

The Parsons Dolphins Swim Team Handbook

- Last updated October 2006 -

www.parsonsdolphins.org

INTRODUCTION

While this handbook can't answer every question or address every issue, it is intended to be a useful tool for all members of the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team. Basic information about our team and board structure, general rules and requirements, a code of conduct, and a glossary of commonly used swim terms are included. If you don't find the answer to a question, just contact a coach or board member or talk with one of the team members who've been around awhile.

This handbook may be downloaded from our website at www.parsonsdolphins.org as an Adobe PDF document or contact any board member or coach to receive a printed copy. When viewed on-line or saved on a computer, you can take advantage of the handy hyperlinks used throughout this document. Instead of scrolling through the entire handbook to find what you're looking for, just click a section heading in the Table of Contents for direct access to the information. Also, many words and terms (dark blue in color) are linked to their definition in the glossary.

As members of the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team board, we want to make the experience of every team member; kids, families, and coaches, to be as positive as possible. Although competition is a big part of our club's focus, our main goal will always be to teach Dolphins swimmers how to work together to achieve success as individuals and as team members while having fun at the same time.

Thanks for being a part of our team!

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I. Mission Statement

"The Parsons Dolphins Swim Team is committed to providing every child with opportunities and encouragement for achieving success, as individuals and team members, both in and out of the water."

II. League Affiliations

The Parsons Dolphins currently belong to both the [USA Swimming](#) and the [Tri-State Swim Conference](#). [USA Swimming](#), (sometimes referred to as USSA or USS Swimming), is a national organization based in Colorado Springs, Colorado with our regional zone being the [Missouri Valley Local Swimming Committee \(MV-LSC\)](#). Although [USA Swimming](#) provides year-round competition in both [long course](#) and [short course events](#), we normally compete in only two winter [meets](#) – Pittsburg and Emporia.

The [Tri-State Swim Conference](#) is a summer-only swim [league](#) of twelve full-member teams from Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas that compete each weekend beginning in June and ending in early August with [Championships](#). [Tri-State competitions](#) are [short course events](#) with the older swimmers competing in some [events](#) that are as long as 400 yards.

In past years, the Dolphins have also belonged to the SEK Swim League which is comprised of teams from towns like Erie, Chanute, Iola, Ft. Scott and Coffeyville.

III. Club Membership

As used in this handbook, the term “*member*” means any member of the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team including swimmers, parents or guardians of swimmers, coaches (paid or volunteer), and team board members.

The Parsons Dolphins Swim Team (**PDST**) is open to any child between the ages of 5 and 18. The only skill requirement for membership is to be able to get from one end of the pool to the other and back, (a total of 50 yards), by any means or method.

Parents or guardians must complete any release forms required by facilities used by the Dolphins for practice, instruction or **competition**. In addition, each member must provide our **Team Administrator** with basic swimmer’s information including; full name, gender, date of birth, address, and emergency contact information. Swimmers wishing to compete in **Tri-State** or **USA meets** must also comply with the requirements of these respective **leagues**. All **league** forms and membership fees may be submitted through our **Team Administrator**.

While encouraged, participation in **meets** is not required. A swimmer wishing to compete at a **meet** must attend at least two full practice sessions within the preceding five days of such **meet**. These sessions may be regular **PDST** sessions or those approved by a coach or board member. Exceptions must be approved by both a coach and one or more board members.

IV. Code of Conduct

For the safety and benefit of all members, the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team has established the following Code of Conduct for every member to follow during practice sessions, instructional sessions, **competitions** or other team gatherings at facilities used by the **PDST** or at other locations. Unless otherwise stated, appropriate disciplinary action for violating any of these rules shall be determined by a coach, a coach’s designate or a board member. Repeated violations, and in certain cases a single violation, of these rules will result in the suspension and subsequent termination of club membership.

Any member whose behavior is distracting, offensive or creates disruption during practice sessions or **competition** shall be given verbal warning or receive an appropriate consequence as determined by a coach, a coach designate or a board member present. Distracting, offensive and disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to; fighting, failure to follow the instructions of an adult, the use of obscene language or gestures, and repeated talking or inattention.

Any member who continues to act in a distracting, offensive or disruptive manner, or whose behavior could or does threaten the safety of themselves or others, will immediately be removed from participation. A parent or guardian will be contacted and the member shall be suspended from further team participation until the matter has been reviewed by the full board for final disposition. Law enforcement will be contacted if a criminal act is suspected.

No **PDST** member, including swimmers, coaches, board members and parents or guardians, may participate in any team activity while under the influence of alcohol or any drug that has not been prescribed by a physician and is permitted for use during such activity.

Anyone suspected of using or having used any drug or alcohol will be advised by at least one adult team member of such concern, immediately removed from the activity and suspended from further team participations. The board will convene as soon as possible to determine final action, which may include termination of club membership.

Prior to participating in any team activity, anyone using a prescription medication under a doctor's care shall provide a coach, coach's designate, or board member with information, on the physician's office letterhead, outlining side effects and/or dangers, if any, of such medication to the member while participating in team practices or **competitions**.

V. Payment of Dues and Fees

As a team, the Parsons Dolphins receives operating funds primarily from **meet fees** received from our **Tri-State home invitational meet** each summer and from **team dues** collected from each Dolphin team member. Our **home meet** can generate from \$1000.00 to nearly \$3000.00 in net income for the club each summer, however, this doesn't cover our annual operating expenses which include **league fees**, equipment costs, and coaching salaries. Like most teams, we charge **team dues** for every child who is a **PDST** member. Summer **dues** and winter **dues** are assessed separately (two different seasons) with the amount of each set yearly by the board. A discount is provided for families with more than one child swimming in either or both seasons and **scholarships** may also be available. Contact the **Team Treasurer** for details.

Summer **dues** are assessed for those members swimming during the months of June, July, and the first part of August and are due prior to the beginning of the **summer season**.

Winter **dues** apply for the months of October through May. Members participating in the **winter season** are billed monthly with payments due 30 days from the statement date.

With the exception of our **home invitational meet**, members are required to pay additional **fees** for each **meet** they participate in. Members should let the **Team Administrator** know they wish to compete in a **meet** no less than two weeks prior to the **meet**. **Meet fees** vary depending on the number of **events** a swimmer enters. Any member who wishes to withdraw their **entry** to a **meet** must notify our **Team Administrator** no less than ten days prior to the **meet** or they will be responsible for paying the **meet fees** anyway. Since it's nearly impossible to determine all **meet fees** for each individual member prior to the start of a season, members will be billed for the exact cost of these **fees**, per swimmer, on a monthly basis.

Members with an account more than 30 days past due may be prohibited from competing with the Dolphins until the entire balance is paid or suitable payment arrangements have been made with the **Team Treasurer**. Balances more than 90 days past due may be referred to collection.

[Team dues](#) and [meet fees](#) will not be refunded, in whole or in part, for members who have ended their membership, have been suspended from participation or had their membership terminated for any reason. Deviation from this stated policy must be unanimously agreed to by the full PDST board.

VI. Coaching Qualifications and Duties

PDST coaches are paid an hourly rate for time spent supervising practices, conducting instructional sessions, attending meetings and overseeing [competitions](#). The rate of pay and any reimbursement for additional expenses shall be determined by the board on a yearly basis.

Coaches shall be required to meet all requirements and to obtain and maintain all certifications as required by the [Tri-State Swim Conference](#), [USA Swimming](#), the city of Parsons, the Parsons State Hospital and Training Center, and the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team.

Duties of Dolphins coaches include:

- Develop (or approve) and supervise practice workouts for all team [age groups](#)
- Provide additional instructional sessions deemed necessary by coaches and the board
- Oversee all [competitions](#) when two or more Dolphin members are participating
- Establish guidelines to insure safe and productive practice sessions and [competitions](#)
- Administer disciplinary measures until relieved by a board member or other adult
- Report disciplinary actions to the board (or a board member) as soon as possible
- Maintain routine communication with the [Team Administrator](#) or [Board President](#)
- Attend board meetings at the request of the board
- Attend team functions (parent's meetings, picnics, etc.)
- Select members to receive annual recognition awards

Members with leadership roles on the team, including coaches, assistant coaches, coach designates, and board members must demonstrate the qualities of responsibility, teamwork, self-discipline, and patience to the [PDST](#) swimmers at all times.

Any members, including coaches, who receive regular compensation from the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team, shall receive a yearly evaluation completed by the full board.

VII. Board Members and Elections

The governing body of the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team shall consist of five persons who, as much as possible, represent the team and the community. Four positions should be filled by parents or guardians of various aged [PDST](#) swimmers (5-7, 8-11, 12-14 and 15-18 years of age) with the fifth position filled by someone from the community with no current affiliation to the Dolphins. Ideally, this Community Representative would be a former [PDST](#) parent or guardian with knowledge of our team structure and its operations.

Except for the Community Representative, board members serve two year terms with staggered elections every year. The Community Representative serves an open-ended term at the pleasure of the elected board or until he or she steps down. Elections will be determined by a simple majority vote members 18 years of age or older who cast an official ballot with the [Team Secretary](#). Votes will be tallied at the [PDST awards dinner](#) in August of each year.

[PDST](#) board members shall serve in the following capacities to fulfill the duties described:

- **BOARD PRESIDENT** (elected in even numbered years)
 - Call, set agendas for, and preside over [PDST](#) board meetings
 - Cast only tie-breaking votes at board meetings
 - Represent, or designate someone to represent our team at [league](#) meetings
 - Maintain routine communication between the coaching staff and board
 - Perform the essential duties of members unable fulfill their responsibilities
- **TEAM ADMINISTRATOR** (elected in odd numbered years)
 - Maintain, or designate someone to maintain computerized records for all members
 - Submit all [entries](#) for [Tri-State](#) and [USA meets](#)
 - Provide all [PDST](#) members with any required team or [league](#) applications and forms
 - Assist the [Board President](#) with routine communication between coaches and board
- **TEAM TREASURER** (elected in odd numbered years)
 - Receive and deposit [dues](#) and [meet fees](#) paid by members
 - Mail account statements to all members
 - Keep detailed records of the [PDST](#) treasury balance
 - Pay out monies owed by the club
- **TEAM SECRETARY** (elected on even numbered years)
 - Report and record the minutes from board meetings
 - Oversee the publishing a quarterly team newsletter
 - Accept nominations and official ballots for board member elections

Parents or guardians of swimmers who have been with [PDST](#) for two or more seasons (a summer and winter, two summers or two winters) are eligible to serve as board members. Nominations may be submitted by any team member (swimmers, parents or guardians, coaches, board members) 18 years of age or older to the [Team Secretary](#) during the months of June and July each year.

VIII. Grievance Policy

If an adult member has a grievance with a coach or coaching method, he or she shall discuss the concern with a board member rather than with the coach. Depending on the nature of the grievance, at least three board members will convene within ten days after initial notification to address the issue and determine a suitable resolution.

This policy is not intended to prohibit or restrict non-confrontational communication between a parent or guardian and a coach during the normal course of training and competition.

Glossary of Swim Terms

A

“A” Time

The minimum time required to qualify for competing in an “A” [division event](#).

Age Group

Events are divided according to swimmers ages. The [USA Swimming](#) National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18.

Age-up

Sometimes [competitors](#) are permitted to enter an [event](#) in the next higher [age group](#). This is usually done for relays when a team doesn’t have four swimmers in the same [age group](#) (Example: If a team has only three 11 to 12 year old swimmers for the Boys 11-12, 200 Yard [Freestyle Relay event](#) they can “age-up” one of their 10 year old swimmers to compete as their fourth [relay member](#)).

Announcer

Each team that hosts an [invitational meet](#) is required to provide someone to call swimmers to the [ready bench](#). In addition to “filling the bench”, the announcer also keeps others attending the meet notified of additional information like meet progress, new pool and [league](#) records and other announcements.

Awards Dinner

The end of the [summer season](#) is celebrated with a team potluck dinner followed by individual awards for swimmers who deserve recognition of various achievements. This dinner is normally held sometime in the week following [Tri-State Championships](#).

B

“B” Time

The minimum time required to qualify for competing in a “B” [division event](#). “B” time requirements are not as fast as those for “A” [times](#).

Backstroke

This [stroke](#) consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

Best Time

An improvement over the fastest [official time](#) recorded for any event.

Breaststroke

This [stroke](#), which is the oldest [stroke](#) dating back hundreds of years, requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

Blocks – see [Starting Blocks](#)

Bullpen or [Ready Bench](#)

This is the staging area where swimmers wait to receive their [lane](#) and [heat](#) assignments for a swimming [event](#). It’s usually away from the pool and has rows of chairs for the swimmers.

Butterfly

This **stroke** features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter kick, scissor kick or use the **breaststroke** kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish.

C

Championships

The final **Tri-State Swim Conference meet** typically held the first weekend in August of each year. A **qualifying time** is necessary to participate in Championships.

Competition

Each swim **meet** offers a variety of **events** and distances, depending on the **age group** and **division**. Each swimmer will have a limit to the number of **events** he or she may swim each day, depending on the **meet** rules.

Competitor

Any swimmer entered in one or more **events** of a sanctioned **meet** or contest. They may either be a member of a team or may enter as **unattached** if permitted by the **meet officials**.

Conference – *see also* **League**

A group of teams organized to oversee **competitions** and record **official times** and results. The terms “conference” and “league” may be used interchangeably.

Course – *see* **Long Course** or **Short Course**

D

Deck

The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, **officials**, and coaches. No other persons are authorized to be on the deck during a **competition**.

Deck Entry – *see also* **Entry**

A swimmer who fails to pre-enter a competition may be deck entered on the day of the **competition** if permitted by the **meet officials**.

Disqualification or **DQ**

A swimmer’s performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is shown by a **stroke and turn judge** raising one arm with open hand above their head when a swimmer fails to execute a **stroke**, turn or start as required for a particular **event**. DQ is short for disqualified and parents of younger swimmers sometimes offset the disappointment of being disqualified with a promise to go to Dairy Queen (DQ) after the **meet**.

Division – *see also* “**A**” **Time** and “**B**” **Time**

A group of swimmers with similar skill levels for any given **event**. “A” divisions have the most proficient **competitors** while “B” divisions are swimmers with slower or no **official times** recorded.

Dry Land

The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

Dual Meet

This is a **meet** where only two teams compete against each other.

E

Entry or **Entries** – *see also* **Deck Entry**

A pre-submitted notification made to **meet officials** for each event a swimmer intends to compete in.

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Event

A race as defined by the gender group, [division](#), [age group](#), distance in yards and type of [stroke](#) (Example: Women's "A" 15 to 18, 400 yard Medley Relay). The basic [events](#) include [backstroke](#), [breaststroke](#), [butterfly](#), [freestyle](#), [individual medley](#), [freestyle relay](#) and [medley relay](#).

F

Freestyle

The [competitor](#) may swim any [stroke](#). The [stroke](#) most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

Freestyle Relay

This team [event](#) consists of four [freestyle](#) swimmers, each completing one quarter of the total distance of the [event](#).

Finals

The top six or eight qualifying swimmers (depending on the number of pool lanes) at [Championships](#) return to compete in the last [heat](#) of each [event](#) for final rankings.

H

Heat

A division of an [event](#) when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers times, after all heats of the [event](#) are completed.

Heat Sheet

The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers' [seed times](#) in the various [events](#) at a swim [meet](#). Heat sheets are sold by the team hosting an [invitational meet](#) and are used mainly to make sure swimmers have been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. They also provide other fun and useful information.

Heat Winner

This is the swimmer who finishes first in a [heat](#) without being [disqualified](#).

Home Invitational Meet or Home Meet

This is the [Tri-State invitational meet](#) hosted by the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team.

Hospitality

One of the responsibilities of a team hosting an [invitational meet](#) is to provide refreshments to all of the [timers](#), [place judges](#), [stroke and turn judges](#), [runners](#), [coaches](#) and [officials](#) throughout the [meet](#).

I

Individual Medley or IM

This [event](#), commonly referred to as the **IM**, features all four [strokes](#). In the IM, the swimmer begins with the [butterfly](#), then changes after one-fourth of the race to [backstroke](#), then [breaststroke](#) and finally [freestyle](#).

Invitational or Invitational Meet

The nine regular [Tri-State Swim Conference meets](#) held during the months of June and July in which all teams in the [conference](#) are "invited" to compete.

J

Judges – see [Place Judges](#) or [Stroke \(and Turn\) Judges](#)

K

Kick Board

A flat buoyant device held with both outstretched hands used to concentrate training on kicking technique.

L

Lane Ropes

These are the floating lines running the length of the pool that divide the [lanes](#). Lane ropes also minimize water movement between adjoining [lanes](#) and provide a visual reference for swimmers approaching the finish.

Lane

The area separated by [lane ropes](#) that each swimmer competes within. Each lane is eight feet wide and 25 yards long for [short course](#) and 50 meters in length for [long course](#).

League or Conference

A group of teams organized to hold [competitions](#) for the purpose of recording [official times](#) and results. The terms “league” and “conference” may be used interchangeably.

Long Course

[Competitions](#) or workout sessions conducted in a pool with [lanes](#) 50 meters in length.

M

Medley – see [Individual Medley](#) and [Medley Relay](#)

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Medley Relay

In this team [event](#), all four [strokes](#) are used. The first swimmer swims [backstroke](#), the second [breaststroke](#), the third [butterfly](#), and the final swimmer anchors the relay with [freestyle](#).

Meet

A [competition](#) of two or more teams sanctioned by a swim [league](#) that records [official times](#) and results.

Meet Director

This person is selected by the club hosting an [invitational meet](#) to oversee the non-competitive operations of the [meet](#), assist the [Tri-State meet officials](#) and resolve problems.

Meet Fees – see also [Team Dues](#)

The charges assessed by the club hosting an [invitational meet](#) to all other teams and swimmers competing.

Meet Officials

These are [starters](#), [referees](#), [judges](#) and other personnel provided by the [league](#) or [conference](#) for each [competition](#).

Missouri Valley LSC

This is the Local Swim Committee for the central U.S. zone of [USA Swimming](#) and is the local level administrative division of [USA](#) with supervisory responsibilities.

O

Officials – see [Meet Officials](#)

Official Time(s) – see also [Seed Time](#) and [Qualifying Time](#)

The time recorded by the [league](#) for each swimmer in each [event](#) at a [competition](#).

P

PDST

This is the abbreviation for the Parsons Dolphins Swim Team.

Place Judges

These are volunteers provided by participating teams at an [invitational meet](#) who sit at the finish line of each [heat](#) and record the finishing order (or place) of each swimmer.

Q

Qualifying Time – *see also* [Seed Time](#) and [Official Time](#)

The minimum time required for completing in an “A” or “B” [division event](#).

R

Ready Bench or [Bullpen](#)

This is the staging area where swimmers wait to receive their [lane](#) and [heat](#) assignments for an [event](#). It's usually away from the pool and has rows of chairs for the swimmers.

Referee

This is the head [official](#) at a [meet](#) in charge of all competition administration and decisions.

Relay –*see* [Freestyle Relay](#) and [Medley Relay](#)

Runner(s)

Volunteers from the host team of an [invitational meet](#) who collect slips from the [place judges](#), [stroke and turn judges](#) and [lane timers](#) at the end of each [heat](#) and take them to the computer persons.

S

Seed Time – *see also* [Official Time](#) and [Qualifying Time](#)

This is the best [qualifying time](#) for a swimmer in an [event](#). Any time that betters this time becomes your new seed time for that [event](#).

Scholarship(s)

A reduction in the amount of [team dues](#) a family must pay per swimmer. Anyone wishing to apply for a scholarship may do so by contacting the [Team Treasurer](#).

Scratch

This is when a swimmer withdraws from an [event](#) after having declared an intention to participate. Some [meets](#) have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, a swimmer may be disqualified from remaining [events](#).

Short Course

[Competitions](#) or workout sessions conducted in a pool with [lanes](#) 25 yards in length.

Starter

The [official](#) in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

Starting Blocks

The elevated 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.

Stroke (and Turn) Judges

These are volunteer members of participating [league](#) teams who have received special training for overseeing all races to insure swimmers use proper start, [stroke](#) and turn techniques.

Strokes

The four basic swimming styles used in [competition](#) – [Backstroke](#), [breaststroke](#), [butterfly](#) and [freestyle](#).

Summer Season

[Tri-State competitions](#) are held during the months of June, July with [Championships](#) normally held the first weekend of August.

T

Team Dues – see also [Meet Fees](#)

Every team member is charged an amount for swimming during the [summer season](#) and an amount for swimming during the [winter season](#). These dues help to cover the club's operating costs.

Time – see [“A” Time](#) or [“B” Time](#) or [Official Time](#) or [Qualifying Time](#) or [Seed Time](#)

Timers

Each of the participating teams at a [Tri-State invitational meet](#) provide volunteers to time by stopwatch, each swimmer's race in addition to providing a backup timer on [deck](#).

Tri-State Swim Conference

This is a summer [league](#) of twelve full-membership swim clubs with [meet officials](#) who preside over every [meet](#). [Tri-State meets](#) are held each weekend in June and July with [Championships](#) held the first weekend in August.

U

Unattached

A swimmer competing at a [meet](#) but not affiliated or swimming with one of the participating teams.

USA Swimming

The national swimming organization based out of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Most U.S. world-class and Olympic swimmers compete and train through USA Swimming. Our USA membership is through the [Missouri Valley LSC](#).

V

Volunteers

These are the parents or family members of swimmers who perform a variety of duties before, during and after hosting an [invitational meet](#) as well as helping out as [timers](#) and [place judges](#) at other [meets](#).

W

Warm-Ups

The practice session swimmers do with other team members to loosen up before a [meet](#).

Winter Season

The period following the conclusion of the [Tri-State summer season](#) up to the start up of the next year's [summer season](#). This typically includes the months of October, November, December, January, February, March and April. Although primarily a season to maintain conditioning for the [summer season](#), the Dolphins often participate in one or two [USA Swimming meets](#) during the winter.