

OTHER INFORMATION – AMHERST TRITONS SWIM TEAM

ATST Swim Groups and Fees

During practice, Amherst Tritons Swim Team is split into smaller, more manageable groups. Assignment in a subgroup is based on a combination of experience, ability, work ethic, and age. Members for each group are picked each season so that every swimmer can be given the best chance to improve his or her swimming ability while joining a similar social group. Groups are balanced in size, allowing coaches to provide as much individual attention as possible to each swimmer. Placement is at the discretion of the coach and is permanent for the season.

- **Age-Group Tritons (Four 60-minute Practices Offered per Week):** The Age-Group Tritons is open to all swimmers who can complete 50-yards of non-stop freestyle with side breathing, and 50-yards of nonstop backstroke. Swimmers must have a familiarity with butterfly kick and breaststroke kick, and a working knowledge of flip-turns and racing starts. The emphasis is on development of proper technique. Refinement of strokes, starts, and turns are continued at this level. The goal of the coaches is to see that the swimmers enjoy their experience as they are introduced to training sets and more challenging practice sessions. Age-Group Tritons competes at the local level and is introduced to local USA swimming competition.
- **Junior Tritons (Four 90-minute Practices Offered per Week):** Swimmers at this level continue to develop their technique and racing skills with an increased emphasis on aerobic conditioning. More complex training sets are introduced. They become familiar with the pace clock, while being challenged physically and mentally. They are expected to be able to take an active role in their development as competitive swimmers. Junior Tritons is encouraged to compete in all strokes and distances, and discouraged from specializing in specific events. Goal setting and race strategies are introduced at the Junior Tritons level. Junior Tritons competes at the local level and out-of-district USA swimming competitions.
- **Senior Tritons (Six 120-minute Practices Offered per Week):** Swimmers who have committed themselves to a high level of training and are in middle or high school are invited to this level. Practice sessions are longer, more complex, and demanding. It is expected that swimmers at this level come prepared to challenge themselves at each practice session. Coach's expectations are detailed at the beginning of the season. Each swimmer will strive to meet these expectations and standards throughout the season. Senior Tritons accepts the position on the team as a role model for the younger and less experienced swimmers and, through their words and actions, set a positive example for others. As with the Junior Tritons, swimmers will compete at the local and regional level with the possibility of qualifying for higher-level competitions where time standards must be met to compete, as well as USA swimming competitions.

Fees are used to pay coaches, pool rental, meet fees, ribbons, and other miscellaneous items. (Fee structure is subject to change.)

- Age Group Tritons: \$300
- Junior Tritons: \$325
- Senior Tritons: \$460
- USS Registration: \$100
- Non-Volunteer Fee: \$200 (in lieu of Volunteering)

In addition, the third swimmer in a family joins for half-price. High school swim team discount is \$100 to compensate for lost ATST practices due to high school practice and meet schedule. For reduced fees, please discuss with the ATST President, Kate Connor (K3connor@charter.net).

Vacation, Holiday, Snow Day Practice Schedule and Policy

- Practice will not be held on the Amherst Regional Public School (ARPS) snow days.
- Practice will not be held in the event that ARPS cancels after-school activities.
- If school does not cancel but the weather gets worse, please check your email and the announcements made at the ATST Web site before heading to practice in the event it is canceled.
- Swimmers need to be at practice 15 minutes before start time and need to be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled end of practice.

How (Dual) Swim Meets Work

A dual swim meet, or simply swim meet, is a swimming competition against one other team. Generally, there are eight swim meets in a swimming season. Swim meets tend to last about 3 hours.

- Swimmers compete against other children in their age group (8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18). Your child moves on to the next age group on his/her birthday.
- Swimmers are encouraged to participate in as many meets as possible, both home and away. In fact, a swimmer must compete in at least four dual meets to be able to swim at championships. We encourage car pooling for away meets if transportation is an issue. Please contact info@atst.org for possible carpool options. In the beginning of the season, the schedule of meets will be announced. If a swimmer decides not to attend one of the meets, the head coach must be notified no later than one week in advance of the meet.

- Swimmers will be placed in a variety of events at a meet. If a swimmer has a preference, he or she must inform the coaches several days before the meet. They will try to match you with those events but it is not always guaranteed. The coaches place swimmers in events that they believe are a good and safe match. The coaches spend A LOT of time beforehand doing this. **PLEASE DO NOT ASK FOR A CHANGE IN EVENT AT THE TIME OF A MEET. THE COACHES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE LAST-MINUTE REQUESTS.**
- Prior to the meet, swimmers will be given an ON-DECK time. Swimmers are required to be on-deck at this time so that coaches can take attendance and get swimmers warmed up properly. If the swimmer has not checked in with the coaches by that time, he or she will be scratched from the meet!
- Directions to swim meets will be posted on the ATST Web site. In addition, meet reminders will be sent out ahead of time via email with directions and on-deck times.
- For ALL meets, please check your email shortly before you plan to leave. Not only can weather cause a cancellation but sometimes a meet may be canceled due to poor water quality or a conflict with facility scheduling.

Championship meets

Spring/Summer season championship meets have generally been held the third or fourth weekend in July. Fall/Winter championships are usually scheduled in the last weekend in January. They are usually held at Springfield College, but sometimes other pools have been used. Swimmers must swim in a total of four dual swim meets to qualify for the championship meet. Trophies or medals are awarded to first through sixth places for each event, and ribbons for seventh through twelfth places. Relay teams are awarded trophies or medals for first through third places.

Swim Meet tips

- Stay through and participate in all of your events at a meet. It only hurts your team and possibly relay partners if you leave early. Check with the coaches to make sure you are all done for the meet before changing and leaving. If you must leave early due to an emergency, please notify the coach first.
- Events are listed on the walls around the pool with swimmers' names next to each event. Some parents find it helpful to write their child's event numbers on their hands. (Please, send them with a marker or pen in that case.)
- Swimmers should prepare to line up ten events prior to their event. You need to pay attention to the event number we are on and get yourself in line on time. For

younger swimmers, buddies (older, more experienced swimmers) will help them do this.

- Encourage your child to use the rest room in advance of their line-up time. The same goes for eating snacks.
- During a swim meet, whether home or away, swimmer should NOT leave the pool deck without notifying a coach first. Swimmers also need to know that the locker rooms and hallways are NOT places to hangout. Swimmers should be on deck cheering for their teammates.

Practice Tips

Practices take place at the University of Massachusetts Totman pool on Eastman Lane. Practice schedules are listed at the ATST Web site under Team Calendar.

- Swimmers are encouraged to attend the maximum number of practices per week possible.
- Attendance will be taken on a daily basis. Coaches understand, however, that there may be conflicts with other sports and activities that may limit a swimmer's attendance at every practice.
- Coaches should be notified if swimmers: (1) cannot attend practice, (2) will be late, or (3) need to leave early.
- Swimmers are not penalized if they miss practices. However, relay teams are partly based on performance of the swimmer and performance is usually related to practice attendance.
- Be sure to look at your mailbox folder at practices, or have your child do so.
- DO NOT interrupt coaches during practice. Please ask your questions before practice starts or after practice ends.

All swimmers should bring a water bottle to practice. Sport drinks such as Gatorade or PowerAid are not allowed in the pool.

Swimmers Training Responsibilities

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases so does his or her responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be Senior Swimming bound. As swimmers improve, this 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 to themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for 100% effort each time they come to practice. Swimmers will be required to bring specified training

accessories (i.e., goggles, flippers, etc.) to workouts. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure that these items are properly adjusted, and that spares are readily available. Equipment adjustment and repair will not be accepted as excuse to miss part of a training session.

Parent Volunteer Duties

The ATST is a parent-run organization. We are not run by Leisure Services and Supplemental Education (LSSE) of Amherst. The board of directors consists of swimmers' parents. In order for a swim meet to take place, as many as 50 positions are required to be filled. We expect at least one parent/guardian to volunteer from each family for each meet. You are only expected to volunteer for half a meet. Parents of new swimmers can team up with a buddy for one of the first meets if they feel uncomfortable, but most of the jobs are fairly easy and require little training. If parents are unable or unwilling to volunteer, a donation of \$200 per season is expected. Early in the season, we usually hold a mock meet where we will train volunteers for these jobs. This year we are planning to enlist volunteers via email. Below is a list of the jobs that must be filled for each meet.

- **Starter:** This requires previous experience or special training. This person announces each event and starts each event.
- **Timer:** This is the job that requires the most number of volunteers. At each meet, you will be given a stop watch and directions on how to use it. Generally, we need 6-8 timers at a time.
- **Back-Up Timer:** This timer starts the watch at the beginning of each race and records time for any person who has a mishap with timing the particular lane assigned to them.
- **Stroke and Turn Judge:** Each team is expected to supply two judges per meet. This person is responsible for making sure strokes and turns are done legally. Training sessions are usually held by the league at the beginning of each season. There is also a video tape available that can be viewed.
- **Bullpen Monitor:** These people help line up the swimmers in the correct order for their events. They also monitor behavior on deck and make sure the kids know what event they are swimming and what lane they are swimming in.
- **Scorekeeper:** These people count up the points for each team during the meet and enter the points into a computer.
- **Place Judge:** The place judge records which swimmer/lane comes in first, second, and third place for each race.

- **Runner:** This person collects all timing cards and place cards from the timers and takes them to the scoring table after each event.
- **Food Table Helper:** For home meets, these people help set up the food table, sell food, and pack up the food table at the end of meet.
- **50/50 Raffle Coordinator:** For home meets, this person coordinates the selling of 50/50 raffle tickets.
- **Locker Room Monitor:** This person periodically goes through the locker room to make sure kids are behaving and respecting property.

ATST Board of Directors

This is a group of parents who meet monthly to distribute workload, set ATST policies and determine fees. The board is open to new members and participation is strongly encouraged. There are committees, actively recruiting participants.

Fund Raising

The ATST raises funds through sales at the food table, which is featured at every home meet. Parents are asked to donate food, hot or cold. For those who come straight from work, a make-shift dinner can usually be purchased, such as pasta salad, fruit salad, pizza, and bagels. Drinks and snacks will also be sold. We also try to sell 50/50 raffle tickets at each home meet.

Uniforms

The ATST has a team swimsuit, which every swimmer should try to purchase. A standardized uniform contributes to team morale and makes our swimmers easy to identify at large-scale meets. Every effort is made to offer a quality swimsuit at a reasonable price. Information on how to obtain team suits usually will be sent to parents via email and mailbox letter. Additionally the team will offer team merchandise, such as sweatshirts, pants, and workout shorts. A special order form will be distributed early in the season so these items may be special-ordered for each swimmer. ATST swim caps and T-shirts will be on sale at home meets at the food table.

Swim Meet Ribbons

Ribbons are awarded to each first, second, and third place finishers for each event for each meet. Ribbons are also made for personal best times. It may take weeks, however, for these ribbons to be distributed because parent volunteers write them up. When they are finished, they will be placed in your child's mailbox.

End of Year Party

There is a party at the end of each swim season, often the weekend of or after the championship meet. At this party, championship trophies and ribbons are distributed. Sometimes there may be other awards given out by the coaches.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming is the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming is responsible for the administration of swimming in the United States and is a member of the United States Olympic Committee. Within the United States, it is divided into 59 Local Swimming Committees (LSC's). Amherst Tritons Swim Team (ATST) is a part of the New England LSC. More information can be found at the Websites of New England Swimming (www.neswim.com) and USA Swimming (www.usaswimming.org).

For those who choose to swim at a more competitive level, this organization offers meets around the New England area. By joining the organization, the swimmer is eligible to participate in USA Swimming sponsored meets. These meets typically occur on the weekends, and summer meets are offered from mid-May to mid-August. The schedule is available at www.neswim.org. In the past, ATST has participated in meets as close as Northampton and Springfield, and has also traveled to Eastern Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Albany. Your swimmer may participate in as many (or few) meets as she/he would like. Unlike the recreational meet format, the team is not limited as to the number of swimmers that it may enter in a particular race. As a result, Coach Jay usually is able to accommodate your swimmer's preferences regarding entries. In general, swimmers who wish to join pay an additional fee of \$100 and a per race fee in the range of \$4. All ATST recreational swimmers are eligible to register for USA Swimming for competitions against the more talented swimmers in New England and beyond. Sign-up is available early in the season.