



HANDBOOK

05/08/2012

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this handbook is to explain to new members & veterans the Newton Bluefish Team guidelines and outline various policies that affect all swimmers, year after year. It should be read by all families so that they may become familiar with important facts and philosophies of the Newton Bluefish Swim Team.

WHY SWIM COMPETITIVELY?

Swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health, by teaching healthy fitness habits, team spirit, good work ethic, and social skills needed to succeed in life.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, which is the most important key to physical fitness.
- The team uses every precious minute of practice time improving fitness and teaching skills

PHILOSOPHY

Every swimmer will have ample opportunities to increase abilities (mental, emotional, and physical) which will be carried over into their daily life (family, school, and friends). Swimmers will learn how to set, work towards and achieve their goals. They will do this in an atmosphere that will combine dedication and hard work with an enjoyment of working with their peers, which will produce a sense of accomplishment both on the individual level as well as that of the entire team. The Newton Bluefish swim as a team!

Swimming is both an individual as well as a team sport. Each swimmer will have the opportunity to develop their skills in four different competitive swimming strokes for races in a variety of distances and racing events, in both individual and team events. Each swimmer's success is measured by a variety of means (race times, split times, individual place finishes, team finishes, stroke, turn quality and overall enjoyment) THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR ALL TO SUCCEED!

Combining the environment of a good training facility, the help of an experienced coaching staff, supportive parents, and hardworking swim team members, the Newton Bluefish members are living the mission of: EVERYONE SWIMS, EVERYONE WINS!

COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

- The coaches are responsible for placing youngsters into practice groups. This is based on the age group and ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of the swimmer, s/he may be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach.
- Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and training rests with the Newton Bluefish Swim Team coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group.
- At meets the coaching staff will conduct a supervised warm-up for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. (It's the parent's job to offer love and understanding regardless of their youngster's performance.)
- The swimming assignment of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff.

The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the Newton Bluefish Swim Team program. It is the swimmer's and parent's responsibility to make the most of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.

PROBLEMS WITH THE COACH

There have been occasional communication gaps between parents and coaches. A parent may feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy or team rules with other parents rather than taking them directly to the head coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but also this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with the head coach.

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interest of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with needs of the team or training group that can range in size from 20-50+ members. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short-term inconvenience.

SICK POLICY

If your swimmer is sick or has a special event and misses one or two practices in the same week, I do not need to be notified UNLESS they will be out for a prolonged period of time.

ATTENDANCE

Practice is the key to becoming a successful swimmer. Making a commitment to attend practice regularly is the only way swimmers will be able to develop proper swimming techniques and build the speed and endurance needed for better competition. All swimmers are expected to attend the recommended number of practices per week that is established for their group. Swimmers need to make the commitment to attend practices at these specified times. We understand there may be inconvenient schedule problems with multiple members on the team, but we cannot have swimmers showing up to a different practice time – each age group has set times for practice. **We encourage carpooling.**

The coaching staff will be taking attendance. This is done for the incentive purposes, and to track swimmers improvements. It is important to do this as each swimmer's attendance has an effect on the other swimmers. We encourage athletes to come to practice as often as possible and remember that as with anything "PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!"

TEAM LEVELS/TRAINING GROUPS

Our training programs are designed to offer every swimmer the leadership and knowledge to be successful in the sport of swimming.

Swimmers of all abilities and levels should work through the programs focusing on:

- Consistently improving their stroke technique
- Being a contributing member of the team environment
- Challenging themselves, their peers, and coaches to succeed.
- Maintaining swimming as a life sport, into college and beyond!

These levels determine practice times:

- **8 & under group**
 - The 8 & under group is the first level training group in the Newton Bluefish program. This training group provides an important transition from water safety to the foundation principles of competitive swimming. The aim of this group is to master the fundamentals of swimming.
 - Swimmers must be able to complete the following:
 - Swim 25 yards (one length of the pool) freestyle (front crawl stroke) Face in the water with good rhythmic breathing!
 - Swim 25 yards backstroke
 - Swim 25 yards breaststroke

- **9 & 10**

- The age group is an important developmental group in the Newton Bluefish swimming program. This squad is a key transition point as swimmers move from a basic foundation of swimming principals to the expectations of the advanced training program. Swimmers can expect to be in this group for a number of reasons.
- Swimmers are required to attend as many of these practices per week. However, swimmers benefit most from our program and experience the most improvement by making all practices.
- Swimmers must be able to complete the following
 - Swim 25 yards (one length of the pool) freestyle (front crawl stroke). Face in the water with good rhythmic breathing!
 - Swim 25 yards backstroke
 - Swim 25 yards breaststroke

- **11 & 12**

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- Swimmers are required to attend as many of these practices per week. However, swimmers benefit most from our program and experience the most improvement by making all practices.
- Swimmers must be able to complete the following without stopping in good form:
 - Swim 50 yards freestyle
 - Swim 50 yards backstroke
 - Swim 50 breaststroke and/or butterfly

- **13 Through 18**

- The advanced group is the highest level of training group available with the Newton Bluefish program. The aim of this group is to qualify and be highly competitive in the program. Swimmers are considered for this age group on combination of three main criteria:
 - Readiness and ability to execute this level practice
 - Meet performance
 - Age

- Swimmers will benefit most from our program and experience the most improvements by making all practices.
- Swimmers must be able to complete the following:
 - 100 free
 - 50 backstroke
 - 50 breaststroke
 - 50 butterfly

Practice times will be posted on the swim team website.

EQUIPMENT/WHAT TO BRING:

PACKING YOUR SWIMMER:

Winter swim meets are typically 3 hours and summer meets are 2 hours in length. Because of this, it is important that your swimmer is adequately prepared for the meet by including the following items in your swimmer's bag. It allows for your swimmer to enjoy the meet, confident that they will be prepared.

1. Two towels
2. Two pairs of goggles
3. Drinks (water, sport drink,) NO SODA or sugary drinks! We do not need comatose swimmers!
4. Team suit
5. Team apparel – No U.S. Swim apparel is allowed. This is a League rule!
6. Extra pants, sweatshirt shoes for on deck or seating area
7. Entertainment (book, homework, quiet game, cards, ectra) NO VALUABLE ITEMS! Leave jewelry at home. Coaches will not be responsible for lost items and will not hold items. We cannot guarantee safety of your possessions at meets or practices.

Notice that SNACKS and CANDY are not on this list, as swimmers are not allowed to eat on the pool deck or the gym area. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to be in possession of food for your swimmer(s) that can be eaten while they are with you. It is against Massachusetts General Law to have food on a pool deck. Please do not violate this policy, as it is a reflection of our team, organization, and you as a parent.

PRACTICE:

- Goggles - 2 pair
- Practice caps - 2
- Practice suit – Do not use your team suit for practice.

- Towel - at least one

MEETS:

- Goggles - 2 pair
- Team cap
- Team suit
- Towels – at least 2
- Warm-ups
- Footwear – sandals, sneakers, flip-flops

ARRIVAL TIMES:

It is important that each swimmer arrive on deck on time ready to swim (dressed in suit, cap, and goggles) at the beginning of each practice session. A swimmer, who shows up late, missing the warm-up, may be asked to sit out. It is not setting a great example for other teammates.

ILLNESS AND INJURY:

Whenever possible, the coach should be informed in advance of an illness or injury, regardless of how serious or trivial it may be. It will almost always be necessary for the coaches to know for the safety of the child and other swimmers. NO one with a communicable disease is allowed to swim or have contact with team members!

SWIMMERS TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases so does his/her responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be advanced swimming bound. As swimmers improve, there is a deep commitment that requires great effort on all parts. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her parents, and most importantly themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for a 100% effort each time they come to practice.

Swimmers will be required to bring specified training accessories (I.E., goggles, caps, suit, and ectra.) to workouts. It is the swimmer's responsibility, not the coach's. Missing pieces will not be an excuse for missing a workout!

No hanging out in the showers or fooling around during practice or in the locker rooms. The team is too large for coaches to constantly chase swimmers around for practice or dual meet events.

DEHYDRATION

Some older swimmers have been reporting leg and foot cramps during practice. Water is essential for numerous functions in the body. When the body's fluid levels become depleted, through increased sweating and/or inadequate fluid intake, dehydration can occur. To prevent dehydration, attention to fluid intake BEFORE, DURING and AFTER swim practice is important. Suitable fluids should be consumed at least **two hours** before practice. I encourage swimmers to bring their own water bottle (clearly marked with last name) to keep hydrated, but not to use as an excuse to not swim a set! After practice, a deliberate effort needs to be made to replace fluids lost during swim team practice. It is particularly important to replace fluid and carbohydrate losses when exercise is being repeated in a short period of time. This should eliminate most of the leg and foot cramps that some swimmers are experiencing during practice.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

COMPETITION:

The Newton Bluefish staff does not see the first place person as the only winner. We'd rather look to see who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner, and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics, concentration, listening skills, and working toward goals.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, ribbons, records, and other material benefits. They will, however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, and enhanced self-image. These are the things that make the swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life to their peak potential, and to contribute to the world in which they live.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

The Newton Bluefish provides challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy:

1. Winning ribbons, medals, and trophies is not our main goal. Even if a swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, s/he is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is as equally important as performance improvement. Coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has either a "good" or a "less than good" swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors,

encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised by the Newton Bluefish coaching staff.

3. A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parents' responsibility to provide encouragement that bolsters the swimmer's confidence along the way. (Strokes change and what you may think is correct is not always true). Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming strokes as long as they can swim them properly. This policy promotes versatility, and encourages the swimmer to explore his/her potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. Oftentimes, a swimmer's "best" stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

FOOD AND NUTRITION/TRAINING AND CONDITIONING

General guidelines for food and nutrition:

As far as general food consumption goes there is no substitution for home-cooked, well-balanced meals. Swimmers should be encouraged to eat three good meals a day which should consist of as much fresh fruit, vegetable, whole grains, pastas, breads as possible supplemented by moderate amounts of protein (meat, fish, poultry, beans) and only occasional servings of treats (sweets, cakes, cookies, candy, soda). Avoid constant fast food meals or food with high fat and sugar content. Save it for an occasional treat! Of all the things a swimmer consumes, the most important is water.

Although the American public has become more aware of the need to drink water more than other beverages we generally still do not consume enough. Optional water consumption is eight twelve ounce glasses a day for teens, only slightly less for younger children. For those who are not big water drinkers, add water to your diet gradually. You'll get used to it and feel better for it!

MEETS:

The regular season is composed primarily of dual meets, one team against another team. The championship season is held after the regular season. Everyone is eligible to swim in our regular season. A swimmer must compete in a number of required season dual meets to qualify for the League championships. Everyone who meets the meet requirement swims in a championship meet. Time determines what meet each swimmer will participate in.

MEET PLANNING/ ATTENDANCE:

It is expected and assumed that all swimmers attend all dual meets unless a Meet Absence Report has been completed on the team website. Therefore, meet line-ups will be planned as such. If a swimmer cannot participate in a meet, the coach must be notified at least 24 hours before the day of the meet. It is extremely difficult (and sometimes impossible) for the coach to make changes to the lineup on the day of the meet as much preparation by many goes into meet preparation. If the swimmer becomes sick and unable to compete on the day of the meet, you must email Newtonswimteam@gmail.com. A message will automatically be sent to the coach's cell phone. The sooner the decision is made as to the condition of the swimmer, the sooner that the necessary adjustments to the line-up may be made. Remember, this may be an individual sport, but your coaches and teammates rely on you!

LEAVE ALL VALUBLES AT HOME AND KEEP YOUR THINGS IN A LOCKED LOCKER OR ON DECK WHEN NOT IN USE!

DURING MEETS:

Meets are great fun, but because there are so many people in attendance and so many different events, good organization is essential. All swimmers are expected to arrive (suited up) 15 minutes before their scheduled warm-up time in order to review their events and prepare their spot on deck or in a seating area. All swimmers are expected to demonstrate values of the Newton Bluefish philosophy of caring, respect, responsibility, and honesty during all swim meets. It is also expected that the team members show good sportsmanship towards their teammates and coaches as well as other team's swimmers and coaches. If swimmers need to briefly leave the pool area, (to go to the locker room) they are to first ask a coach before leaving. Each team member is expected to stay at the meet from the beginning of the warm-up to the end of the last event. Anyone with a special request to leave early must clear it with a coach prior to the meet. As the coaches are responsible for all swimmers during the meet, anyone leaving the meet early must tell a coach. There will be no food allowed on the pool deck. All drinks should be brought with the swimmer at the beginning of the meet to be kept on deck with their towel and sweats; glass is not allowed on the pool deck. All swimmers must wear shoes in the hallway at home meets.

COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS: DUAL MEETS ARE MANDATORY!!

Swimmers who have attended the required practice sessions will be eligible for competition. All swimmers who have attended practice regularly are expected to attend all dual meets. Our

league championships at the end of the season are our single most important meet of the season and every swimmer is expected to participate!

DUAL MEETS:

Dual meets are meets occurring between two teams. All of our dual meets are scheduled with other surrounding swim teams in our league. Dual meets are scheduled during the winter season on Saturdays or Sundays. During the summer, dual meets are scheduled on Tuesday and Thursdays. Everyone is expected to participate. If you are unable to make a swim meet you must notify the coach at least 24 hours prior to the meet, otherwise you will be there. The line-up (swimmer's events) will be determined by the coaches.

Some of our meets will be in our "home" pool; others will be at an "away" pool. All meets are staffed by parent volunteers; therefore, parents will be asked to sign up for timing, judging, scoring, recording, timing, or in charge of bullpen prior to each home meet. Parents are expected to drive their swimmers to all away meets so that they may be assured of safe transportation and support from family members. Carpooling is highly encouraged.

PARENTS: YOUR ATHLETE NEEDS YOU

To have a successful program there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your youngster makes depends to great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join the Newton Bluefish.

Parents have the opportunity to enhance their child's experience by volunteering for positions such as a starter, stroke and turn judge, scorer, working the bull pen, timer, back up timer, or runner at home or away meets. Parental participation in these areas is essential to keeping up the high quality and great success of the program.

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children's athletics. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective and help your child reach his/her potential as an athlete.

The coach is the coach! We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it

causes considerable and often times, insurmountable confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact the coach.

Parents should understand that the coach's job is to motivate and constructively critique the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's' job to supply love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn give him/her the confidence to perform well in competition.

VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteer staffing for all home meets and away meets is a must. We cannot run an efficient meet without your help. All Newton Bluefish meets are staffed by parents who help out with officiating, starting, timing, recording, or organizing swimmers in a bull pen. All parents are expected to give their time and help at meets or to help with some preparations for meets as they are able. Since most parents attend most meets and some parents have time while they are waiting for the swimmers to compete their practice session, parents usually find that this request is not an inconvenience, but rather gets them more involved and knowledgeable about the program.

GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

Bullpen

Place where swimmers report at meets, before their event, to be arranged into their heat and lane assignment.

Heat

A heat in swimming is a group of swimmers swimming the same event. Since only a certain number of swimmers can swim at a time (depending on the number of lanes, usually 6) they have to have swim at different times and usually they place heats on how fast they swim. So, in the winter season if you have the fastest time going into the race then you'd be in the last heat and if you have the slowest time going into the race then you'd be in the first heat. During our summer dual meet season, it is the reverse. The fastest heat always swims first.

Course

Designated distance over which the completion is conducted.

Deck Seeding

Heat and lane assignments are determined for the swimmers at the beginning of each meet session, after scratches are taken out.

DQ

Disqualification - A swimmer is usually disqualified when she/he performs a stroke, touch or turn incorrectly or when s/he enters the water before the start (false start).

Dual Meet

Meets conducted between two teams, usually with a limitation to the number of entrants from each team.

False Start

When a swimmer enters the water before a race or moves during the start, she/he may be charged with a false start. This results in disqualification.

Finals

Finals are the session of a meet where qualifying rounds were held previously to determine the finalists for the event. Usually there are 1 or 2 heats of finalists and their order of finish determines the ultimate placement in a given event. Most trials-finals meets are on a championship level.

Finals Heat

Last heat of a trials/finals meet to determine the top 6 finishers in an event, seeded by prelim's results

Heat

A heat is a group of swimmers who swim in a race at the same time. Several heats may be held in a particular event.

Heat Sheets

A program printed listing of all swimmers by event number and entry time. These are also called the Meet Programs or Psych Sheets.

I.M.

Individual Medley is an event where a swimmer swims butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

Lap

A lap consists of two lengths of the pool.

Length

A length is one length of the pool.

Medley Relay

Four swimmers on each team swim one length of the pool in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

Meet Director

The individual responsible for acceptance/ rejection of teams' entry into the swim meet designated meet schedule and events offered, staffing the meet, and publishing results. Parents are not allowed to contact meet directors without prior approval from the head coach.

Prelims or Trials

In certain meets, the qualifying rounds for each event to determine the finalists.

Proof of Time

A requirement at some meets to make certain that swimmers have legally met the entry time standards for that meet.

Pyramid Seeding

In trials or preliminaries of trials-finals meets, the swimmers in the top 3 heats are intermingled so that the fastest three swimmers are in the middle lanes of the last 3 heats, the next 3 in the late next to that in each of the heats, and so forth. This is also called "circle seeding". In finals, those finishing fastest by time swim in the top 1 or 2 heats (final and consolation final)

Referee

A referee is an official who has been named as the final authority over all other officials at a swim meet. This individual makes all final decisions and sees to the efficient running of the meet.

Seed Times

The times a swimmer uses to enter a meet. These times appear on the heat sheet and the entry cards and determine the swimmer's heat and lane assignment in a meet.

Seeding

The process of assigning swimmers to lanes and heats by entered time. In general to swimmers with the slower seed times swim in the earlier heats. The order of swimming in the final heats depends on the type of meet.

Straight Seeding

Swimmers are assigned to lanes in heats from slowest to fastest. In a given heat, the fastest swimmers swim in the middle lanes and the slower swimmers on the outer lanes.

Split

The time a swimmer achieves in one or more laps of his/her race. Coaches use these times to help instruct swimmers in pacing. For example, the time for the first 50 yd in a 100 yd race is the swimmer's first 50 yd split.

Starter

The starter is a meet official who has been chosen as the person responsible for starting each heat and calling the swimmers to the blocks for each race.

Stroke and Turn Judge

An official, who determines the legality of swimmers' strokes, turns, and finishes and disqualifies those who do not conform to the rules.

Time Trials

A session that a coach will designate as a time to get times for each swimmer in each event at the beginning of the season as a base time for each swimmer.