF OUR SWIM MEETS. IT'S AN EASY WAY TO GET CLOSE TO THE ACTION AND AS YOU WILL HEAR, IT'S THE BEST SEAT AVAILABLE AT A SWIM MEET. WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS AT THE SWIMMING-WORLD FAMOUS TWST GRILL. TWST IS WELL KNOWN ACROSS TEXAS FOR HAVING THE VERY BEST CONCESSION AND THIS GROUP TAKES A LOT OF PRIDE IN THE SERVICE THEY PROVIDE. IT'S A GREAT GROUP AND OF ALL THE DIFFERENT VOLUNTEER TEAMS, THEY MAY ACTUALLY HAVE THE MOST FUN AT OUR MEETS AND OUR HOSPITALITY GROUP IS A CLOSE SECOND. BOTTOM LINE, NOBODY IS GOING TO OUT-DO OUR PEOPLE THAT KEEP US FED AND WATERED AT A SWIM MEET!

SWIM MEETS ARE NOT THE ONLY TIME OR PLACE TO VOLUNTEER. OUR SOCIAL COMMITTEE IS INCREDIBLE AND ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS AND HELP WITH THE MANY DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE POOL THAT TWST IS KNOWN FOR. AS YOU BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE TEAM YOU WILL LEARN THAT THE TEAM IS SUPPORTED BY A BOARD OF DIRECTORS WITH NINE PARENTS SERVING VARIOUS POSITIONS AND TERMS. REPORTING TO THE BOARD ARE A SEVERAL COMMITTEES INCLUDING FINANCE, GOVERNANCE, COMMUNICATIONS, MEET OPERATIONS, LONG RANGE PLANNING AND FUNDRAISING. THESE COMMITTEES ARE COMPRISED OF BOARD MEMBERS AS WELL AS NON-BOARD MEMBER PARENTS AND THERE IS PLENTY OF WORK TO GO AROUND SO WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR HELP IN ALL OF THESE AREAS.

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO FIND OUT WHERE HELP IS NEEDED OR INDICATE AN AREA OF INTEREST? RESPOND TO THOSE PESKY EMAILS SOLICITING HELP AND/OR SEEK OUT ONE OF OUR COACHES OR OUR BOARD PRESIDENT. THEY WILL POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. CHECK OUT THE TEAM VOLUNTEER POLICY ON OUR WEB PAGE. WE'RE SERIOUS VOLUNTEERS!



Woodlands  
Swimming

