



# **Kanakadea Valley Aquatic Club**

## **Team Handbook**

[www.kvacswim.org](http://www.kvacswim.org)

# WELCOME

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Welcome to the Kanakadea Valley Aquatic Club (KVAC). KVAC is an age-group swim club designed to offer a competitive swimming experience to young male and female athletes. KVAC is a United States Swimming (USS) sanctioned club with fully certified and insured coaches.

The KVAC philosophy is one of a coach led/team focused swim club. The Head Coach will fulfill all waterside components of the operation including but not limited to practices, meet schedules, swimmer/parent discipline, etc. The Board of Directors' role is to facilitate the success of the Head Coach's waterside operations through fundraising activities, public relations, marketing and other support activities.

Competitive swimming, like other sports, is very much a learn-as-you-go experience for both the swimmer and the parents. The longer you do it, the more committed and consistent you are, the more you will progress. The purpose of this handbook is to introduce you to the club and to competitive swimming. However, some of the best resources for your questions are the coaches, the parents and the swimmers. They will be happy to answer any questions you might have. A glossary is included in the appendix to assist you.

## KVAC CLUB PHILOSOPHY

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### KVAC's Purpose

- KVAC exists to promote swimming as a lifelong sport, for fitness and for competition.
- KVAC makes it possible for our members to compete at a regional level. Meet participation is required as a means to achieve a swimmer's personal goals.

### KVAC swimmers

- KVAC members agree to participate to the best of their abilities in practice sessions.
- At meets, KVAC swimmers are prepared, well-behaved, and encourage their teammates to better performance.

### KVAC coaches

- KVAC coaches encourage all swimmers to achieve personal goals in fitness, stroke, and technique development.
- KVAC coaches encourage meet participation, but are respectful of the decision not to compete in away meets.

### KVAC parents

- KVAC parents agree to encourage their children to set goals with the coaches for achievement and to support the coaches in training decisions. They recognize that KVAC is not a learn-to-swim program or purely social activity for their children.
- KVAC parents should encourage meet participation when possible.
- KVAC parents agree to help and support KVAC and USA Swimming through volunteer activities whenever they are able. These include

- volunteering as an official (training required)
- becoming certified as a lifeguard (training required)
- volunteering to time at meets
- volunteering as a driver to carpool to meets
- assisting in KVAC fundraising activities

Meet participation is encouraged through recognition awards

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

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KVAC is a developmental swim program. Youngsters are coached through the basic elements of the four competitive strokes with the end goal being proficiency with all. Parents and swimmers need to understand that becoming a "swimmer" is a lengthy process. It is one of the most difficult sports to achieve success in because the process is demanding. There is an enormous amount of skill training involved for each stroke and an enormous amount of repetitive drill training required to achieve body balance, flexibility, core strength and mechanical efficiency in the water—a medium many are not used to and not naturally comfortable in. Multiply all of that by 4 and you have a load of work to "master" the four competitive strokes.

Success in the sport requires, more than anything, consistent attendance. For newcomers and for many younger swimmers this involves Tuesday, Thursday and Friday practice attendance. For most youngsters starting out in the sport, it takes a while to grow into it. To become truly proficient with the four competitive strokes takes most youngsters several years of consistent training. Swimmers are guided through this process in a positive, relaxed, encouraging and systematic manner.

Swimmers should be able to swim comfortably for 25-50 yards using all four competitive swim strokes (freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, and breaststroke). 8-and-under swimmers are required to have proficiency in freestyle and backstroke. Swimmers are then divided into groups based on a combination of the swimmer's experience, proficiency, age, interest, focus and coaches' recommendation. New swimmers trying-out will need to have certain levels of proficiency, based on their age, coming into the sport. In the event that a swimmer does not make the team, the coaches will guide them toward improving their abilities and encourage them to try-out again in the future. All swimmers must have a current membership in USA Swimming.

Swimmers have the opportunity to practice and compete year round. We encourage swimmers to become involved in the sport on a year-round basis, as it is most conducive to success. The swimming year is divided into two seasons. The short course season begins in early fall and continues through the winter months. During the short course season, meets are held in pools 25 yards in length. During the spring and summer, the swimmers participate in the long course season. Many of the meets are held in 50-meter, Olympic size pools. All spring/summer Southern Tier Swim League (STSL) league meets are held in 25-yard pools.

**Beginner:** Is able to swim 25 free and 25 back unassisted. This group is designed to introduce the swimmer to all four strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly) and competitive swimming. Focus is put on stroke technique. Meet participation is strongly encouraged but not required.

**Intermediate:** Is able to swim the four strokes, with the need for continued technique work. This group will also meet the needs of older swimmers that don't know the four strokes. Meet participation is required.

**Intermediate Plus:** Is able to swim the four strokes, with the need for some technique work. Focus is shifted to endurance and race training. Meet participation is required.

**Advanced:** Designed to train swimmers to be competitive with other swimmers their age. Focus is on endurance, race, & dry land training. Meet participation is required.

**PRACTICES:** Team members are expected to attend practice regularly. When we set up the practice schedule, we ask the *minimum* for success in the sport. As each swimmer progresses through the program, they have the opportunity to grow by taking on an increasing workload as they move toward the advanced level. This process ensures continued growth throughout the consistent swimmer's career.

Consistency is the key. Missing practice is not good for the swimmer or for the swimmer's teammates. With the team growing as it is and with more and more kids reaching higher levels, crowding the pool with inconsistent practice swimmers makes things difficult for all. When a swimmer doesn't practice, he or she falls behind in technique and endurance, and can't keep up with their group. That makes practice difficult for him or her and for the consistent swimmer who needs to swim around them.

In our collective, multiple years of swim team involvement, those teams that have functioned best are those that have unity throughout—in practice, league meets, district meets, etc. The fun comes from working hard and bettering yourself as an individual. When that happens, you better the team as well.

We encourage swimmers and parents to let the coaches know if, when and why a practice will be missed prior to practice. There are good reasons and bad reasons for missing practice, as dictated by logic and common sense. One of the best things about serious involvement in sports is learning and gaining from life lessons throughout one's career. Organization is key to success and the coaches expect the swimmers to work to be successful in all facets of their lives.

As well, we understand vacations and other family things that arise, but hope they don't impact too much and trust kids don't take advantage, simply because it is detrimental to progress and, in a variety of ways, can have a negative impact on the team. As difficult as this may be, we also hope that more families will begin to look at the season calendar and begin to plan vacations around the big team meets, if not the club seasons in whole.

If a situation arises in which a swimmer is not meeting the minimum practice requirement consistently, the coaches will discuss the issue with the swimmer. If the behavior continues, the coaches will suggest other activities for that individual to pursue.

Again, consistency is the biggest key to doing well, at every level. For younger swimmers it helps development and progress with skill and endurance training. For the experienced swimmer, swimming five-six days a week, sometimes twice a day, is key to becoming a successful competitor.

Advanced swimmers are expected to practice three to five nights a week. Swimmers in this group are those individuals on the team swimming at the highest level of proficiency. Any advanced swimmers who feel they may have difficulty with this level of commitment should speak with the coaches at the beginning of the season.

**COMPETITION:** Meet attendance and competition is not mandatory, it is, however, strongly encouraged. Team members should be at every meet they are physically capable of attending—league, district or otherwise. Very simply, this is how a team functions and thrives. A fraction of team is not a team. Again, it's more fun with everybody!

The Southern Tier Swim League (STSL), of which our club is a member, has six league meets during the season and one league championship meet at the season's end. All club members must register as a U.S.S. competitor to allow competition in club meets and for U.S.S. insurance purposes. All swimmers are encouraged to compete in at least two STSL meets and in the STSL Championship Meet. Competition in *all* meets is highly encouraged. This includes all regional and district meets on the KVAC schedule for which a swimmer has qualifying times. Meets are a great way to measure improvement, a lot of fun for the kids once they get past the first meet jitters, and a tremendous team bonding time for everyone. For those youngsters who are nervous about competition, we have a great group of experienced peers, parents and coaches to help them get through it.

**MEET ENTRIES:** Information regarding meet entries and meet entry deadlines is usually sent out well in advance of league and championship meets. It helps us tremendously when we receive meet entry information as early as possible. If we do not hear from a swimmer, we assume that that swimmer *is* swimming in the upcoming meet. Swimmers may choose the events they would like to swim in meets, but *the coaching staff will make all final decisions*. There is usually little discrepancy, as most swimmers know their abilities and their coaches' expectations.

## UNITED STATES SWIMMING

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United States Swimming (USA Swimming) is the national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming has the responsibility to formulate the governing rules, conduct national championships, disseminate safety and sports medicine information, and select competitors to represent the United States in international competitions. USA Swimming is the ruling body of sanctioned swimming meets in the United States. USA Swimming meets are designed to protect the swimmer and provide fair and equitable conditions of competition.

Athletes pay USA Swimming an annual registration fee. They receive a membership card (held by the Club Secretary) and liability and secondary insurance coverage. Clubs pay the national fee and also are provided with liability insurance coverage for approved insured activities. For families who are receiving public assistance or reduced school lunches, USA Swimming has an outreach program to provide memberships at a greatly reduced fee..

# CLUB ORGANIZATION

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The Kanakadea Valley Aquatic Club is a non-profit organization. The club is directed in achieving its goals by a head coach hired by a volunteer Board elected from the general membership at a meeting held annually in February. The Board consists of the following: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Head Coach

The purpose of the Board is to support the head coach in facilitating the “dry side” of team operations. Getting to excellence requires taking one deliberate step at a time. It starts with the best possible mix of people and an understanding that serving on the board is an honor and privilege.

The duties of the Board include:

- Setting policy
- Approving the annual budget
- Establishing yearly goals within a long range plan
- Evaluating the organization
- Representing the club in the community
- Hiring and firing of head coach
- Coordinating fundraising activities to support the budget.

Board members also aim to motivate and inspire club members to become actively involved and participate in the activities of the club.

Board members serve on several sub-committees as needed. Ad-hoc Committees may be designated from time to time by the President, with the approval of the Board, to deal with specific issues.

The Executive Committee – Consists of the officers of the Club – President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Conducts business between Board meetings deemed necessary by the President and officers.

Finance Committee – Consists of the Treasurer, President and other selected members of the Club. Responsible for budget preparation, management of balance sheets, and recommendations to the Board of approval of major expenditures or funding programs.

Fundraising Committee – Responsible for organizing and administering selected programs designed to generate income or contributions to the organization to provide a determined financial offset to the anticipated operating expenses of the business beyond projected income from dues and fees. Each family member is expected to help share in supporting the achievement of such program goals.

Swim Meet Committee – Responsible for recruiting meet coordinators for KVAC hosted meets and assisting in the organization of volunteers to conduct such meets. Responsible for recruiting volunteers to coordinate away meet hotel arrangements.

Marketing Committee – Responsible for organizing and administering selected programs designed to promote the Club. This may include: Brochures, press releases, team suits and other team equipment.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF SWIMMER, COACH AND PARENT

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## **Swimmer Responsibilities - Behavior**

The coaches and parents of KVAC desire a high level of commitment and respect from the swimmers. Swimmers are expected to act in a manner, at all times, that reflects favorably upon KVAC and on themselves. Respect and cooperation are an expectation.

Swimmers are expected to behave courteously with the coaches, teammates and all others with whom they interact while representing the team or participating in team activities. Any disruptive or destructive behavior, including arguing, speaking rudely, use of profanity, or use of physical violence will not be tolerated. Illegal acts will not be tolerated. Use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco will not be tolerated in any form. A swimmer in violation of these rules will be asked to leave the club and the club will retain any fees paid.

## **Swimmer Responsibilities – Practice and Training**

Swimmers will be assigned to appropriate swim groups with specific practice times. Swimmers should attend practice at the scheduled times for that group. All swimmers should be ready to stretch, do drylands and swim at least five minutes prior to the start of practice. Swimmers should come to practice with all equipment necessary.

During practice, swimmers should complete all practice sets as required. Swimmers should not interfere with the progress of another swimmer. Proper swimming and lane etiquette should be followed at all times.

The pool, lobby and the locker rooms must be kept clean. Yelling, running or horseplay is not permitted. Any damage to university property may result in financial liability to the swimmer and his/her parents.

Each swimmer will be required to sign an agreement to reinforce expectations. This agreement must be reviewed with parents and signed by the parents as well.

## **Coach Responsibilities**

The coaches provide the leadership and the personality of our swim club. These individuals have an important influence on the attitudes of the swimmers and their parents. Communication between the coaches, the swimmers and the parents is essential for a healthy team attitude.

The coaches will guide the swimmers as they learn the value of self-improvement and commitment. They are responsible for training the swimmers at practices, implementing procedures and assuring good discipline. They provide stroke instruction and determine the practice groups. The coaches give guidance at swim meets and determine which meets the swimmers should attend.

At no time can a coach discuss with a parent an individual swimmer's progress during a practice time. Coaches will check email for messages from parents. If you have an issue related to your child, leave a note with your phone number and times to call with his/her coach.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

Swimming on a team provides an opportunity for swimmers to experience success while becoming healthy and physically fit. As parents, our most important responsibility is to provide stability and support. We can show our interest by ensuring that the children attend practice regularly and on time, with the proper training equipment.

Parents should be supportive, but remember that your CHILD is the SWIMMER! The coach, NOT THE PARENT, is the coach! The swimmer needs to establish his/her own goals. Parents should respect the goal(s) set by the swimmer. The most important part of your child's swimming experience is to enjoy participating in the sport. Parents should not, for any reason, be "on deck" during meets or practice.

All KVAC parents are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

- I. I will practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of discipline, loyalty, commitment and hard work.
- II. I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
- III. I will demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting myself in a manner that earns the respect of my child, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets and practices.
- IV. I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward the coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
- V. I will not contact other teams, meet officials, etc. on behalf of KVAC unless I am specifically authorized by a board member to do so.
- VI. I understand that prior to, during, and following a competition, questions and concerns regarding meet entries and other matters relating to the competition should be directed to the KVAC Head Coach. I understand that parents should address meet organizers and officials via the coaching staff only.

Should any parent conduct himself in a way that is contrary to the above, a conversation with the parents followed by a written explanation detailing the concerns and expected future behavior will be initiated by the Head Coach. If there are any further transgressions, the Head Coach will involve the KVAC Board to consider appropriate action, which depending upon the severity and continuance of transgression, may include the President appointing a committee of parents to review the situation in question and recommend appropriate actions. All actions will be open to an appeals process which will involve a member of the KVAC Board and a parent committee.

The Club provides no supervision for swimmers before or after scheduled practice times. It is the parents' responsibility to supervise their swimmers before and after practice, including time in the locker rooms.

## COMMUNICATIONS

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For KVAC to function most effectively as a team, we must have good team communication. The majority of team communications will be initiated by the Head Coach. Concerns regarding practices, meets, etc. need to be addressed to the Head Coach. As stated earlier, contact with coaches should not be initiated during practice sessions. Communication between the coaches, the Board and parents is accomplished mainly through **E-mail and the team website [www.kvacswim.org](http://www.kvacswim.org)**. Team notices and announcements will be distributed through the use of the Email system. **It is the family's responsibility to check E-mail and the website on a regular basis.** All information, which is deemed essential, will be emailed.

**Parent Meetings** are held throughout the year as needed. There is generally one at the start of a new season to familiarize new swimmers and their parents with the operation of the club.

**Phone trees** may be used to inform families of sudden changes in the practice schedule (such as a serious snow storm) and of other changes which need to be communicated quickly. (Be sure to check your answering machine!) This is a very difficult way to communicate and will only be used in the case of an extreme emergency. **E-mail** is used for those with e-mail addresses.

**E-mail** is used for most on-going team communications during the season. All communication from the coaches and board will come through this medium. Please check your e-mail often for updates on team happenings. If you don't have an email address, please "buddy" up with someone who does so that you can receive information in a timely fashion. This is also the best way to get in touch with the board and coaches.

**\*\* It is extremely important to check Email and answering machines before practice on snowy days. There is a chance practice will be cancelled if there is no school, school closes early or after school activities are cancelled. Common sense dictates this. However, KVAC coaches are generally able to get to practice and will conduct practice for those who wish to brave the weather conditions.**

The address for the team **web site** is: [www.kvacswim.org](http://www.kvacswim.org).

# FINANCIAL AND SERVICE OBLIGATIONS

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## Financial Obligations

### **Fees**

Swim fees need to be paid in their entirety. FAMILIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING THE FEES FOR THE ENTIRE SEASON THAT THEY HAVE CONTRACTED WITH KVAC. Refunds will not be given unless there is an extenuating circumstance. The board must approve all refunds. Swim fees are determined at the beginning of each season and will vary depending upon the length of that particular season and the expected number of swimmers. The swim fee covers coaches' salaries, insurance and some meet related expenses. League and district membership fees, software, duplication, administrative expenses and other miscellaneous administrative items are also paid from the fees. There are additional fees for team apparel, swimsuits and other training gear, regional meets and local championships. All swimmers must pay the USS registration for purposes of competition and insurance.

### **Equipment**

There is required equipment for swimming. For all swimmers, a suit suitable for exercise and a pair of goggles is the minimum. Other equipment, depending on the level of the swimmer and their training group, is required. The club will provide each swimmer with a latex cap. Silicone caps are available for purchase at the pool. Swimmers are encouraged to buy team suits and to wear them at meets. The cost of suits is approximately \$30 for boys and \$50 for girls.

### **Meet Fees and Surcharges**

Except for the regular-season Southern Tier developmental meets, meet fees are charged to swim at all meets. These fees are usually \$3-5 for each event swum and an additional \$3-5 swimmer surcharge or deck fee. These fees are paid, via the board Secretary or Treasurer, to the club hosting the meet.

In addition, KVAC may add a team surcharge to the meet fees. This surcharge of \$5 to \$25 per meet (depending on the number of swimmers participating, the length and the location of the meet) is used to help cover coaches' lodging and travel expenses.

### **Fundraising**

The budget is somewhat dependent on fundraising. It is an important source of funds for equipment, training for coaches, and social functions. Typical fundraising activities may include: conducting a Swim-A-Thon, selling poinsettias during the holiday season and providing concessions during a home meet. Parents are encouraged to be involved in team fundraising and to share other fundraising ideas!!!

## Volunteer Obligations

The smooth functioning of the team is dependent on parent/adult energy and enthusiasm. It is absolutely necessary for parents/adults to be involved. There are many opportunities for participation. These include: working at meets, publicity, organizing fundraisers, helping with social functions, and promoting team enthusiasm. Parents are encouraged to help the team in ways that are interesting and enjoyable.

# SWIM COMPETITION OVERVIEW

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Swim meets are an important part of team unity and spirit. Team members should be at every meet they are physically capable of attending—league, district or otherwise. Very simply, this is how a team functions and thrives. A fraction of team is not a team. Competition builds confidence and self-esteem in the swimmer. Improvement in “personal best” times is emphasized. Again, it’s more fun with everybody!

For meet competition, swimmers are organized by gender and age. There are boys’ and girls’ events for the 8-and-under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14 and 15-and-older age groups. Competitors swim in the age group they are in on the day of the meet. For meets that last more than one day, swimmers compete in the age group they are entered in on day one of the meet.

The coaching staff selects the meets that the team will attend. Parents are responsible for transporting swimmers to the meets. The Club attends several types of meets. The SOUTHERN TIER SWIM LEAGUE (STSL) MEETS are low-key, developmental in nature and are usually within two hour's drive of Alfred. The REGIONAL MEETS take place in Rochester or Buffalo. The format of the regional meets varies from being similar to a STSL type meet to that of a championship type. There are qualifying time standards for these meets and meet entries are submitted in advance in order to “pre-seed” the swimmers. These meets tend to be 2 or 3 days long, and may require overnight accommodations. These meets are more competitive than the league meets.

A meet schedule is posted on the KVAC website. KVAC reserves the right to alter or delete meets on the schedule. The KVAC website will be kept as current as possible. Time standards for district meets can be found on the team website.

## **Southern Tier Swim League (STSL)**

The Southern Tier Swim League (STSL) is a swim league composed of 21 teams in the Elmira-Binghamton-Ithaca area. Because there are so many swimmers, the League has been split into divisions. During each season, the league generally sponsors four to six meets and a final championship meet that are hosted by member teams. The Championships are for all divisions combined. These meets are developmental in nature and even the newest competitive swimmer should be comfortable participating.

**It is expected that all swimmers will participate in the STSL meets.** The fall/winter season meets are most often held on Saturdays with younger swimmers (10 and under) swimming in the morning session and older swimmers (11 and over) in the afternoon. Each session lasts about three hours, with morning sessions tending to be much shorter.

Spring/summer meets are generally on Wednesday evenings. The younger swimmers (10 & under) usually swim one week and the older swimmers (11 and over) swim the following week. Again each session lasts about 3 hours.

Each meet offers the swimmer a chance to swim a number of different events and often relays. By the end of the season, a swimmer will have had the opportunity to swim a full range of events offered for

that age group. Swimmers are encouraged to swim all events at each meet. Points will be kept for each swimmer for the developmental meets by the STSL. All KVAC swimmers who are ranked in the top 16 in each age group at the end of the season will receive recognition at the end of the season banquet.

**Swimmers MUST notify the coaches to let them know if they are, for whatever reason, not attending the meet that weekend no later than TUESDAY at practice. It is also extremely helpful for us when you confirm that you are attending, even though this is the expectation and assumption we make. The more organized we are as a team, the more smoothly meets run. As an STSL league rule, all meet entries are required to be submitted electronically two days prior to our arrival at the host site. It is imperative that this practice be followed. There will be no late entries or exceptions to this rule. Host clubs will not accept late entries and it takes us time to compile them before they are sent out.**

## **Regional Meets**

Regional meets are hosted by various clubs in the Rochester and Buffalo areas (the Niagara District of USA Swimming). These meets vary in format, from meets that are similar to the STSL meets to meets that are similar to the District Championships. Some of these meets will have qualifying times (i.e. a swimmer must meet a qualifying time standard in an event in order to swim at the meet). All of these meets require 'pre-registration' (one to two weeks before the meet) and additional payments (meet fees and team surcharges) that will be handled by the board Secretary and Treasurer. Some of these meets will require overnight stays. Families are responsible for arranging transportation and accommodations. Information for these meets will go out in emails.

## **District Meets—Bronze, Silver, Gold Meets**

District meets (we are in the Niagara District) are offered at three different levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold, corresponding to pre-determined time standards (see KVAC website). For example, new swimmers usually begin at the Bronze level. The meets are generally offered twice a year -- once in November and once in January with a District Championship (Gold Level) in March -- due to resource constraints, KVAC will only participate in one silver and one gold meet per year. These meets are usually held in Rochester or Buffalo. Transportation and accommodations are the responsibility of the families.

The District meets are multi-day meets which operate with a preliminary / final format. In this format, all swimmers entered will swim in the preliminary session and the fastest 16 swimmers will return in the evening for the final session. The Bronze Meet is two days in length (Saturday and Sunday); the Silver is two-and-one-half days long (Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday); the Gold is three-and-one-half days long (Thursday evening, Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Swimmers who do not plan to stay for finals (no matter the circumstance) need to scratch from the finals within 30 minutes of the finals announcement. Swimmers who do not follow proper scratch procedures will be responsible for any fines incurred.

These meets have qualifying times and pre-registration is required.

## **District Meets—Long Course Meets**

Long course meets take place in 50 meter pools rather than the typical 25-yard pool. Long course is the standard format for District level meets in the summer months. The club will try to include 2-3 long-course meets in its summer season schedule.

**For each of the regional and district meets we enter as a club, a meet eligibility list along with a due date for entries will be sent in advance. The entry due dates vary, based on the expectations and needs of the host club. The sooner we get entry information from swimmers and parents, the more convenient it is for us. Putting all of the entries together involves considerable organization and time.**

\*Parent volunteers are being sought to arrange hotel accommodations for away meets. So you may plan ahead, it is important to look at the meet calendar and at your child's times in relation to the time standards for regional and district meets. The TEAM expectation is that every swimmer whom has met time standards competes in these meets. When the word goes out, sign up as soon as possible so that needed rooms are reserved at the best rate. These meets are fantastic team events and are a blast for everyone—great competition and great fun, especially if we all lodge together.

## Glossary

**Age group swimming** -- The program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are: 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18. Local meets may also include events for 8 & under.

**Block** -- the starting platform

**Circle swimming** -- performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

**Circle Seeding** -- at certain meets the top three heats are 'circle seeded'. The fastest 18 or 24 swimmers are divided among the first three heat with the fastest swimmer in heat one, the second fastest in heat 2, the third fastest in heat 3, the fourth fastest in heat 1, etc.

**Clerk of Course** -- The person(s) responsible for assigning swimmers to heats immediately before each event

**Consolation Heat** -- Competition for the fastest of those swimmers who failed to qualify for the finals. Usually the top six or eight are considered the finals heat and the next fastest six or eight the consolation heat (depending on the number of lanes in the pool).

**Deck seeding** -- a procedure of assigning swimmers to proper lanes and heats immediately before each event.

**DQ -- Disqualified** -- This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind; e.g. freestyle kick in butterfly. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards in that event, nor can the time be used as an official time.

**Dryland** -- Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance. This usually includes stretching, calisthenics and/or weight training.

**Dual Competition/Duel Meet** -- competition between two clubs

**False Start** -- occurs when a swimmer is moving inappropriately at the start of an event. In USA Swimming, a false start will result in disqualification from that event.

**Finals** -- the concluding session of each day of a meet in which the final heats of each event are swum. The preceding session is considered a preliminary session.

**Finals Heat** -- the championship heat of an event in which the top six or eight swimmers from the preliminaries compete (depending on the number of lanes in the pool).

**Flags** -- backstroke flags placed five yards (short course) or five meters (long course) from the end of the pool. These enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently by counting his/her strokes to the wall, thereby not having to waste time looking for the wall.

**Heats** -- a division of an event in which there are too many swimmers entered to compete at one time. Swimmers' times are arranged slowest to fastest and then swimmers are grouped according to the number of lanes in the pool. Slowest swimmers usually swim first.

**IM** -- individual medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, back, breast, and free.

**Long Course** -- a pool 50 meters in length.

**LSC (Local Swimming Committee)** -- the governing body for swimming on a local level. Our LSC is Niagara District.

**Medley Relay** -- a relay event, swimmers consecutively swimming backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, then freestyle.

**Niagara District** -- our LSC (Local Swimming Committee). The Niagara District spans the area from Binghamton to Buffalo, including Syracuse.

**Official** -- a judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers and referees.

**Positive Sign-In** -- the longer events at some meets may require a swimmer to "sign in" at the start of a meet to facilitate final seeding of the event.

**Preliminaries (Prelims)** -- the session held earlier in the day at a meet in which the top twelve or sixteen swimmers will swim again later in the day in a finals session.

**Qualifying Time (Standard)** -- a qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

**Referee** -- the USS official who has the authority over all other officials at the meet. He/she makes all final decisions and sees to the efficient running of the competition.

**Scratch** -- to withdraw from an event in a competition.

**Seed(ed) Times** -- the time a swimmer uses to enter a meet. Most often these are the swimmer's best time. The Clerk of Course uses these times to determine heat and lane assignments.

**Short Course** -- a pool 25 yards in length.

**Southern Tier Swim League (STSL)** -- a developmental league, of which KVAC is a member, comprised of 21 teams in the southern tier of New York.

**Starter** -- the USS official at a meet responsible for starting each heat and calling the next heat to the starting blocks.

**Stroke Judge** -- a certified USS official who determines the legality of a swimmer's strokes. This person has authority to disqualify any swimmer who does not conform to USS rules.

**Timed Finals** -- a competition in which all events are swum only once. There are no preliminary or final heats.

**USA Swimming** -- United States Swimming, Inc.: the national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States.

**USS Number** -- the personal registration number for each swimmer who is a member of US Swimming. All swimmers on the team must register with US Swimming.