

Parent Handbook

WELCOME to the Great Wolf Swim Team!

Since our inception in 2004, Great Wolf Swim Team has helped hundreds of athletes in the sport of swimming from novice to national champions and national record holders. We help all individuals maximize their potential.

We are always looking for new swimmers to JOIN THE PACK!

Team Mission Statement

Our mission is to offer programs designed for all level of experience which will aid swimmers in maximizing their potential. Great Wolf Swim Team is geared towards excellence and was founded upon the desire to lead it swimmers to reach the highest level in their swimming careers. This is accomplished through goal setting, age-appropriate teaching and training that is geared toward competition.

Governing Bodies

Minnesota Swimming is our LSC or local swim committee. Minnesota swimming primarily handles registration, rules, and meets schedules throughout the state. For more information, please visit www.mnswim.org.

USA Swimming is the national governing body for all USA club teams. They primarily handle national rules and regulations, insurance, hosting national championship, picking the Olympic team, etc. for more information please visit www.usaswimming.org.

We do our best to communicate any and all changes as soon as possible, If any questions arise please contact Head Coach, Jason Smith at 952-855-2120 or jason.d.smith1234@gmail.com or any of the coaches directly using the contact information on the website.

Team Website

Great Wolf Swim Team maintains an informational website at www.greatwolfswim.org. The website can often answer questions you may have and is also a useful resource for tracking your swimmer's progress. The website is maintained to benefit our swimmers and their parents and contains the following information:

- Meet Information
- Practice calendars
- Meet results.
- Parent and swimmer codes of conduct
- USA Safe Sport guidelines and tools
- Records containing swimmer times.
- Updated monthly/current calendar for meets.
- Wolf Wear shop team apparel that can be shipped directly to your home.
- Elsmore Swim Shop All needed equipment per group that can ship directly to you.
- Maps to pools utilized by Great Wolf Swim Team
- Links to great swimming websites/resources

Team Levels

Great Wolf Swim Team offers a program for all ability levels. The goal for our swimmers is to continually improve. Each of the programs listed below are designed to provide the correct level of instruction and participation to keep swimmers improving and having fun!

Tryouts are done when first joining the team so that a coach may assess your swimmer's skills and decide which program is best suited for your swimmer. These tryouts are scheduled in advance and may be offered at a time outside of normal practice times.

Our team progresses swimmers to the next level based on skill and ability. Mid-season group changes may be limited so that swimmers have a consistent practice schedule/coach, but some exceptions may occur. All group assignments are made by Great Wolf Coaching staff. Below are the groups and skills required to progress to that level.

Age Groups

Pups

This is our entry-level program. Swimmers need to be able to easily swim one length of a 25- yard pool. Emphasis is put on learning the four basic strokes, starts and turns. Practices last 45 minutes and swimmers are encouraged to attend 2-3 times per week. At this level we require attendance at our novice meets.

Pup Skills: circle swimming, streamlined push-off, kicking for all four strokes, flip turns, backstroke flip turns, open turns, proper use of a kickboard, front crawl with rhythmic breathing on both sides, racing starts from the blocks, backstroke racing starts and finishes, two hand finishes, the proper technique for all four strokes.

Required equipment: swimsuit, swim cap, goggles, kickboard. A mesh equipment bag is recommended to haul your swimmer's equipment. Please note that swimwear must be legal with USA swimming rules. If you have any questions, please contact your swimmer's coach or go to https://www.usaswimming.org/swimmers-parents/learn-the-basics/rulebook

Trackers

This level teaches swimmers more advanced competitive swimming skills and the very basics of training. Practices last 75 minutes and swimmers are encouraged to attend 2-3 practices a week. At this level attendance at novice meets is required. Other meets are optional.

Tracker Skills: Underwater pull-outs for breaststroke, flip turns and open turns for IM races, relay starts, swim a set with rest periods, swim a set with training intervals, can read their times from a pace clock, know two drills for each stroke.

Required equipment: swimsuit, swim cap, goggles, kickboard, fins, pull-buoy.

Hunters

This level fine tunes strokes, starts & turns and develops good training habits. Moderate training for stroke work is begun. Practice lasts 90 minutes and swimmers are encouraged to practice 3 or more practices a week. At this level we also require attendance at most other regular and Championship level meets.

Hunter Skills: Fine tune stroke techniques, flip turns, open turns, IM transitions, and starts. Know three drills for each stroke, and learn proper technique for streamlines, pull-outs, and breakouts. Improve conditioning and add yardage. Teaching and practice of skills is often at training/race pace.

Required equipment: swimsuit, swim cap, goggles, kickboard, fins, pull-buoy, snorkel, hand-paddles.

Alpha Leaders

These swimmers train hard for both stroke improvement and conditioning while maintaining and improving racing skills. Swimmers are encouraged to practice 4 or more times per week for up to 2 hours, plus dryland trainings. Attendance at Gold/Silver and Championship level meets is required.

Alpha Leader Skills: Develop excellence in race skills, including strokes, turns, tempo, and race preparation.

Required equipment: swimsuit, swim cap, goggles, kickboard, fins, pull-buoy, snorkel, hand-paddles.

Optional: drag sox and Triton (see coach for details)

Senior Silver

Experienced high school team swimmers aged 13- adult. These swimmer train for stroke improvement and conditioning while improving racing skills. Practice lasts 2.5 hours and swimmers are encouraged to swim 4-6 times a week. At this level attendance, participation at all Championship meets is required.

Senior Silver Skills: The emphasis on this group is on a specific training based upon the type of swimmer they are (distance, mid-distance/stroke, and sprint), and stroke corrections are made as needed.

Required equipment: swimsuit, swim cap, goggles, kickboard, fins, pull-buoy, snorkel, hand-paddles.

Optional: drag sox and Triton (see coach for details)

Senior Gold

Experienced high school team swimmers aged 13- adult. These swimmer train for stroke improvement and conditioning while improving racing skills. Practice lasts 2.5 hours and swimmers are encouraged to swim 6-8 times a week. At this level attendance, participation at all Championship meets is required.

Senior Gold Skills: The emphasis on this group is on a specific training based upon the type of swimmer they are (distance, mid-distance/stroke, and sprint), and stroke corrections are made as needed. Faster paces, sets, interval work is required compared to Senior Silver.

Required equipment: swimsuit, swim cap, goggles, kickboard, fins, pull-buoy, snorkel, hand-paddles.

Optional: drag sox and Triton (see coach for details)

National Team

This program is for the most dedicated and committed swimmers ages 13-adult. These swimmers train hard for stroke improvement and conditioning while improving racing skills to the highest level. Practice lasts 2-2.5 hours and swimmers are required to practice 5 to 10 times per week. Athletes are required to attend all scheduled practices. Attendance at Championship and National level meets is required.

National Skills: Develop excellence in race skills, including strokes, turns, tempo, and race preparation. Stroke corrections are made as needed.

Required equipment: swimsuit, swim cap, goggles, kickboard, fins, pull-buoy, snorkel, hand-paddle, drag socks and other tech equipment as recommended by the Head Coach.

Practices

A variety of practice times and locations are available for our swimmers. Please take note in the section above to see how many practices per week are expected at each level. Swimmers are encouraged to attend one location regularly, so that they have a consistent coaching staff, however, can attend any location for their assigned group if needed.

The following are guidelines to inform both parents and swimmers of policies regarding practice. These policies have been developed and designed to provide the best practice environment. More information can be found under Parent/Swimmer resources on our website:

- The swimmer's USA registration must be current to attend any practice or meet NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Swimmers are expected to be on time and stay the entire practice.
- Parents are allowed to leave after practice starts, but please do not drop off swimmers and leave them unattended more than 15 minutes prior to their practice start time the coach's first responsibility is the safety of the swimmers in the water.
- Please ensure that your swimmer is picked up no later than 15 minutes after their scheduled practice end time. Coaches are not allowed to drive swimmers due to Safe Sport regulations.
- Parents and other adults should use available restrooms and not locker rooms at all practice facilities to adhere to Safe Sport guidelines.
- During practice, swimmers must ask coaches to leave the practice area (this is for safety, swimmers must never leave the pool area without the coach's knowledge).

Each practice group requires specific training accessories/tools as listed above. Make it a habit to bring equipment in a mesh bag to each practice. It is the swimmer's responsibility to bring equipment and take-home equipment after practice. Please label all items with your swimmer's name. Great Wolf is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

Wolf Wear

Wolf Wear is now ONLINE! Please visit our website and look for the spirit wear logo. You can buy T-shirts, parent shirts, sweatshirts, hats, caps, long-sleeved shirts and much more! The Wolf Wear website will ship all orders directly to your home. We encourage all swimmers to show pride in the team by wearing team gear and team colors to meets.

Equipment

You can buy all your other swim equipment on our partner site, Elsmore Aquatics. In the bottom of our website, you will see their logo - click on the logo. You will need your group's necessary items as listed above. Please ask your swimmer's coach if you have any questions.

Seasons

There are two seasons - Short Course and Long Course

- Short Course season starts in September and ends in a Championship meet in March. These meets are run in a "Short Course" or 25-yard pool. If your swimmer is in Hunters and above or has Champ times, please plan on attending all Championship meets in March.
- Long Course season starts in April and ends with a Championship meet in July/August. These meets are usually run in a "Long Course" or 50-meter pool. If your swimmer is in Hunters and above or has Champ times, plan on attending all Championship meets in July/August.

Basic Skills

The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly:

• In **freestyle** a competitor may technically swim any stroke, but the most used stroke is the "crawl" stroke (also known as Freestyle).

Freestyle is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up and down) flutter kick. On

turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

- **Backstroke** consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on their back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on their back.
- **Breaststroke** consists of simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. Then hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion like the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.
- **Butterfly** consists of a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands MUST touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish.
- Individual Medley, commonly referred to as I.M., features all four strokes. In the I.M., the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes to backstroke, then breaststroke, and finally freestyle. Each stroke is one fourth of the race.

Relays

- The **Medley Relay** consist of all four strokes. The first swimmer swims backstroke, followed by breaststroke, followed by butterfly, the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle.
- Freestyle Relays consist of four swimmers, each swimming one fourth of the total distance of the event all swimming freestyle.

Race components

Starts

In the "start", the swimmer is called to prepare for their race by taking their starting position. The starting official visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the horn is sounded to start the race.

Relay Starts

Relay exchanges will be reviewed with all swimmers in advance of participation in a relay.

• Turns

Each stroke has a standard turn – flip turns for freestyle and backstroke and an open turn with two hand-touch for butterfly and breaststroke. Legal turns should be practiced at each wall during each practice and again at all meets.

Finishes

Most meets will use timing pads at the wall and the timing pad will record the swimmer's race time. Swimmers need to have a legal finish and should engage the touch pad with a firm finish at the end of their race. Backstroke should be finished while still on their back. Breaststroke and butterfly require a two-hand (simultaneous) touch.

Time Standards

At the state level in Minnesota there are 5 basic standards. We have the current MN Swimming time standards linked on our website under time standards. Typically, new standards are released in November each year.

- **Pre-Bronze** times primarily consists of new swimmers that either have not swum in meets, or just starting off. Pre-Bronze times are times that are slower than the established bronze time.
- Bronze times are the first level on the time standards sheet.
- **Silver** times are the second level on the time standards sheet. The MRC championships are held at the end of every season specifically for Gold-Silver level swimmers.
- **Gold** times are the third level on the time standards sheet. The MRC championships are held at the end of every season specifically for Gold-Silver level swimmers.
- **Champ** times are the fourth level on the time standards sheet. At the end of each season the State meet is held as a final meet for these athletes.
- **Zone** times are the fifth level on the time standards sheet. At the end of each summer, if your swimmer achieves a Zone time, they are invited to become a part of Team Minnesota. Team Minnesota then travels to compete at a meet in a predetermined location somewhere in the Midwest, held each August.

At the national level there are additional standards. (Sectionals, Grand Prix, Junior Nationals, Senior Nationals, U.S. Open, Olympic Trials)

Time standards for the above meets can be found on our website and at USASwimming.org.

A swimmer may have different time standards in different strokes and distances. For example, they may have bronze times in one stroke, silver times in another, and Gold or Champ times in other strokes, depending on their strengths and weaknesses.

Swim Meets

All Great Wolf Swim Team members will be expected to be fully involved in swim meets. This is the most fun part for the swimmers! At the start of each season the coaching staff will determine which meets we will be attending for each program level. The key to swimming success is regular and appropriate competition. In addition, the swimmers develop stronger friendships and more team spirit when they share in each other's success. To help you plan your meets, you can access your current times at the USA Swimming website at any time. (Please see helpful information on how to find times)

Signing up for Meets

All members of Great Wolf Swim Team are required to swim in meets appropriate for their level. We are a competitive swim team and swim meets gauge your athlete's progress along the season. Registration deadlines for each meet will be made known via email. Please make special note of registration deadlines to submit entries online. All registration is done on our website at greatwolfswim.org.

Novice Meets

Great Wolf has developed swim meets that are geared for our Pups & Tracker swimmers. These will typically be held on one day of each month and will take place instead of regularly scheduled practice that night. These are designed for swimmers and parents to learn how swim meets work, and what to look forward to when they move to the next level. These meets will include members from Great Wolf Swim Team, but we may also invite other local teams. At the novice meets hosted by Great Wolf, we require that parents volunteer to help make the meet run smoothly. This may include timing, running the Meet Manager/Colorado-6 timing system or another role. You are advised to sign up in advance if you have a preference.

First Meet?

There are a few things to keep in mind before, during and after your swimmer's first swim meet:

- Before the meet, please make sure that your swimmer is prepared when arriving to the pool. Make sure that they are equipped with their swimsuit, goggles, towel, wolf wear/ warm clothes and WOLF swim cap. If you need a WOLF cap, you can order one through our website.
- Please make sure that your child has a bag to keep all your child's belongings together on the pool deck. Swim meets may last a while so make sure your swimmer has snacks and a beverage. (Water or a sports drink)
- Please make sure your child has an idea of what they are swimming so they have an idea of when they will go up to the starting blocks (the coaches will assist but it is helpful if the swimmer at least knows what they are swimming. It is common to have your child write his or her events on their arm or leg. Below is most common format.)

Event	Heat	Lane
67	6	8

- When you arrive at the pool, make sure your swimmer goes straight to the pool deck to check in with a coach. You should have them arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm up time.
- After they check in with their coach, they will warm-up in the pool.
- Parents should go to the designated seating area.
- In Accordance with USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed on deck unless they are officiating or volunteering at that meet.
- In Accordance with USA Swimming Safe Sport rules, parents are also not allowed in the locker rooms during a swim meet. Swimmers are also not allowed to change on deck or in parent restrooms.
- During the meet, please make sure that your swimmer stays on the pool deck and checks in with their coach before each race.
- Your swimmer should immediately go back to their coach after their swim this way the coach can give them instant feedback.
- They can come up to sit with you in between races, but we highly encourage them to stay on deck, cheer for their teammates and socialize with the other swimmers.
- After they swim, congratulate your swimmer on a job well done!

To help all our new swim parents with the meet process we have created a brief synopsis to help you all out! We have also linked step by step instructions on how to decline meets and confirm events on our website. We hope that this answers most of your questions regarding swim meets. As always, feel free to email or speak with your child's coach before or after practice!

<u>Declining Meets</u> on our website <u>Signing up for meets</u> on our website.

Signing up for meets

If your swimmers are automatically signed for a swim meet that they qualify for (a championship meet, for example) their coach then goes into the system, commits them to the meet and chooses what events they will be swimming. After that is all said and done, Jason sends out an email informing you that your child is signed up for the meet.

Your job as the parent is to figure out if they can or cannot attend the meet and to look at their events. If you cannot attend the meet you must log into the Wolf site and decline the meet. (See attached for info on how to do this) If you can attend the meet, then you log in to confirm the meet, check the events that your child is swimming, look to see what time warmups are, and what location the pool is at. If you feel that your child should not be swimming one of the events that had been chosen by the coach, you can log in to the website and change the events IF the deadline is not passed. If the deadline is passed you can email Coach Jason (jason.d.smith1234@gmail.com) with changes. He will change the events if it is possible.

Meet Prep

Leading up to meets the coaches will be focusing on certain skills during the week to get the swimmers ready for the weekend, whether that be working on starts, dives, finishes, or strokes more than usual.

Make sure that your swimmer receives a good night of rest the night before the meet and eats a healthy dinner. The morning of the meet: make sure to already have their swim bag packed with two towels, clothes they can wear over their suits (they tend to get cold), healthy snacks that they can eat between their races, and of course a water bottle.

You will notice as you start going to meets that veteran swimmers have their events written on their legs or arms. Once you are sent the meet schedule you can use a sharpie to write your child's races on their body. Usually, it is written in a little graph with an E for events, H for heat, and L for what lane the swimmer will be going into. This keeps it a little less chaotic down on the pool deck when trying to send kids up to the blocks for their races. Don't worry the sharpie will come off!

It is required that the swimmers wear their Black WOLF swim cap at the meet, its makes finding them much easier for the coaches both in the water and on the pool deck, also it adds to the team mentality. If you would like to order a cap, feel free to go onto our WOLF WEAR website at https://greatwolfwolfwear.itemorder.com/shop/home/

Meet Day

All meets have a warm-up before they start, it is important that your child is there before the time that is posted for warm-up, not when the meet starts. Parents are not allowed on the pool deck; once they enter the pool deck, they become the coach's responsibility. The swimmers get in the water and complete the warm-up that the coach has chosen for them. After the warm-up the team does a cheer and pep talk to get everyone pumped up for the meet! After that the coaches will give directions to all the swimmers as to what comes next.

During the meet it is important that your swimmer learns to stay down on the deck with the coaches and other teammates. The swimmers may come up to the stands in between their races to see you but must return to the pool deck so that their coaches can give them their pre-race talks and get them up to the blocks in time. The coaches do not have time during the meet to run up into the stands or locker rooms to seek out swimmers. After a swimmer finishes his or her race, they are to go straight to the coaches to receive feedback for their race. Once they have done that, they are then free to go up and visit with you.

Races in the meets are broken up into different events, then in the events there are multiple heats. Heats are the races and swimmers they will be swimming against. Your child's event might be Event 3 50-yard freestyle, but then it might say heat 11 of 15. What that means is that there are 15 races of the 50-yard freestyle in Event 3. Your swimmer would be swimming race 11 of 15. Also, the coaches go over this with the swimmers at the meet, and it makes sense after you have a race or two under your belt.

Once your swimmer has finished all his/her races he/she is then free to leave the meet. Please make sure you let your coach know when your swimmer is leaving. You do not need to wait until the team is completed. Most of the larger meets offer awards for the fastest swimmers in the events, when leaving the pool or during the meet when your child isn't swimming you can go and check the awards table to find if your child won anything.

Race Times

Ultimately swimming is all about achieving times - it is super exciting and great when your swimmers place in their races, however, at this age we look more at what times that they are getting in their races and developing their strokes. Both items can be measured by faster times meet after meet.

At meets, times are broken up into different categories. These time standard categories are called Bronze, Silver, Gold, Champ, and Zone times. This is breaking times up by fast, faster, and fastest. They help place the swimmers in races and decide who they will be swimming

against, so that the swimmers aren't discouraged swimming against someone who may be faster than they are. It is also a good motivation for the swimmers, for those who don't have bronze times it makes them want to get faster so they can achieve a bronze time. Same for a swimmer who has a silver time, they want to get faster to get a gold time, and so on and so forth.

Awards

Most meets provide awards to the top swimmers in each event, which are usually available at an awards table outside of the pool area. In most instances parents and athletes are responsible for picking up their own awards as we have coaches at multiple facilities, and it is hard to get awards to their rightful owners.

Coaching Staff

Please visit www.greatwolfswim.org for up-to-date profiles/bios and contact information for all our fantastic Wolf coaches!

Special Events

Great Wolf Swim Team may hold several special events throughout the year and attendance is voluntary. These have included the Fall Corn Maze, Holiday swim parties and summer picnics, to name a few.

Awards Banquet

The awards banquet is held typically in the summer of each year and is designed to recognize swimmers for their achievements over the previous year. Part of the banquet is a slide show and picture placemat. We encourage you to take pictures throughout the year and submit for inclusion in the banquet!

Billing

Great Wolf Swim Team offers multiple forms of payment. We offer direct debit, you enter your bank or from your credit card, as well as payment via mail. We prefer direct debit to ensure that we receive payment in a timely matter, but it is an option if direct debit is not right for your family. We bill our dues monthly. We charge for the entire month on the first of that month. (Example: Sept dues are taken our Sept 1) if your payment is not processed in full, you may be assessed a late fee. Payments are needed to be made in a timely fashion to keep your child in the pool. Meet participation fees from the previous month are drafted on the first of the following month along with normal dues.

Fundraising

Great Wolf Swim Team is an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and relies heavily on fundraising support to function smoothly and effectively. To keep fundraising simple and fun, and to keep pressure off the swimmer and parents, the team funnels all fundraising needs into a single event, our annual swim-a-thon. The swim-a-thon is this an integral element of the team's budget as well as a unifying, memorable team event for the swimmers.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to become involved with the team and get to know the parents of other swimmers. Parents are required to volunteer to ensure that our functions are run smoothly and efficiently. The most important volunteer opportunities are swim meets. All parents are expected to participate in meets hosted by the Great Wolf Swim Team. Please visit our website to sign up in advance so that you can get your preferred volunteer slot. Please ask a coach if you have any questions — training will be provided.

Helpful Information!

USA Swimming Time Finder

Visit www.greatwolfswim.org Under partners click on the USA swimming icon.

Helpful Aps!

Sports Engine Motion

- Account management.
- Allow sign-up for upcoming coming jobs offered by the swim team.
- Display detailed attendance histories for their children [swimmers]
- Manage each upcoming swim meet with timing and heat & lane assignments
- Interactively view every swim meet the team has swum by swimmer or roster.
- Split Math calculator for goal setting
- Lots of preferences for personalization available on both apple and android

Meet Mobile

- In addition to real time results, see pre-race rankings and heat and lane assignments as they become available.
- Individual and team scores
- Follow Your Favorite Swimmers Flag swimmers and/or teams as "favorites" and then easily filter down to see both completed results and upcoming schedules.
- All Meets, In Real Time Search meets from all over the world or in just your local area.
- Reminder, that Meet Mobile times are NOT official times and are subject to the meet organizer's completion in the system.

Practice Locations

Brooklyn Center Community Center

6301 Shingle Creek Pkwy Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Spring Lake Park High School

1100 81st Ave NE Spring Lake Park, MN 55432

Jackson Middle School (Champlin)

Door 10: 6000 109th Ave N Champlin, MN 55316

Centennial High School

Door B2: 4757 North Rd Circle Pines, MN 55014

Northdale Middle School (Blaine)

11301 Dogwood St NW Blaine, MN 55448

The Rookery (Lino Lakes)

7690 Villiage Dr Lino Lakes, MN 55014

Great Wolf Cancelation Policy

- 1. Our billing cycle is monthly. We require one week advance notice to the end of the month for all cancellations. Please send an email to Katie Smith (Ikatielisasmith@gmail.com) with the cancellation notice.
- 2. The account owner remains responsible for any fees incurred by the swimmer prior to the end of that month (i.e., meet fees, purchases, monthly dues).
- 3. Any swimmer who leaves the team and wishes to be reinstated during the same season (short course season is Sept-March, long course is April-July) may be assessed a reinstatement fee.

Contact Information

Great Wolf Swim Team is always available for questions or comments. Please contact Head Coach Jason Smith at <u>jason.d.smith1234@gmail.com</u> or 952-855-2120.