

# TEAM HANDBOOK



## FRANKLIN AREA SWIM TEAM

<http://www.swimmingfast.net>

# **TEAM HANDBOOK**

## **FRANKLIN AREA**

### **SWIM TEAM**

#### **(FAST)**

This Handbook is to be used as a reference for understanding the structure of FAST membership.

The Allegheny Mountain Swimming (AMS) handbook is the official reference for our local swim committee in Region II.

The United States Swimming (USS) handbook is the ultimate reference for USS competitive swimming.

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## **CLUB VISION AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

Franklin Area Swim Team (FAST) provides professional instruction, stroke development and training for swimmers of all ages and ability levels. It is the goal of FAST to provide a positive and dynamic learning environment that progresses an individual swimmer through the sport with excellent skills, work ethic, and a love for the sport. We want each swimmer to have the vision and process to be able to grow towards their potential and our mission is to have excellence at every level.

The FAST coaching staff believes there is a direct correlation between a swimmer's attitude, commitment and success in the sport. The Coaching staff aims to instill this maxim with each swimmer: commitment to process through hard work, focused practice, and belief in one's self and the program will lead to swimming success and overall personal development.

The Swim Team Board and coaching staff feel that swimming on a USS team should be an enjoyable experience. Swimmers make new friends, bolster their confidence, develop a spirit of camaraderie with teammates, and are introduced to values such as organization and self-discipline.

USA Swimming (USS) is a non-profit corporation headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO in which coordinates competitive swimming across the United States. It provides rules and guidelines for regions and clubs to follow, and sets time standards and meet structures for the local, zones and national levels. Allegheny Mountain Swimming, Inc. (AMS) is another non-profit corporation headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA and which, as the USS Local Swimming Committee, coordinates competitive swimming activities in the Allegheny Mountain Section. It set meet schedules and formats, sanctions meets, supervised certification and training of officials, and performs other administrative functions. Franklin Area Swim Team, Inc., (FAST) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of advancing competitive swimming in the Murrysville, PA community and taking part in USS activities. We work closely with the Franklin Regional school district and its swim teams; however, we are not restricted in membership to those living in the Franklin Regional school district and have had numerous successful swimmers and board member parents from those living in adjoining communities.

### **How is USS swimming different from summer recreation swimming?**

There is a difference in the frequency and structure of meets. Instead of swimming two meets per week (as in recreation swimming), the USS team will swim one meet every several weeks. The number of events offered at a USS meet is also greater. Recreation meets offer 25 yard and 50 yard events of each stroke, 100 IM, and relays. Other than at special meets directed specifically at swimmers 8 years old and younger (Mini Meets), events at USS meets offer events with longer yardage: 50-100-200 in each of the four strokes, 500 and 1650 in freestyle, 100-200-400 IM, and 100-200-400 in both the freestyle and medley relays.

For younger swimmers, USS training is very similar to summer recreation training, concentrating on stroke improvement. As the swimmer becomes older, the USS workload will continually increase and become significantly higher than found on summer recreation teams. It is for this reason that USS swimmers in older age groups are so much faster than summer recreation swimmers, while in the younger age groups there may not be much difference.

USS swimmers become more conscious of their times in each event. Competition at a USS meet is against swimmers with similar times. By improving over time, the goal is to become competitive with oneself. Swimmers learn to achieve their goals, cope with adversity, and accentuate the positives; and they swim faster and achieve a higher level of competition as they get older.

# FAST TRAINING GROUPS

## OVERVIEW

In order to ensure that every FAST swimmer is taught the proper technique, learns the fundamentals of the sport, and trains to his/her highest level, FAST is divided into an organized set of groupings. These groups ensure the FAST effectively uses its allotted pool time and each swimmer receives the best possible workout.

Our groups are designed to place a swimmer into an appropriate group that will promote the long-term development, enjoyment, and success in our sport. All levels, therefore, have a strong emphasis on stroke development and overall athletic development through dry land and water workouts.

The guidelines of the groups are based on both ability level and age. Each group has specific goals and expectations of practice attendance. The best way to progress through the program and to maximize swimming improvements is by committing to achieving the group goals and by realizing practice expectations. Not living up to attendance expectations could limit ability to execute drills and sets, increase chance of injury, and limit improvements over the course of the season.

There are 6 FAST swimming groups. They are: Stroke Developmental 1b; Stroke Developmental 1; Stroke Developmental 2; Age Group; High School Group; and the National Group. All of the goals and criteria of the training groups are set up by the coaching staff. A swimmer's placement into a group is based solely on the recommendation of the coaching staff. All placements are done at the coaching staff's discretion. Advancement to a higher group traditionally occurs before the start of Short Course season.

### ***Stroke Developmental 1b***

#### Group Description

This is our beginning competitive group at FAST. The primary focus of the group is to begin the process of learning swimming skills and technique. Swimmers will learn correct body position and the importance of a strong kick through drills and instruction. Practices will be educational and fun!

#### Age Requirements

This group consists of swimmers ages 5 to 12 years of age.

#### Attendance

Practice will be offered 2 days per week for 45 minutes per practice.

Practice is not mandatory.

#### Skill Requirements

To be placed in this group, swimmers must be able to do the following:

- Swim 25 yards of legal freestyle
- Swim 25 yards of legal backstroke

#### Group Goals

- Freestyle with proper body position, strong kick, rotary breathing, streamlines past flags.
- Demonstrate Legal 50 yards of legal freestyle and 50 yards of legal backstroke,
- Learn a freestyle flip turn and to dive in head first

#### Competition Requirements

It is encouraged that swimmers compete in meets, but it is not required. Any mini-meet meet (8 and under only), dual meet, or B meet, is an excellent opportunity for our young swimmers to test their skills. Please ask the coaching staff if you have any questions.

## ***Stroke Developmental 1***

### Group Description

This is our intermediate competitive stroke developmental group at FAST. The primary focus of the group is to continue the process of learning swimming skills and technique. Swimmers will learn correct body position and the importance of a strong kick through drills and instruction. In addition, we will aim to become proficient in All Four Strokes. Practices will be educational and fun!

### Age Requirements

This group consists of swimmers ages 6 to 12 years of age.

### Attendance

Practice will be offered 3 days per week for 45 minutes per practice

Practice is not mandatory.

### Skill Requirements

For admittance into the group, swimmers must be able to do the following:

- Swim 50 yards of legal freestyle
- Swim 50 yards of legal backstroke

### Group Goals

- Freestyle w/ proper body position, strong kick, rotary breathing, streamlines past flags.
- Demonstrate Legal 25 Fly, Back, and Breaststroke
- Swim a continuous 100 free with proper technique
- Develop, competitive freestyle and backstroke flip turns and to dive in head first

### Competition Requirements

It is encouraged that swimmers compete in meets, but it is not required. Any mini-meet (8 and under only) dual meet, or B meet, is an excellent opportunity for our young swimmers to test their skills. Please ask the coaching staff if you have any questions.

## ***Stroke Developmental 2***

### Group Description

This is our intermediate to advanced competitive stroke developmental group at FAST. Similar to other Stroke Developmental Groups, the primary focus of the group is to begin the process of learning swimming skills and technique. Swimmers will learn correct body position and the importance of a strong kick through drills and instruction. In addition, we will practice and develop all four competitive strokes with an emphasis on moving efficiently through the water. Practices will be educational and fun!

### Age Requirements

This group consists of swimmers ages 12 and under.

### Attendance

Practice will be offered 3 days per week for 1 hour per practice

Practice is not mandatory. It is, however, important to recognize the importance attending practice has on the swimmer's understanding and improvement.

### Skill Requirements

For admittance into the group, swimmers must be able to do the following:

- Swim 50 yards of legal freestyle
- Swim 50 yards of legal backstroke
- Streamlining past flags.
- Legal butterfly and breaststroke kick
- Swim a continuous 100 IM and 100 freestyle with rotary breathing
- Swim 8 x 25 freestyle on 40 sec

### Group Goals

- Freestyle with proper body position, strong kick, rotary breathing, streamlines past flags.
- Demonstrate Legal 50 butterfly, Back, and Breaststroke and 100 IM
- Swim a continuous 200 freestyle with rotary breathe and flip turns
- 6 x 50 freestyle on 1 minute
- Develop, competitive freestyle and backstroke flip turns and to dive in head first

### Competition Requirements

It is encouraged that swimmers compete in meets, but it is not required. Any B or BB meet, dual meet, or open meet is an excellent opportunity for our young swimmers to test their skills. Please ask the coaching staff if you have any questions.

## **Age Group**

### Group Description

This is our primary training group at FAST for middle school aged kids and younger. Our focus will be to continue and advance all previous stroke development such good body position, strong kicking, and fluid movement. In addition, we will continue to develop proper workout behavior, interval training, race strategy, and goal setting. Practices will be educational, challenging, and positive.

### Age Requirements

This group consists of swimmers ages 10 to 14 years of age.

### Attendance

Practice will be offered 5 days per week for 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 h 45 min per session.

Practice is not mandatory. It is, however, it is important to recognize the importance consistent practice has on a swimmer's understanding and improvement in the sport.

### Skill Requirements

For admittance into the group, swimmers must be able to do the following:

- Freestyle w/ proper body position, strong kick, rotary breathing, streamlines past flags.
- Demonstrate Legal 50 Butterfly, Back, and Breaststroke and 100 IM
- Swim a continuous 200 freestyle with rotary breathing and flip turns
- 6 x 50 freestyle on 1 minute
- Freestyle flip turn and dive in head first

### Group Goals

- Swim a legal 200/400 IM
- Establish appropriate training intervals and goal paces for all stroke
- Swim a 500 freestyle with a rotary breathing in under 8 minutes
- Compete in all of the strokes in a variety of distances

### Competition Requirements

It is encouraged that swimmers compete in meets, but it is not required. Any B, BB or A meet, dual meet, or open meet will be appropriate for the swimmers. The coaching staff will provide instruction and guidance to help the swimmer enter the appropriate meets throughout the season and we strongly encourage a swimmer to participate in a championship meet at the end of the season. Please ask the coaching staff if you have any questions.

## ***High School Group***

### Group Description

This is our group for swimmers who entering or are already in high school. The focus will continue and advance all previous technical instruction such good body position, strong kicking, and fluid movement. In addition, we continue to develop proper workout behavior, interval training, race strategy, and goal setting. Practices will be educational, challenging, and positive. This group will prepare and compliment the High School Swimming experience and will be an educational, challenging, and positive environment.

### Age Requirements

This group consists of swimmers ages 13 and older.

### Attendance

Practice will be offered 5 days per week for 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 h per session.

Practice is not mandatory. It is expected that swimmers choose an expectation of how many practices they will make per week.

### Skill Requirements

- Swim a legal 200 IM
- Swim a 500 freestyle in under 8 minutes
- Make 10 x 100 freestyle on 1:45 (yds)
- Committed to developing a strong kick.

### Group Goals

- Swim a legal 400 IM
- Establish appropriate training intervals and goal paces for all of the strokes
- Swim a 500 freestyle with a rotary breathe in under 8 minutes
- Train both, in and out of the water, to get reach your personal goals
- Compete in all of the strokes in a variety of distances

### Competition Requirements

It is encouraged that swimmers compete in meets, but it is not required. The coaching staff will provide instruction and guidance to help the swimmer enter the appropriate meets throughout the season and we strongly encourage a swimmer to participate in a championship meet at the end of the season. We recognize that this group will get most of it competition during the High School Swimming Season. Please ask the coaching staff if you have any questions.

## ***National Group***

### Group Vision

We are a committed group who aspires to reach our full potential in the sport of swimming. To do so, our expectations and goals are high, our workouts are intense, and our mentality is positive. We will be a culture based on respect and believe in each other and our common goal: To be our best everyday!

### Groups Skill Requirements

- Swim a legal 400 IM
- Achieve USS "A" time standard in multiple events
- Swim a 500 freestyle or 400 IM in under 5:45
- Make 10 x 100 freestyle on 1:20 (yds)
- Written document, with goals, of why you want to be in the group.

### Group Rules

- Make Every Practice (Coaches should be notified before an excused absence)
- 3 unexcused absences and/or 6 tardies you will be removed from the group.
- Be on time for every practice
- Respect Coaching Staff and Teammates

### Group Goals

- Achieve USA Swimming "A" time standard in multiple events
- Swim a 500 freestyle or 400 IM in under 5:45
- Swim 10 x 100 freestyle on 1:20 (yds)
- Written document, with goals, of why you want to be in the group

### Practice Schedule

The FAST coaching staff and board does its best to maximize our allocated pool time. We have a very large team and we share the pool with a variety of other activities throughout the year. We have to be creative with our schedule so practice times will change on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. However, we will do our best to keep the schedule as consistent as possible. The schedule will be made available ahead of time and is posted on the FAST website so you will have the opportunity to plan a practice schedule that works for you. There is always the chance we will have last minute change to the schedule due to cancellations out of our control. Any changes to the schedule will be sent via email.

## FRAMEWORK OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

<b>Worldwide</b>	FINA, International Federation for Aquatics.
<b>National</b>	United States Swimming (USS)
<b>USS Membership</b>	<p>All swimmers that compete in a USS swim meet must join United States Swimming. USS membership is renewed every year and the cost is included in your FAST dues. Membership provides swimmers with accident insurance for all sanctioned swim meets and supervised practices of member clubs. Additionally, registered USS members become eligible for USS and Allegheny Mountain Swimming travel fund money when competing at Junior National or National Championships.</p> <p>Each swimmer will receive a membership card. The registration number is recorded on the Times Entry Sheet for each meet entered by our Club. <b><i>The card should be taken to all meets since a registration check on all swimmers may be called for.</i></b></p>
<b>Regional</b>	Region II is one of thirteen regions which divide the U. S. Swimming into more easily administered areas for all amateur athletics. Allegheny Mountain Swimming and five other district associations comprise Region II: Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, District of Columbia, Virginia, and West Virginia.
<b>LSC</b>	<p><u>Allegheny Mountain Swimming</u> is the name of our local swim committee in Region II. It is comprised of all the Pennsylvania counties west of Potter, Clinton, Center, Huntington, and Bedford counties: Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, and Marshall Counties in West Virginia; Jefferson, Belmont, and Columbiana counties in Ohio.</p> <p><u>Allegheny Mountain Swim Committee</u> oversees the aquatics program in our district. AMS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Grants USS sanctions. (AMS must approve the design and structure of individual meets throughout an entire season. Without this sanction, the meet cannot be considered official.)</li><li>2. Interprets and implements USS rules: hears protests.</li><li>3. Establishes and coordinates the swimming calendar.</li><li>4. Establishes the developmental swimming program and sets the applicable time standards.</li><li>5. Is responsible for the training of meet officials.</li><li>6. Provides a forum for coaches.</li><li>7. Sponsors and conducts special meets. (such as the all star meet)</li><li>8. Maintains the district's swimming records.</li><li>9. Is responsible for overall quality of the district's aquatics program.</li></ol>

## **COMPETITION**

### ***Meet Participation***

FAST participates in a variety of meets. Meets have different formats and some have time and/or age requirements. The time standards are determined by USS and are available on line through the AMS web site; a link is also provided on our home page. Here is a description of the meets (remember it is beneficial for a swimmer to have multiple personal times in different events on file so they have the option to swim a variety of events at meets.

### ***Meet Formats***

#### Age Group Open (AGO)

The most basic meet that provides all swimmers with the option to swim any event in his/her age group. There are no qualifying times for Age Group Opens.

#### Mini Meet

These meets are for swimmers ages 8 and under. These meets provide younger swimmers with the opportunity to compete in all types of events, both individuals and FAST relays.

#### B Meet (qualifying times, no faster than meet)

These are developmental meets great for newer swimmers who are learning to race and swim competitively. Swimmers' must not exceed national standard B times.

#### BB Meet (qualifying time, no faster than meet)

These are qualifying meets for swimmers achieving national BB time standards.

#### A Meet (qualifying meet)

These meets are for experienced swimmers who have national A qualifying time or higher.

#### Zones

This is an Age-Group all star meet for our LSC, Alleghany Mountain Swimming. Qualifying times for this meet usually requires one to be in the top one or two in the AMS in your age group.

#### Sectionals

A swimmer must achieve a Sectional time qualification.

#### Junior Nationals

A swimmer must achieve a Junior National time qualification.

#### Senior Nationals

A swimmer must achieve a Senior National time qualification.

This is an overview of the format of AMS meets. FAST also competes in a few non sanctioned AMS meets usually intended for the entire team. Please, feel free to approach the coaching staff if you have any questions about the meets or which one is right for you.

## FRANKLIN AREA SWIM TEAM ORGANIZATION

The Franklin Area Swim Team is a non-profit corporation operated by its members on a voluntary basis in accordance with its bylaws. Primary responsibility for club operations is vested in the Board, club officers, and the coaching staff.

FAST membership is automatic for parents when a child is accepted as a member of the swim team and has paid all dues. The help and cooperation of all parents is expected and essential as all swimmers share in the benefits and services of the club.

**Income** is obtained from member dues, fees for the Introduction to Competitive Swimming program (ICS), and the operation of swim meets. Dues are low compared to those of similar clubs in the area and can be maintained if members support the meets held by the team.

Fundraisers have not been a regular occurrence with FAST. Fundraisers, when held, are for the purpose of holding dues amounts down or for specific equipment or team trips. When held, it is hoped that all families participate.

**Expenses** incurred by the team include salaries for coaching staff, payroll taxes, insurances, end of the season banquet, and various administrative and miscellaneous costs.

**The FAST Board** consists of six to ten members and the Head Coach. New board members are elected during the General Membership Meeting in the spring. The Board, in turn, elects the officers of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Board performs or oversees a designee (FAST Administrator) for the following functions:

- Selects coaching staff
- Arranges for the use of the school facilities
- Establishes the budget for the year and sets membership dues consistent with budget
- Establishes length of practice season and the length of practice in conjunction with the Head Coach
- Establishes, with Head Coach's agreement, qualification for membership
- Registers swimmers with U.S. Swimming
- Supports the Allegheny Mountain Swimming (AMS) committee and its programs
- Manages team entries and individual entry fee accounts
- Conducts FAST sponsored meets
- Administers swimmer recognition, i.e., Spring Banquet
- Purchases and maintains equipment related to competitive swimming
- Maintains team communication, weekly-updated telephone hotline, FAST bulletin board, and frequent e-mails
- Plans and manages the yearly Introduction to Competitive Swimming (ICS) program to obtain new qualified members
- Arranges for annual team trip, if possible

**The Coaching Staff** is responsible for training and development of team swimmers. Activities cover full range of training and competition. In particular the coaching staff:

- Conducts practices, arranging appropriate workout schedules to teach all racing strokes and techniques and to develop stamina
- Establishes, with approval of board, team practice times
- Attends swim meets
- Represents swimmers at meets, particularly when difficulties arise
- Provides critiques of performances and encourages swimmers
- Establishes and enforces rules for swimmer conduct at practices
- Maintains general discipline (includes suspension and dismissals with board concurrence)
- Contributes to overall improvement of the team by consulting and cooperating with the swim team board, other coaches, and AMS swim committee

## PARENTAL SUPPORT / VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

Volunteers are needed to run meets and provide other team functions throughout the season. By helping the team, parents help swimmers achieve their goals. In addition to specific volunteer opportunities, parents' support is required in the following areas:

- Signing up their swimmers to enter in meets
- Providing/arranging transportation to practice and meets
- Helping their swimmers maintain and track their individual times
- Providing encouragement to their swimmers

All families are encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions with the Board. Every family is expected to volunteer and is asked to sign an agreement to do so at the time they join the team. FAST requires that at least one member of each family volunteer for the FAST Home Meet. Included in the FAST Registration Packet is a Volunteer Incentive Fee letter that describes FAST's position.

**IF A FAMILY DOES NOT VOLUNTEER TO WORK DURING THE HOME MEET, A FEE OF \$100 WILL BE ASSESSED.**

***It is FAST's position that swim dues are paid in a timely manner as requested in the registration packet. Failure to do so will be subject to either suspension from practices and meets until the dues are paid in full or permanent removal from the team.***

### DURING THE SEASON

#### ***Committees***

Many volunteer jobs require support throughout the season. Some involve sporadic activity over an extended period of time; some require more intense effort over a short period of time. Board members head each committee with support from team members. If you are interested in a particular committee, contact a board member.

- Team Trip Coordinator:** One or two people are needed to work with the Head Coach and Board to select an appropriate meet for the team trip, select a hotel, and make reservations as needed.
- Banquet Committee:** This job organizes the team's end-of-season banquet.
- Social Committee:** This group plans and implements fun nights, pizza parties, etc., throughout the season.
- FAST Merchandise:** One or two people coordinate selection of team merchandise, take orders, purchase, and deliver articles at the beginning of the season.
- Home Meet** Work with meet director. Volunteer coordinator is needed and a concession committee to run the kitchen for the home meet.
- Pool & Facility** Monitor the lobby, locker rooms, and pool bleacher area.
- Bulletin Board:** One or two people keep the FAST bulletin board neat and orderly.
- Webmaster:** One or two people create and maintain the FAST web site.
- Corporate Sponsors:** One or two people solicit local businesses for significant sponsorship and provide thank you at end of season.
- Photography:** One or two people coordinate team pictures and collect candid photos throughout the season.

## **Meet Volunteers**

Families are expected to work at least one of the sessions hosted by FAST during the season. A typical 2-day, 4-session meet requires a minimum of 232 jobs to be filled. Most positions require no special skills or qualifications and are easily picked up by an adult, or in some cases by a swimmer or sibling. The following is a representative list of jobs needed for home meets:

- Meet Director:** This is almost always a board member.
- Volunteer Coordinator:** This is the job for anyone with a phone and some time to solicit volunteers for open jobs.
  - Timers:** A total of 12 timers plus one head timer are needed per session (18 timers plus one header timer if a mini-meet).
  - Kitchen:** Staffing includes one or two coordinators per session and at least 6 people for prep/server/cashier jobs per session.
  - Marshals:** Four are needed per session to monitor the pool during warm-ups and between sessions.
  - Scorer:** Requires training on timing/scoring equipment – two people per session run scoring system, print times by lane and announces winning results in the pool area.
  - Heat and Tee:** Two volunteers are needed at the start of each session (one or two later in each session) to sell heat sheets and procure and sell meet merchandise such as tee shirts.
  - Awards:** This job involves sorting and distributing ribbons to swimmers and requires two to three people per session.
  - Deck Runners:** One coordinator and four runners are needed per session to move data and results from one point to another on the pool deck and other locations in the building. Kids like to volunteer for this.
  - Data Entry:** Three skilled adults handle the results computer system and resolve any discrepancies.
- Place and Finish Judges:** Two to three adults are needed per session to provide visual confirmation of the order of finish for each heat.
- Safety Director:** One person per session remains on deck to monitor, defer or address any injuries.
- AMS Officials:** This job requires training and monitors adherence to rules during home and away meets. FAST is required to have a minimum of four officials per season.
  - Set-up:** About 8-10 people set up chairs and tables, install equipment, post signs, etc. the night before the meet.
- Tear-down and Cleanup:** About 8-10 people remove signs, clear chairs, and dismantle equipment immediately after the meet.
- Heat Sheet Organizers:** One or two people are needed to set-up advertising and text for heat sheets.
- Meet Advertisement:** Solicit ads for heat sheets prior to the meet-usually board member

# SWIM MEETS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

USS COMPETITIVE SWIMMING RULES are designed to protect the swimmer, provide fair and equitable conditions of competition, and promote uniformity in the sport so that no swimmer shall obtain an unfair advantage over another. Swimmers are encouraged to attend the meets that the coaches have scheduled for the team. This is typically one to two meets per month.

### **Competition**

**Closed:** Entries are limited to members of one organization or one USS district (in our case the AMS).

**Open:** For all USS registered swimmers.

**Invitational:** For those swimmers or those clubs invited by the sponsoring organization.

**Junior Olympic:** For swimmers seventeen years of age and under (maximum time no minimum).

**Developmental:** For district (in our case AMS) age group swimmers whose times meet certain specified time standards (both minimum and maximum).

**Mini:** For swimmers eight years old and under.

### **Age Divisions**

**Age Group:** Swimmers compete in categories according to their age on the first day of the meet. The categories or age groups as established by the USS are as follows: 9 and 10, 11 and 12, 13 and 14, and 15 through 18. The 8 and under and 9 and 10 are combined as 10 and under in some meets. At Mini Meets swimmers compete as 6 and under, 7, or 8 year olds.

**Open or Senior:** All swimmers 6 years old and over in A and BB meets. There are no Senior events for B meets.

### **Course Distinction**

#### Short Course vs. Long Course

Refers to the length of the pools.

**Short Course:** Any 25 yard pool or course; abbreviated: (sc) for short course.

**Long Course:** Any 50 meter pool or course; abbreviated: (lc) for long course.

### **Meet Attendance**

#### How long are USS meets?

In general, USS meets run two days with some events on Saturday and others on Sunday. This division is because of the large number of events offered. Meets are usually divided into morning and afternoon sessions by age group to keep the duration of each session under four hours.

#### Do we have to attend?

While attendance at a meet is not mandatory, this is the swimmers reward for all the practice and hard work they have put into swimming. By competing, the swimmer is able to reach his or her goals.

As the swimmers get older, the importance of the meets increases. A swimmer may be expected to attend certain team meets or may be expected to attend as a member of a relay team. Note: a swimmer who does not show for an assigned relay will have three very disappointed teammates and will be charged for the cost of the full relay event.

## **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### ***Types of Meets***

#### AMS Developmental Meets (Closed)

These meets are limited to AMS district teams and are confined to age group competition. There are specific events with qualifying times for ages 9 - 18 with qualifying times slower than national "A" time standard. The purpose of this program is to further enhance the goals of the USS and to provide the best possible conditions to encourage all swimmers to improve skills.

**"B" Developmental Meets** Qualifying times must be slower than national "B" time standards

**"BB" Developmental Meets** Qualifying times must be slower than national "A" time but faster than national "B" time standards

Usually two or three separate clubs host these meets at their pool. The FAST coaching staff and Board determine which location the team will attend. A swimmer's strength generally varies in the different strokes, and therefore, it is not uncommon for a swimmer to compete, for example in "BB" meets in the freestyle and in a "B" developmental meet in the butterfly. A swimmer in the program competes at his or her own level. Each swimmer faces progressively stronger competition with personal improvement. Awards at these meets are ribbons and achievement awards.

#### Specialty Meets (Closed)

These meets are developed for specific areas of interest and needs. Examples are relay meets, distance meets, and odd age meets.

#### Major Meets - Age Group Open (Invitational)

For most months of the short course season, a club will host an Age Group Open Meet. There are no qualifying times required for these meets and swimmers are seeded in heats with other swimmers of comparable strength.

#### Major Meets – Championships (Closed and Open)

Championship meets are held for each type of swimmer ("B" Meet Championships, "BB" Meet Championships, Mini-Meet Championships, and Age Group Open Championships). The Age Group Open Championships and some of the other large meets such as the annual Christmas Meet require swimmers to obtain a national "A" time to qualify.

Meets such as the Christmas Meet attract outstanding USS registered swimmers from all over the eastern half of the United States. Awards for these meets are team trophies, high point trophies, and medals. Zone team selections are made from these meets.

### ***FAST Swim Meet Participation***

The coaches select those AMS meets which FAST will attend during each season.

The FAST Meet Schedule can be found on our website, [www.swimmingfast.net](http://www.swimmingfast.net), and are listed on the calendar. The meets later in the season will be posted as the remaining calendar gets updated. Meets are also posted on the website under 'MEETS / TIMES'.

NOTE: The Head Coach may provide important information below the Meet Schedule.

## **Meet Sign-Up Procedure**

Meet information is usually provided to FAST by the sponsoring club approximately four weeks before the meet entry deadline. Entries are required to be in the hands of the meet host no later than two weeks prior to the meet. Factoring in time to process a list of the eligible swimmers and processing the sign-ups, a swimmer normally has about one week to sign up for a meet, but the FAST Administrator will try to give swimmers as much time as can be allowed to indicate their intention to swim.

1. E-Mail Announcement

An e-mail to all members will be sent that announces: i) the upcoming scheduled AMS meet; ii) the date that the Meet Sign-Up Sheet (in the form of a Meet Eligibility Report) will be posted on the FAST bulletin; and iii) the date that it will be taken down.

2. Sign-Up Sheet Postings

The Meet Sign-Up Sheet along with the Meet Invitation will be posted to the FAST bulletin board just outside the Franklin Regional Middle School pool. It is recommended that parents check the bulletin board each time a swimmer is brought to practice to avoid missing a meet sign-up.

**DO NOT REMOVE THE MEET SIGN-UP SHEET FROM THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE BULLETN BOARD.**

3. Confirm that your child is eligible to swim at the meet

The Meet Sign-Up Sheet (Meet Eligibility Report) lists ONLY those swimmers who are eligible to swim in the meet that is scheduled. Eligibility is determined by the swimmer's individual times compared to the qualifying AMS Time Standards established for the specific meet. (Swimmer's individual times must be achieved at a meet or recorded by a coach in a time trial.) The AMS Time Standards are posted on our website under Meets/Times.

NOTE: Some meets have 'no faster than' time standards and others have 'at least as fast as' standards, so your swimmer's eligibility will vary from meet to meet. Also a few meets or events do not have qualifying time standards ("Open Meets"), but these are the exception. Refer to the Types of Meets above.

If your child's name DOES NOT appear on the Sign-Up Sheet then they are not eligible to swim in this meet. If their name DOES appear, then....

4. Review the Meet Invitation

The Meet Invitation includes details about the meet and also includes the Events and Session Sheet for that meet. The most important details from the Meet Invitation are: i) the host club; ii) location of the meet; iii) the entry limit (maximum number of events a swimmer can swim per day); iv) entry fees; v) and the dates and times of the meet. The warm-up times will be reconfirmed by a separate email closer to the actual meet date.

5. Review the Event and Session Sheet for the meet

In order to plan your day and to avoid conflict, the parent will use the meet's Event and Session Sheet to assist them in choosing which events they want their child to swim.

The entire Meet Invitation can be found on the AMS website under the "Meets" tab by selecting schedules/invitations, then INV and clicking on the "green" button.

6. Confirm that your child will swim in the meet

**Circle your child's name** on the Meet Sign-Up Sheet which confirms that they will participate in the meet.

**Circle the events** that your child wishes to swim, including any relays. There is typically a limit of 4 events per swimmer per day plus relays; be sure to review the Meet Invitation for specifics. Relays will be entered by the coaching staff on the day of the meet.

If you are unsure you can ask a coach to help you in selecting which events your swimmer should participate in.

7. Special Notes

You can also make special notes/comments, i.e. available to swim all except for..., or can only swim in..., etc.)

NOTE: If you confirm that your child is going to swim but DO NOT CIRCLE ANY EVENTS then the coaches will select events for your child to swim based upon their abilities. It is possible that they will be signed up for both days.

8. Sign-Up Sheet Removal

The FAST Administrator will take down the Meet Sign-Up Sheet by the date indicated and then enter all of the swimmers' event selections and submit all FAST entries as a group to AMS. After this is done three things happen: (1) your swimmer has been irrevocably entered into the meet, (2) FAST incurs a non-refundable entry fee liability and (3) your entry fee amount is deducted from your Meet Entry Account and cannot be refunded.

9. Review the Meet Entry Report

A Meet Entry Report will be posted on the FAST bulletin board. This report lists all FAST swimmers who have been entered and confirmed for the meet. **PLEASE CHECK THIS REPORT IMMEDIATELY AFTER POSTING**; if an error has occurred it may be possible to correct, but only if caught in time.

The Meet Sign-Up is complete! Your swimmer now needs to practice hard, eat and sleep well, show up on time for the meet warm-up, swim their best and HAVE FUN!

### ***FAST Meet Entry Account***

A Meet Entry Account is a separate FAST account into which you deposit money and from which FAST pays meet entry/splash fees, all so your swimmer can compete in AMS sponsored meets. FAST tracks your deposits and deductions, thereby maintaining a running total for each swimmer's family.

Deductions are based on "Splashes". A Splash is a confirmed event in which your child will swim. It is not the number of meets or sessions attended. The Splash fee is charged to the swimmer even if the swimmer does not actually attend the meet or misses an event. Splash costs are determined by AMS and can be found on the Meet Invitation. FAST does not keep this money. It is paid to the host swim club.

A swimmer who confirmed that they will swim a relay but leaves early and causes a relay to be scratched will be charged for the cost of full relay (all relay swimmers' Splash fees).

Example: A swimmer is confirmed for three (3) events and a relay but leaves early and does not swim in the relay, \$15 will be deducted for the three splashes plus \$20 for the missed relay (4 swimmer's times the cost per Splash).

The FAST Board recommends that you deposit enough money into the account in the beginning of season to cover participation at several meets. A meet entry balance will be posted on the FAST bulletin board periodically to confirm a family's account balance.

**Checks are made payable to: FAST Meet Entry**

(Be sure to include your swimmer's name in the Memo of the check)

The check can be mailed to: Jodi Horvath, 3951 Sunflower Ct., Murrysville, PA 15668 or, placed in the Horvath family mailbox.

**NOTE: A SWIMMER WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ENTER A MEET IF THEIR MEET ENTRY ACCOUNT HAS A NEGATIVE BALANCE.**

Families with active swimmers should maintain a positive balance in their meet entry accounts. Parents will be informed periodically of the status of each family's account by posting on the bulletin board. Accounts must be kept current for each swimmer's entries to be accepted.

## ***Meet Procedure***

Heat Sheets are normally sold at the door. FAST swimmer meet results are posted on the bulletin board after received from the hosting club. Results are also available on the AMS web site.

### The swimmer's arrival should allow time to:

1. Report in to the coach.
2. Check in, if required.
3. Obtain a rest area space with the team.
4. Check the heat sheet to know your EVENTS including your HEAT and LANE. Coaches will have HEAT SHEETS and an ELIGIBILITY LIST of our swimmers' events.
5. Participate in team warm-up and team meeting to prepare for the meet up and to become accustomed to the pool edges, the starting blocks, and to the water temperature.
6. Report behind the blocks for the event.
7. Report to a coach immediately after the event.
8. Wear a FAST cap.

### The swimmer should then:

1. Listen to the PA system or watch the call boards for events to be called; each event is usually announced three times. Failure to hear a call for an event does not dismiss a swimmer from responsibility of being on time for the start of a heat. At a pre-seeded meet there is no seeding area and swimmers report directly to the pool deck for seeding. Swimmers and parents should pay close attention to the heat sheet information and time flow of the meet events. For some meets, seeding is done in a special seeding area and entry cards are provided to swimmers to take to their lanes.
2. When the swimmer's event is announced or posted, the swimmer reports on deck to the assigned lane or to the Clerk of Course in the seeding area. The heat sheet or an entry card in the seeding area (if used) designates the event number, heat, and lane assignment for the swimmer. The meet invitation indicates the type of seeding in place for the meet.

### After the race, the swimmer should:

1. Get his/her time from the head lane timer or the time board.
2. Give his/her time to the coach.
3. Record the time for his/her Times Record Sheet.
4. Check the posted results, and pick up any awards.

### Before leaving, the swimmer should:

1. Check with the Coach to see if participation is needed in a relay.
2. Clean up the rest area and be sure to collect all personal belongings.

## ***Meet Helpful Hints***

- The "weather conditions" at an indoor swimming meet vary from warm (spectator section) to cool (rest area or seeding area). It is suggested that parents and swimmers dress for maximum flexibility. In all cases, sneakers are a must for any kind of deck duty. When not actually in the water, swimmers should have something on over their suits -- a T-shirt, sweatshirt, or a warm-up suit -- to ward off getting chilled.
- Identify or mark ALL your swimmer's belongings. Sew a nametag into the warm-up suit and/or mark with indelible ink the label tag in the swimsuits, towels, etc.

- Take a blanket or sleeping bag for the rest area. Bring games, playing cards, books, and/or a radio to pass the time between events and a bag of snacks to ease the budget and the hunger pangs. Generally, snacks such as coffee, donuts, hot dogs, hamburgers, and candy are sold at the meets.
- Parents find it most helpful to write the event numbers on the back of the swimmer's hand with a ballpoint pen. This provides a constant reminder of the events, which minimizes the risk of missing an event.

## **Glossary of Meet Terminology**

### Heat and Heat Sheet

A term given to the division of swimmers within a single event when there are too many contestants to compete at one time. Each group of contestants is called a heat. The slowest heat swims first in the event; the fastest heat swims last. The heat sheet is the printed meet program, which lists the events, Rules of Conduct, swimmers entered and their entry times.

### Call Boards

A board on which the event number currently being seeded is posted. This serves to notify swimmers in an event that they should report immediately to their assigned lane on the pool deck. There is usually a call board in the swimmer's rest area and often an additional one in the pool area. The event being seeded is usually two events ahead of the event that is being swum.

### Clerk of Course:

An official who distributes entry cards, if used, to the swimmers and accounts for the presence of all swimmers scheduled for the event. This official places each swimmer in the properly seeded position for the race. This is most often seen in mini-meets.

### Seed, Seeding Time, Seeded Position, Seeding Area

Seeding of swimmers into heats is done to arrange the number of contestants into a distribution pattern in order to equalize the competition. In swimming, the entry time, presumably the swimmer's best time to date for that event, is the seeding time. The heat sheet lists the swimmer's position (seeded position) in the race according to his/her entry time; seeding also determines the specific lane assignment. The seeding area is where the swimmers are physically lined up in the correct and actual order in which the event is to be swum. In pre-seeded meets, there is no separate seeding area – swimmers report directly to their assigned lane.

### Lane Assignment

This is noted on the time card or heat sheet. In each heat a lane assignment is determined by the seeding time, with the fastest swimmer seeded in the "middle lane" and the slowest swimmer in the outside lane. For example, in a six lane pool the fastest swimmer in the heat will be in lane 3, the second fastest in lane 4, third fastest in lane 2, fourth in lane 5, fifth fastest in lane 1, and the slowest in lane 6.

### Scratch

To withdraw an entry from competition. If a swimmer scratches himself/herself or is scratched from one event in a meet, he/she may or may not be permitted to swim the remainder of the meet. Check with the coach if there is a question.

### Timed Finals

In this type of meet, the final placings are determined simply by the times performed in the heats. The majority of our district meets are judged on this basis.

### Preliminaries and Finals

Another type of meet competition and setup, with two sessions - preliminaries (events) and finals (events). With the exception of the three fastest heats, the preliminary events are seeded as usual. In the fastest heats, the competition is mixed to a much greater extent than usual. The fastest swimmers are dispersed throughout all three heats in accordance with a USS seeding pattern instead of just the first heat.

A final heat of swimmers with the fastest times from the preliminaries returns (the finalists) and swims a final race to determine places and final times. Often under this setup, the event is more stimulating, with finishes less predictable. Exceptional performances are encouraged. However, this system creates a longer meet.

### Strokes

Four basic strokes: freestyle, butterfly, breaststroke, backstroke. Each stroke, except freestyle, has clearly defined legal and illegal technique. Swimmers are disqualified for any infraction and their race is null and void.

### Individual Medley (IM)

The individual medley is a combination of the four basic strokes: butterfly, back, breast, and freestyle. Each stroke constitutes one fourth of the event distance. Freestyle constitutes a free style or free choice as long as one of the previous strokes is not swum again. The crawl stroke or any variation is usually used. Swimmers are disqualified for any infraction and their race is null and void.

### Disqualification ("DQ")

Occurs for an illegal start, stroke, swim, touch or turn. The swimmer is usually advised by an official; the infraction is also noted on the time card. A time achieved under disqualification is not a legal time and cannot be used for any purpose. A "DQ" is indicated by a meet official raising one hand overhead with an open palm.

### Official Time

The final time for a swimmer for a particular event. Most meets use electronic timing systems (touch pads) with two people as backup timers per lane. Otherwise, three timers are required for each lane. If touch pads are used, the electronic time is the official time and watch times serve only as a backup. If an electronic timing system is not used and two or three times are identical, this is the official time. If all three readings disagree, the middle reading is the official time. If there are only two readings available and they differ, then the average of the two readings becomes the official time. All watch readings are written on the swimmers entry card; the unofficial time is posted on the time board for each lane. The time cards are put in order of the official time, disqualifications and judges' decisions are noted, and these cards are compiled for the official results of the race.

### Results

The results of each event and award winning places are prominently posted as soon as times are available from the administration desk. A complete set of results is mailed to each club. Individuals may order and pay for a complete set of results. In addition, a complete set of results are posted on the AMS web site ([www.amswim.org](http://www.amswim.org)) after each meet.

### Awards Table

Awards, as described in the heat sheet, are issued at this table. Usually, ribbons are awarded to the top six places in each event. Awards are not available immediately after the finish of the race; the tabulation work must be done first. Swimmers who qualify for an award should report to the awards table as soon as an event's results are posted or announced over the public address system. Swimmers who pick up an award must initial the results sheet at the awards table.

### Record Times

FAST Record	a record set by any FAST swimmer at an official meet, which is the fastest time in a particular event in a particular age group. These records may be posted on the bulletin board.
AMS Record	a record set by any AMS district swimmer in any USS sanctioned meet, recognized only when official meet results are provided for the AMS Records Chairman. It is the best time ever swum by an AMS swimmer in a particular event.
District Record	a record achieved in an AMS district meet by any swimmer from any district; it is the best time swum in this district in a particular event.

Junior Olympic Record        a record achieved by a swimmer for a particular event. This is a separate system of records under the USS Junior Olympic Program.

### Relays

An event with 4 swimmers in a single event from each team. In order to enter a relay team in a meet, the coach must determine which swimmers will make up the team.

Before leaving a meet, swimmers should always check with the coach to see if they are needed for a relay.

### Special Situations

If questionable developments, problems, or difficulties arise for a swimmer at any time during the meet, the swimmer should seek the advice, assistance, and/or representation of the coach.

### Behavior

Each club and its coach are responsible for the conduct of its swimmers. Swimmers must obey all rules of good behavior and safe practices. A swimmer may be expelled from the meet for unacceptable behavior.

## RECOGNITION

Benefits or awards are provided by the Swim Club and also by the AMS for swimming achievements. Swimmer recognition is promoted in several ways.

### ***Privilege of wearing the team suit***

This occurs after qualifying for the team and is the first level of achievement for a swimmer. (Purchase of the team suit is optional.)

### ***Recognition party***

This is sponsored each spring, usually in March. All team members are invited. All swimmers are recognized for their hard work and dedication to the sport and awards are presented.

### ***Team record recognition***

A summary of current FAST all-time records for each event by age group is posted on the FAST bulletin board. Also posted is a summary of current season records for each event by age group. This recognizes top performers for the season and gives a challenge to other swimmers to improve times to beat those times.

### ***Coaches' discretionary awards***

The coaching staff may elect to recognize swimmer achievements during the season for such accomplishments as consistent attendance at practices or meets or exemplary performance.

### ***Meet recognition awards***

**Place awards** (ribbons, medals, trophies, or plaques) are given at all meets for all events. The schedule for awards, which varies from meet to meet, is usually given in the information section of the individual meet announcement as well as on the heat sheet.

**Time standard** Each year, USS establishes time standards, or "Cuts" for each of its major meets, from 'BB' or age group meets through Olympic Trials (Starting at level 'B' and going up to level 'AAAA' times). These time standards exist for each sex, each age group, as well as each of the five recognized events: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley.

**First "A" time standard** the swimmer is awarded an AMS patch, a bar denoting the applicable age group, and a single star. Additional stars are awarded as the time standards are achieved in each of the recognized strokes.

**Best time ribbons** this is a FAST program which provides a ribbon to each swimmer as they achieve a new personal best official time in an event.

**Age group awards** upon moving to an older age group, a swimmer must strive to achieve the standards that apply thereto.

## **POOL RULES/DISCIPLINARY CODE**

### **POOL RULES**

1. Running is never permitted in the pool area. All wet areas become slippery and dangerous and are an invitation to injury.
2. Conduct and behavior must be good at all times and all places, particularly when and where the team is being represented.
3. Private and public property must be taken care of and respected at all times.
4. During practice times all swimmers are expected to be in the pool area. Roaming around other areas of the building by swimmers or siblings is not permitted.
5. Disruptive behavior or insubordination will not be tolerated in practice.
6. All safety (USS & AMS) regulations must be observed and enforced.

### **DISCIPLINARY CODE**

1. Minor infractions: one week suspension.
2. Actions which involve questions of safety: one week to permanent suspension.<sup>1\*</sup>
3. Insubordination, willful disobedience of coaches, willful destruction of property: one week to permanent suspension.\*

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<sup>1\*</sup> When such a penalty is assessed, the coach should discuss it with the Board.

## MISCELLANEOUS / HELPFUL HINTS

### **The FAST Bulletin Board**

Check at least weekly during the season, preferably at each practice. It helps to keep up with team events and swimmers' achievements. Meet entry sheets for upcoming meets are posted on the bulletin board. Prompt review permits entry omissions or errors to be corrected. Notify the Coach or Meet Entry Person regarding an error or omission.

### **AMS Handbook**

An AMS Handbook is available from AMS for a small fee. Contact FAST Board members if you would like to order a copy.

### **USS Official Handbook**

A complete swimming and diving rulebook is available. Contact FAST Board members to place an order. The contents of the handbook are also available at the AMS web-site ([www.amswim.org](http://www.amswim.org)).

### **Swimming World**

SWIMMING WORLD is the monthly national magazine for competitive aquatics. It is informative and very useful, especially when parents and swimmers become more enthusiastic and involved in this sport. To subscribe, send your name, address, and check to Swimming World Magazine, P.O. Box 45497, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

### **FAST MailBox and Communications**

Inside the pool area is located the FAST *MailBox*, which contains a slot for each FAST family. You can also drop off information to the coaches and FAST board members in the *MailBox*. FAST communicates primarily via e-mail. FAST Administrator's email address is [swimfast30@comcast.net](mailto:swimfast30@comcast.net).

### **FAST Web Page**

The FAST Website address is <http://www.swimmingfast.net>. AMS also maintains a site at <http://www.amswim.org>; this site contains information related to meet schedules and results.

### **On Leaving the Team**

If a swimmer becomes inactive or if a family is moving, please notify the coach and the club treasurer so that names can be removed from the mailing list and any balance in a family's meet entry fund be returned. If meet entry money is not requested within three months from the date of severance, the money will be automatically rolled into the general fund.

**Please check the FAST website for Board of Directors and Head Coach contact information.**