

Branson Waves Swim Team

Parent Handbook

Updated 4.9.2010

The Branson Waves Swim Team is a summer recreational swim program sponsored by the Branson City Parks and Recreation Department and driven by volunteer parents. The Branson Waves Swim Team participates in the Tri-State Conference composed of various summer and year-round teams from southwest Missouri, northwest Arkansas, southeast Kansas and northeast Oklahoma. The Branson Waves Swim Team teaches boys and girls, ages 5 to 18, how to swim competitively with emphasis on having fun both in and out of the water. The goal is to become a skilled athlete in freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly techniques and thereby enjoy fitness and good health. In addition to performing well in the water, the Waves swimmer develops a positive attitude as well as team spirit and sportsmanship. Swimming competition promotes a swimmer's individual achievement, which in turn improves the team's result. At the same time, the more the team supports the swimmer, the better the personal achievement. All swimming achievements result from commitment to practicing and learning from the coaches.

Family involvement is a major asset of the Waves with many parents volunteering to help run swim meets (both home and away) and host social events. The social functions are a significant part of the swim season, allowing the team members the enjoyment of each other's company as well as having fun at the various events. The development of friendships among the swimmers and parents is very much a part of the Waves family experience.

EMPHASIS

Our staff focuses on five things:

- Character building and self-confidence development
- Physical fitness through swimming
- Learning competitive swimming strokes
- Being a member of a team, working and getting along together
- Having fun in and out of the water

We do not focus on winning as individuals or as a team, but encourage the swimmers to continue to improve their own personal times.

COST

The summer fee is \$25. Additional cost to a swimmer, if competing in meets, is a team swimsuit, a team cap, goggles and meet entry fees. Meet entry fees are \$3.00 per event. Deck entry fees (those entered the morning of a swim meet) are usually \$6.00 per event. The Branson Waves Swim Team pays for relay entry fees.

REQUIREMENTS

Swimmers must be able to swim the length of the pool (25 yards) without touching the sides or the bottom of the pool. They must also be able to fully submerge head under water. The Waves is designed to teach competitive swimming and should not be confused with swimming lessons. If the coaches determine that a child does not meet the requirements or have the physical ability to be part of the Waves, the child will be asked to drop from the team. The child will be encouraged to take swimming lessons and return to the Waves later in the season or next summer, after swimming skills have been perfected.

PRACTICE

Practices are held at the Branson RecPlex. They are Monday through Friday and will start May 10th and continue until August 6th.

May 10 th – May 28 th	All	3:30pm – 5:00pm
May 31 st – August 6 th	Advanced	6:40am – 9:00am
	Beginners	8:15am – 9:45am

Parents are not allowed on pool deck during or between practices. Parents are allowed to watch from the Parent's Viewing Area.

EQUIPMENT

MARK YOUR NAME ON ALL EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING WITH A PERMANENT MARKER! Continue to check periodically for fading names from sunlight and chlorine exposure. FORGETTING EQUIPMENT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

SUITS:

Every swimmer should have two suits, a suit for practice and a team suit for meets. For practice suits, those made with polyester wear substantially longer than traditional lycra or nylon suits. Swimmers can also practice in old, baggy "drag" suits that encourage resistance. The team suit should ONLY be worn at meets. Our team suit can be purchased from Alicia Bates. After use, the suits should be rinsed out with cold water and hung to dry.

CAPS:

Caps are highly recommended in practice for swimmers with long hair, so that hair will not interfere with proper breathing patterns and strokes. At meets the Branson Waves swim cap should be worn, as it is part of our team uniform. After use, rinse the cap, dry it and powder it with talcum (baby powder) for long wear.

GOGGLES:

Goggles are optional equipment, but because the water at some pools may irritate eyes, it is highly recommended that every swimmer have one pair available. Purchase a brand name such as Tyr, Speedo or Finals. The style should have foam or rubber seals around the lens, however there are also Swedish style goggles (with hard plastic around eye sockets) which are acceptable. Be sure that the goggles are sized for the swimmer's head. They should seal around the eye with light pressure. Be sure to use the same goggles for both practice and competitions.

LOST & FOUND:

The team has a lost & found tub. There is very limited storage space and items not claimed in a reasonable time will be given to a local charity.

MEET FORMAT

All regular meets are called Invitationals. Invitationals are organized contests, lasting either one or two days, for swimmers to compete against other swimmers in the Tri-State Conference. Swimmers compete against other swimmers based on sex, age, time and stroke. Swimmers compete both individually and with other teammates in relay events. The Tri-State Conference allows the swimmer six individual events and two relay events in a two day meet. In a one day meet, only three individual events and two relay events are allowed. The formats of the Invitationals are consistent.

EVENTS:

There are eighty-one events in the following sequence:

Event Number: Stroke

- 1-2: 200 Free (age 15-18 only)
- 3-12: Medley Relay
- 13-22: Short Free
- 23-32: Backstroke (Back)
- 33-42: Individual Medley (IM)
- 43-52: Butterfly (Fly)
- 53-62: Long Free
- 63-72: Breaststroke (Breast)
- 73-82: Freestyle Relay

The first digit indicates what stroke; the second digit indicates the age group of the swimmers and whether it is a boys or girls event. For example, all 11 & 12 yr olds will swim events ending in either a 7 or an 8. All odd numbers indicate boys' events and all even numbers indicate girls' events.

AGE DIVISIONS:

There are age divisions in each relay or stroke series in this order:

- 6 & under (Invitationals only)
- 8 & Under
- 10 & Under
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 15-18

Swimmers will swim according to their age as of June 1st.

HEATS:

A heat is a group of swimmers that swim against each other. In each event, the number of heats depends upon the number of swimmers entered into the age bracket of that meet. The winner of the heat is often given a small award which differs at each meet. The "heat winner" does not necessarily mean the winner of the entire event.

EVENTS, STROKES AND DISTANCES:

(INDIVIDUAL STROKES) FREESTYLE, BACKSTROKE, BUTTERFLY and BREASTROKE: Swimmers under 8 years old swim 25 yards. All other ages swim 50 yards with two exceptions: the Individual Medley, whereas it is only a 100 yard race until the swimmer is 13 years old or older; and the 200 yd Freestyle for the 15-18 age division.

MEDLEY RELAY: The four fastest swimmers from each age group will form a relay team. Each of the four swimmers swims a different stroke in the following order: Back, Breast, Fly and Free. The "8 & Under" and "10 & Under" age groups swim only 25 yards of each stroke, while all other ages swim 50 yards of each stroke.

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY ("IM"): This is a medley swum by one swimmer who swims each of the following strokes in this order: Fly, Back, Breast and Free.

(INDIVIDUAL STROKE) LONG FREE: This is a 100 yard freestyle race, unless you are under 8 years old, in which it is a 50 yd race.

FREESTYLE RELAY: The four fastest swimmers from each age group form a relay team. Each swimmer swims 50 yards, for a combined total of 200 yards, with the exception of those under 8 years old, who each swim 25 yards, for a total of 100 yards.

VOCABULARY:

Flip turn – term used for changing directions in the pool without stopping; flip turns make the swimmer's stroke more efficient, thereby decreasing time. Freestyle and Backstroke use flip turns. Flip turns are not mandatory, however greatly beneficial.

Open Turn – term used for changing directions in the pool once a hand(s) have touched wall. Breaststroke and Butterfly require open turns. Although slower, open turns are optional in Freestyle and Backstroke.

Starting Blocks – the raised platforms at the starting end of the pool in each lane. Swimmers are allowed to start from the blocks or from the edge of the pool; however, it is to the swimmer's great advantage to use the blocks.

Free – Freestyle stroke

Back – Backstroke

Fly – Butterfly

Breast – Breaststroke

TIME DIVISIONS, TIMES AND SEED TIMES:

There are two time divisions ("A" and "B") for swimmers. "A" times are the faster of the two. The "A" and "B" standards are goal times for swimmers to achieve. Official times are kept by the coaches throughout the season. Seed times are the swimmers' fastest recorded times for each event; these are the times used for placing a swimmer in a specific heat and lane. Swimmers are always encouraged to beat their old times and improve their standings.

DISQUALIFICATIONS:

At each invitational there are official Stroke and Turn Judges who may disqualify a swimmer in an event if USA Swimming rules for strokes and turns are not followed. The most common reasons for "DQ's" are:

- flutter kick in the butterfly
- false start for the second time in a heat.
- not making a two-hand touch on the turn in the breast stroke and butterfly or at the end of the breast stroke or butterfly lap in the IM
- flip turn fails to touch the wall
- backstroke turns and finishes that rotate past vertical onto stomach
- early take-off by a relay member
- executing a scissors kick in the breast stroke

If a swimmer has been disqualified, the swimmer must notify his/her coach immediately.

BULLPEN AND DECK CARDS:

Swimmers are called to the bullpen before their events by the announcer over the loudspeaker. The bullpen is a waiting area for swimmers to check in and be given their deck cards (event, heat, lane number and seed time). As the event nears, swimmers are moved closer to the pool deck. Deck cards are given to timers before their race. Next, the swimmer's race time is written on the deck card and then sent to the computer room. Listen for bullpen calls. Do not miss races because of failure to hear announcements!! All parents and other swimmers not currently racing are asked to stay out of the bullpen and off of the pool deck.

"6 & UNDERS" AND "8 & UNDERS"

For "6 & Under" and "8 & Under" swimmers: The swimming distance is always 25 yards in Short Free, Backstroke, Butterfly and Breaststroke Events. However, in the Individual Medley, there is 25 yd of each stroke (totaling 100 yds); the Long Free Event for "6 & Unders" and "8 & Unders" is a 50 yard race. During Tri-State Championships, there is not a "6 & Under" division; those who fall into that category will swim with the "8 & Unders".

Note: Some young swimmers may not be ready or willing to swim in a competitive swim meet. If your swimmer feels that he or she is not ready, please speak with the coaches. Likewise, the coaching staff will not enter a swimmer into a competitive meet if they are not ready.

MEET PERSONNEL

MEET REFEREE:

The meet official responsible for the invitational and has final authority.

STROKE JUDGES:

The officials who specifically watch how swimmers perform each turn, stroke and finish are stroke judges. It is the responsibility of the stroke judge to disqualify any swimmer who, in his judgment, does not properly perform the stroke, turn or finish correctly in agreement with the USA

Swimming Rules. Parents are not to approach judges with a questionable call. The coach will handle all questionable decisions. Parents who are interested in becoming stroke judges are required to become certified by completing a stroke judge clinics which are held at the beginning of the summer.

PLACE JUDGES:

Two pairs of place judges sit in each corner of the finishing end of the pool to determine the order of the finishes (first, second, third etc.). Parents will be required to volunteer as place judges.

TIMERS:

Timers are responsible for using a stopwatch to time specific lanes throughout the meet. The timer is asked to start the watch at the flash of the start and to stop the watch when the swimmer touches the wall. There are usually three timers per lane. Parents will be required to volunteer as timers.

"8 & UNDER" PARENTS AND TENT PARENTS:

The position of "8 & Under Parents" arose from the need to assist and support the large number of young swimmers on the team. At all meets, the "8 & Under Parents" are responsible for organizing this particular age group of swimmers. Prior to the start of the meet, the "8 & Under swimmers" are gathered under the team tent which is "home base" for the duration of the meet. With heat sheets, the "8 & Under Parents" are responsible for getting these little swimmers to the bull pin and lined up before their races based on the stroke they are swimming, their heat and their lane.

A particularly useful practice has been for the "Parents" to mark the swimmers' hands with the appropriate event information. The hand has three numbers: the first number indicates the event, the second number indicates the heat (or race) and the third number indicates the lane number. - For example, a hand marked 23 / 2 / 5 means the swimmer is swimming in the 23rd event, in the 2nd heat (or race) and is in the 5th lane for the particular race.

"6 & Under Parents", as well as "10 & Under Parents" will also benefit from the above information and keep swimmers from missing their bullpen calls and missing their races.

Tent parents are those who govern the tent (the "home base" for all Waves). Tent parents and "8 & Under Parents" make sure that Waves are resting between races and not wrestling or running around, in addition to making sure Waves' don't miss their races!

MEET ENTRY

The swimmer registration and entry fees are due two Fridays before the meet date. Swimmers without paid entry fees by due dates will not be entered into the swim meet; however there is the option to deck enter the morning of the swim meet. Please contact the coach to deck enter. The payments and registration form can be turned into a file located in the file folder box on the pool deck.

MEET RESULTS

These are the printed times of all swimmers at an Invitational. They are posted in the pool area and are updated throughout the meet. Coaches also have an official list of times.

POINTS AND AWARDS

SCORING

A swimmer may score from any heat. Only the top six times score, but these times can come from any heat.

Individual events score points for the top six times:

- 1st: 7 points
- 2nd: 5 points
- 3rd: 4 points
- 4th: 3 points
- 5th: 2 points
- 6th: 1 point

Relay events score double points for the top six times:

- 1st: 14 points
- 2nd: 10 points
- 3rd: 8 points
- 4th: 6 points
- 5th: 4 points
- 6th: 2 points

The top three teams at each invitational will receive a team trophy, which is given at the conclusion of the meet. A male and female from each age division, who score the most points for their team are called "High Point Winners" and they will receive an award also at the conclusion of the meet.

RIBBONS & MEDALS

Ribbons are awarded to the top six swimmers in each event. Medals are usually given to the top 3 swimmers in the "A" division; places 4th-6th receive ribbons in the "A" division. All top six swimmers in "B" division will receive ribbons. At the championship meet, all six places of "A" division receive medals.

Waves' ribbons are distributed at the Monday practice following the meet. Please have your child pick up their ribbons in their file on a weekly basis.

GETTING READY FOR THE MEET

REST

Including warm-ups, a two day swim meet can take up to seven hours or more per day and a one day meet can take over eight hours. Be sure your swimmer gets a good night's sleep before each race day. During the meet, the swimmer should rest to conserve energy between events and be protected from the sun. The sun will drain your energy, so stay as cool and relaxed as possible. While waiting between events, drink lots of water, play cards, video games or listen to music and cheer for your teammates. No running or playing out in the sun.

WARM UPS AND WHEN TO BE THERE

All swim meets begin with warm ups, a 20-30 minute session for swimmers to get muscles ready for competition and to get accustomed to the pool, walls and starting blocks. Warm up times will vary and may start as early as 7am. Arrive early to find a spot at the team tent for your gear and attend the team meeting on the pool deck. It is MANDATORY that swimmers be on the pool deck, ready for swimming 20 minutes PRIOR to warm up times. ALWAYS check the file folder Friday morning at practice for any changes. Parking at Invitationals is sometimes limited; car pool if possible and be prepared to walk!

FOOD

Friday and Saturday night have a high carbohydrate meal, such as pasta, baked potatoes, pancakes or waffles to provide maximum energy and endurance for the weekend's meet. Have a light breakfast such as bagels, toast, cereal, fruit and juice Saturday and Sunday morning. During the meet, snack on bagels or fruit and drink plenty of water (No soda, or sweet and sugary snacks!)

WHAT TO BRING

The Waves set up a team tent for a gathering place for all Waves. Blankets/sleeping bags are usually spread out underneath for swimmers to rest on and parents set up lawn chairs. Depending upon the individual swimmer and the weather... Bring swim equipment (Branson Waves suit, Branson Waves swim cap, goggles), towels, sandals, t-shirt, shorts, sun screen, a sleeping bag/blanket, ice chest with snacks and drinks to last all day, lawn chairs, resting games (cards, handheld video games, music, etc.), and of course, cheers and good spirit! Be sure to mark all items with swimmers name with permanent marker.

HEAT SHEETS AND PYSCH SHEETS

The Heat Sheet is the official program of the Invitational. It lists swimmers' seed times and heats of each event. A Psych Sheet lists only the swimmers' seed times of their events; it does not list the breakdown into heats. The Heat Sheets sell for \$3.00 - \$5.00 at each Invitational. The Heat Sheet also lists the lanes required from each team to provide timers or place judges. Be sure to sign up for a time slot on Friday in the file folder box.

LEAVING

Always try to stay to the end of the meet and cheer on other Waves teammates. Show support of the Branson Waves by seeing the meet through to the finish. If a swimmer must leave early, check out with the coach. Before leaving, help pick up trash in the area around the tent. Ribbons and medals will be handed out at the following Monday's practice.

DUAL MEETS

In years past, there have been dual meets with one other Tri-State Conference teams in the surrounding area during the week. A swimmer can achieve a legit, qualifying time for Championships at these Dual meets. However, Dual Meets are not considered an Invitational and can not fulfill the requirements for attending two Invitationals to compete in Championships.

CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Championship Meet is the Olympics of the Tri-State Conference season. Every swimmer should make it a priority to represent the Waves at this festive event. The Championship meet is generally held on the first weekend of August at an indoor facility with touchpad timers. All Tri-State teams participate. All members who have participated in a minimum of three Invitational's and who have qualified with at least a "B" division time during the season may swim. The results of this meet determine the final team standings for the year.

The format for the Tri-State Championship Meet is slightly different than the Invitationals throughout the summer. At the Championship, each event is divided into "A" division swimmers and "B" division swimmers. The races during the day for the "B" swimmers are their finals and they are awarded ribbons for the top six times. However, the races during the day for the "A" swimmers are the preliminaries for their final swims in

the evening. The top six swimmers from each "A" event will swim in their finals races on both evenings. The final swims determine their standings for the season.

Medals are awarded to all top six places in individual events for "A" swimmers. Ribbons are awarded for all top six places in individual "B" events. In relays, the top three relay teams in the "A" division receive medals and in the "B" division, the top three relay teams receive ribbons.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The Branson Waves Swim Team hosts three social functions during the season. These events give both swimmers and parents a chance to become friends away from the pool, and promote camaraderie and team spirit. The following is a brief description of the events which may be held each season.

SEASON OPENER PICNIC

The season opener/pre-meet pasta dinner will be held Friday June 4th at the pavilion in the pool after we are done setting up for the Branson Waves Swim Meet at 5:00pm.

PASTA POWER DINNERS

These are held on the Friday night before our Ozark Invitational and our Monett Invitational. Everyone gets a good carbohydrate dinner to fuel them for the meet. Parents will bring either pasta dishes, salads, desserts, drinks or plates and utensils. Watch the file folder box for more information.

TEAM PICTURE

A team picture is taken before or right after our home meet. The picture is a great keepsake. Individual photos are taken as well. Please be sure to wear your team suit!

PARENT EXPECTATIONS:

Parents are expected to either help put up equipment in the morning or help take down equipment. THIS IS mandatory. It is neither the coach's or swimmers single responsibility to do equipment. Expect to help either before or after your child's practice. Thank you!

AWARDS NIGHT

The annual awards dinner is held after the swimming season is over, usually in late August. It is the culmination of our efforts and achievements for the season. At the beginning, swimmers and their families usually play in the pool. Following the swimming, there is the pot luck dinner. Families will be responsible for bringing main dishes, sides, drinks, desserts, plates and plastic ware. Watch for sign up sheets in the file folder box. At the awards ceremony, all swimmers are recognized for their participation and achievement. An individual plaque with best times of each event is given to each swimmer. An overall most improved swimmer for the boys and for the girls is also awarded. The evening concludes with a slide show set to music reminiscing the meets and social events. Watch the file folder box for more information.

COMMUNICATION

It is vital that the Branson Waves Swim Team has clear communication between coaches, the Board, parents and swimmers. Our major way to accomplish this is a File Folder System. Each swimmer/swim family has a file folder marked with their name, which is used throughout the season to file their ribbons, important handouts and information. Information such as meet entry deadlines, motels, maps, schedule changes, warm up times, etc. will be copied and in every swimmers/swim families file folder. The file folders are kept alphabetically in a file folder box and will be available during practice at the parents seating area. Please continuously check the File Folder Box for updates and new information. For parents who have questions and comments, there will be a file folder labeled for the Coach and the Manager. Please use this method for communicating. The Branson Waves Swim Team also has a website www.bransonparksandrecreation.com.

RAIN DAYS

Because of our outdoor facility, all practices are weather permitting. However, practice is rarely cancelled. ALWAYS show up to the pool for practice, UNLESS you have received a phone call from the coaches. Rainy or cold days will be accommodated for with Swim Training DVDs or Dry Land exercises.

COACHES AUTHORITY

If a family chooses to become part of the Branson Waves Swim Team, a contract of a code of ethics will be signed by both the swimmer and his/her parents. By becoming a member of the Waves, the family agrees to honor the authority of the coaches at all times. Included in the coaches authority, is the choice in which events swimmers will swim in Invitationals or Championships and who is chosen for relay teams.

We look forward to another great season! For any questions please contact the coaching staff.

Manager- Alicia Bates: 417-335-2368

Head Coach- Michelle May: 918-698-4062

Assistant Coach- James Grimmer: 417-527-8924