

# TEAM HANDBOOK

## Welcome!

Welcome! We are excited for the start of the new season. Any and all 7th through 12th graders in ISD 197 who are able to swim at least 25 yards are invited to join. We also welcome area students in home school programs in in our school district.

We are a competitive swim and dive team in the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). Competitive means the sport revolves around racing in various fixed-distance events for swimmers and judged diving competition for divers. For those new to competitive sports, track and field provides a good analogy. The swimming events are like the running races in track and diving is like a field event.

## Team Philosophy

Participating in high school athletics requires a commitment from you of your time. We place value on the following:

- The team is before the individual athlete, but team improvement is driven by personal improvement. We place great value on personal improvement, whether that be improving your time in swimming races or increasing your points in diving.
  
- Every practice and meet requires 100% effort and often will be physically exhausting. If you don't leave practice tired, you didn't work hard enough! This effort will give you a sense of accomplishment when the hard work turns into higher personal performance.

## Team Expectations

Participating in a high school sport is a privilege and an important part of the high school experience. Athletes are expected to follow the rules set by the MSHSL, the high school Activities and Athletics Handbook, as well as our team rules.

Personal improvement comes from regular attendance, listening and being respectful to coaches and teammates, and following workout plans provided by the coaches. Every practice has a goal and is important. An athlete that wishes to perform their best at meets can only do so by putting forth their best effort at practice every day starting day 1 and every day thereafter. Athletes cannot expect, and will likely not get, season-best results without this daily effort.

Each swimmer should consider themselves a good example for their teammates and should be that positive example by demonstrating hard work, commitment, respect to coaches and each other at practice and at meets.

## Practice & Meet Attendance

Practice will be every day, Monday through Saturday except those days with a meet scheduled. Practices (including Saturday practices and practices on days without school) and meets are mandatory, though a parent reserves the right to excuse their child if they deem it best for their student-athlete. However, if this practice schedule is not compatible with a student-athlete's academic, family, or other extra-curricular schedule, the swim & dive team will likely not be a good fit for them. The order of priority should be as follows: family, school, swimming.

Athletes who miss one or more practices during a week may not be eligible to swim in the meet that week, it will depend on the circumstances of why practice was missed.

Excused absences are listed below. They require an email from the parent or guardian. **It is NOT acceptable for another swimmer to notify a coach of your absence.**

- Illness
- Family vacations (see note on vacations below)
- Religious or cultural observance
- College visits (with advanced notification)
- Any school event that would take precedence over practice (e.g. ACT's)

# Practices

Most practices will be in the afternoons immediately after school from approximately 3:15 to 5:45. The times may be adjusted slightly earlier or later depending on pool time availability and team needs. There will also be Saturday practices, typically in the morning.

# Competition

The team competes in the Metro East Conference during the regular season. We have dual meets against each conference team as well as some multi-team meets with both conference and non-conference teams.

We also compete in MSHSL Section 3AA. At the end of the season, a section meet is held to decide which student-athletes will attend the state meet. Our section includes some member teams from our conference as well as non-conference teams.

# Entries For Meets

All of our conference meets have unlimited entries, meaning everyone will swim in at least one event!. Other non-conference meets/ conference relays have limited entries, so the coaches will try to make the best lineup possible. If your athlete is not entered into the meet, it is expected they attend the meet and cheer their teammates.

# True Team

True Team is a section-like meet midway through the season. The True Team meet has a scoring system which is more beneficial to a team with depth whereas the regular section and state meet scoring is weighted more towards a team with top-end athletes. True Team is not an official MSHSL event; it is held by the Minnesota State High School Coaches Association (MSHSCA). As such, the meet is optional for our team, but typically is one that we attend. The team that wins the True Team Section meet advances to the True Team State meet. It is sometimes possible for a team to get second at the True Team Section meet and also be invited to the True Team State meet; it depends on how teams in other sections perform. In this meet, every single swimmer scores points, so the more entries we are able to have, the more points we can score.

## End Of Season Meets

The end of season includes three championship meets:

- Junior varsity conference championships
- Sections
- State Championships

JV Conference Champs – This is a meet where only the JV swimmers on all of the teams within the conference compete. It is the last meet of the season for JV swimmers.

Sections is a qualifying Varsity meet for State. Section teams are different than Conference teams. Each team is only allowed only four athletes per event.

State – only those who qualify from the section meet will swim at the State meet. Usually only the top two finishers from each event or those with a state qualifying time.

## Section Team Qualification

Qualifying for sections is largely up to the coaches. A few of criteria the coaches use to make the decision are:

- Top 4 on our team in an event
- 80% Practice attendance
- The athletes time being outside of the bottom 3 or 4 in the previous years section meet

## Transportation to Meets

Per the Activities and Athletics Handbook, athletes will be expected to travel to and from meets with the team using district-provided transportation. The team does allow team members to drive home with their parent or guardian. If you wish to drive home with a parent or guardian, that parent or guardian must notify the head coach directly, being certain that you have received confirmation from the coach that they have received notification from your parent or guardian.

## At a Meet

Please make sure that your athlete has a healthy beverage and snack for the meet. Meets can run long sometimes, and a small snack can be very helpful.

Athletes are encouraged to cheer for one another, it makes the meets much more exciting for everyone. Cellphones should be left in backpacks or lockers during meets and practices, as swimmers should be focused on what is going on in the pool. Repeated warnings to put their phone away will result in a coach holding on to a phone until the practice or meet is over.

## Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The team is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our team members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to notify a coach immediately. Your name will be kept confidential, if you prefer. Consequences for bullying may result in immediate expulsion from the team, depending on the severity of the incident.

# Captains

The team will have one or more captains to provide leadership to the other athletes. Captains will be expected to exhibit and represent the team with the highest levels of sportsmanship, respect, hard work, and determination. The captains will be chosen yearly by the team by a vote and the coaches at the end of the year banquet.

Our captains will be:

- Team players and advocates for the school
- Active listeners to athletes and coaches
- Respectful role models through sportsmanship and hard work at practice
- Maintain a positive, respectful environment
- Lead by example in the pool by hard work at all practices with their best effort

Being a leader is not about you! It's about the people on your team and how you can help them be successful.

# Booster Club

The Booster Club is an organization that is managed by parent volunteers. The Booster Club is instrumental to the success of the team. They provide:

- Team meals and meet snacks
- Help fund and run fundraisers
- Organizing and setting up the end of season banquet
- Assisting with and hosting meets and other events
- Providing money for some team equipment purchases

