

# Aquatic Club of the West Shore

## Team Handbook



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## MISSION

- To sponsor and promote amateur competitive swimming in the best interest of the youth.
- To develop good citizenship, sportsmanship, socialization, enthusiasm for the sport, and personal responsibility among all team members.
- To promote and maintain the highest level of physical fitness, team spirit, ethics, growth, and enjoyment of sports.

## A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

While some individuals may have a talent for swimming, it is fair to say that great athletes are not born. It takes discipline and commitment, along with skilled instruction in a positive atmosphere. At ACWS, each individual is encouraged to move along in a continuum of skill and development focusing on drills for maximum stroke efficiency and improved performance.

ACWS coaches are fully committed to each athlete's overall development as a competitive swimmer. Technique instruction and practices focus on enhancing the talents that each athlete inherently brings to the sport of swimming.

ACWS commits to providing competition instruction, training in a life-long sport, and a positive team-building environment for swimmers.

## CLUB HISTORY

Since 1998, the West Shore Waves swim team has been providing local youth from the West Shore of Harrisburg and the surrounding area an opportunity to participate in a competitive aquatics program. The Waves is a nonprofit, parent-led organization that sponsors and promotes amateur competitive swimming. We develop good citizenship and sportsmanship, socialization, enthusiasm, and responsibility. We also promote and maintain the highest level of fitness, spirit, ethics, growth, and fun. In addition, we encourage swimming as a lifetime sport.

Athletes range in age from 5 to 18 years, the majority of whom are residents of the West Shore School District. Red Cross level 3 swimming ability is advised for the swim team.

ACWS participates in local swim leagues for dual meet competition – the Capital Area Swim League (CASL) and the Central PA Aquatic League (CPAL). The organization is overseen by a Board of Directors and supported by a parent organization in which all parents of registered athletes are members.

## SCOPE

This handbook is a guideline of general policies developed and approved by the ACWS Board of Directors. This handbook is intended to be used as a guide only and for informational purposes.

All members and registered swimmers are expected to comply with the expectations, policies and procedures, and the ACWS Code of Conduct outlined in this handbook. All alleged Code of Conduct violations shall be reported to the Board of Directors for review.

## SWIM LEAGUE AFFILIATIONS

ACWS is affiliated with the Central Penn Aquatic League (CPAL) in the fall/winter season and the Capital Area Swim League (CASL) in the summer season. These local leagues offer dual meets and championships for our members to build competitive experience.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ACWS is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The goal of the Board is to provide transparent and professional diligence in the best interest of ACWS as a whole and not for any individual gain or purpose.

The Board of Directors consists of the following positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer/Secretary
- League Representative
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Fundraising Coordinator
- At-Large Members

The Board of Directors meets monthly to discuss issues related to the management of the team. Board meetings are scheduled based on board member availability. The Board hosts some open board meetings where all members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- Develop and manage the operating budget of the team.
- Maintain vital relationships with the West Shore School District and our West Shore Community.
- Oversee ACWS Coach hiring and expectations.
- Organize and work with the school district to set practice and meet times.
- Work with local swim league organizations.

- Verify clearances for volunteers on deck, coaches and Board members.
- Communications with parents regarding the swim season.
- Advertise and market the team for sustainability.

## REPORTING CONCERNS

Although conflicts in our team are few, they occasionally arise, and we have a protocol for dealing with them.

If you have a concern, please contact the Board of Directors at [acws17339@gmail.com](mailto:acws17339@gmail.com). Your concern will be discussed at a special or scheduled board meeting and mediated in private.

## COACHES

Our coaches invest a great deal of time, heart, and energy to create a successful and positive team environment. They are dedicated to making our children better swimmers and strive to uphold ACWS's mission and commitment to excellence. ACWS coaches have also passed federal and state background checks and obtained Act 34 child abuse clearances prior to their employment.

An ACWS coach's main responsibility is to mold all our athletes into the best swimmers they can be. In addition, our coaches mentor our swimmers and provide an environment that promotes good sportsmanship and positive values.

Our coaches work with the ACWS swimmers to set achievable goals while also building and maintaining relationships with other aquatic organizations.

The ACWS Board of Directors expects that the Coaches' responsibility is to build teamwork, self-esteem and help each swimmer reach their potential in the sport. The Board of Directors takes seriously any concerns that parents have with coaching behavior and will mediate concerns brought to the board.

## SWIMMER EXPECTATIONS

### PRACTICE

- Practice schedules may vary throughout the season due to sharing the natatorium with other groups. We try to send out a weekly email, post to social media, and post to the On Deck app, however, it is always best to check the website for any changes.
- While arriving on time is highly recommended, swimmers can join the practice after it has already started.
- We do NOT have an attendance policy, as we know how busy families are these days. We do encourage your swimmer to attend as many practices as possible in order to progress in the sport.
- All adults are strictly prohibited from entering the locker rooms on the pool deck. If your child cannot change into or out of their swimming gear without help, we suggest that they

come dressed in their swimsuits and bring a bathrobe or other cover up to put on after practice.

- We ask that all parents/guardians remain in the spectator area if they choose to stay for practice. Parents are NOT allowed on the pool deck and are NOT allowed to interfere with coaches and practice.
- At least one member of the board attends every practice and will be present on the pool deck. Board members are there to assist coaches as needed, so they can focus on the swimmers. Board members wear an identifying badge. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to discuss with the board member on deck.

If you have questions about your child's progress, please email the board at [acws17339@gmail.com](mailto:acws17339@gmail.com) and we will put you in touch with your child's primary coach.

### SWIMMER CODE OF CONDUCT

As a swimmer for ACWS, I will abide by the following Code of Conduct:

- Will be prepared for practice. This includes having goggles, cap, equipment and water bottle with them and ready to begin stretching. If a swimmer/diver arrives late, they are asked to get into their assigned lane for practice without disruption.
- Will do their best and give their attention and focus to the drills and exercises given them by their coaches.
- Will show respect and sportsmanship for fellow swimmers/divers, coaches, officials, administrators, the public and the club equipment. This includes but is not limited to promptly following all instructions given by the coaches, not arguing with officials, and not interfering with the practice of other team members. If a swimmer/diver is disrespectful of a coach or belligerent or threatening to another swimmer/diver, the lead coach/board member on deck will address the situation and the parent/guardian will be notified as needed.
- Team members will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of ACWS or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco products, vaping products, fireworks, firearms or controlled substances by an athlete during any team activity (including practice and meet facilities and surrounding areas) is prohibited.
- Will always ask permission from a coach before leaving the pool area during practice
- Will not interfere with the progress of another swimmer/diver during practice or otherwise. No ridiculing or inappropriate behavior towards other swimmers/divers will be tolerated.
- Every ACWS swimmer has the privilege to participate in a safe, supportive environment. As such, no athlete shall engage in activities intended to harm, intimidate, or harass any ACWS swimmer. Any person guilty of attacking a swimmer whether through verbal, physical or any other means will be directly reviewed by the ACWS Board of Directors. This may

include suspension of practice and meet privileges, or in extreme cases, termination of member athletes from ACWS.

- The taking, displaying, or sending pornographic image/recording is strictly prohibited and will result in the immediate termination of an athlete from ACWS. No exceptions will be made.
- No photography or video in locker rooms!
- Will, at the conclusion of practice, help the coaches to clean and organize the pool area.
- At the conclusion of practice, will remain in the building until a parent is visible to directly leave with.
- Will not use a cell phone or any electronic device during practice including dry land. The use of electronic devices is acceptable only after practice.
- No checking of the cell phone during bathroom breaks during practice.
- If a swimmer brings a cell phone to practice, the cell phone will be in the locker room at the swimmer's own risk.
- If a swimmer/diver has an emergency and the need to contact their parent/guardian during practice, they will inform their coach.

#### VIOLATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Failure to comply with the ACWS Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which may include:

- A review by the ACWS board
- Suspension or dismissal from ACWS activities
- Responsibility to pay any damages or make any type of suitable compensation for applicable actions

## PARENT / GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS

#### PARENT / GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

As a parent/guardian member of the ACWS, I will abide by the following code of conduct:

- If you committed your swimmer to a meet and cannot attend due to sickness or other unforeseen events, email the board email and post to OnDeck as soon as possible to let the



Head Coach know. We offer multiple practices per week. If your swimmer cannot attend a practice you do not need to notify the board or coaches.

- Will encourage their child to do their best, bring a positive attitude to practice, be respectful of the coaches and their teammates, and encourage them to have fun.
- Will recognize that swimming is both an individual and team sport. Parents will help their swimmers focus on dropping time in their races and achieving personal best times instead of “winning” a heat.
- Will bring concerns in an open-minded manner to the board for discussion and resolutions.
- Will acknowledge that the ACWS Board of Directors is run by volunteers who are dedicated and invested in the team.
- No parent/guardian or relative shall engage in activities intended to harm, intimidate, or harass any ACWS swimmer, ACWS coach or ACWS Board member. If a person is guilty of this whether through verbal, physical or any other means, the individual and his/her related swimmer could be subject to Violations of Code of Conduct above.

## ORIENTATION MEETING

Each season we hold a mandatory meeting for ALL members (new and returning). This meeting includes an introduction to the Head Coach and an informal presentation from the ACWS board. The goal of the meeting is to familiarize new and returning families with the structure and organization of our team. Information from the meeting will be available on the website in Parent’s Lane.

## PARENT COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE

As a volunteer, parent-led organization, we rely on the contributions and participation of all our members. We cannot successfully conduct home meets or attend away meets without consistent support from everyone. For this reason, we strongly encourage the parents/guardians of all our athletes to volunteer during the setting up, running, and tearing down of all meets during the regular and post season.

Most positions do not require experience and also allow you to watch your swimmer participate in the meet. Every effort will be made to make sure this is possible. Clearances are required for all on-deck volunteer positions.

At the beginning of each season, ACWS will hold a “mock meet” to train new member volunteers on each position. Volunteer opportunities vary depending on the size of the meet (dual, invitational, divisionals) and whether ACWS is the hosting or visiting team. The Volunteer Coordinator will generate a volunteer sign-up prior to each meet and answer questions on all positions.

## VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

- Meet Manager (1 per home meet) – This is a trained position. Meet Manager is the software program that we use to manage the meet lineup, link race times with the correct swimmer, and score the meet. During the meet, the individual running the meet manager software will

electronically update the events with race times, use back up times from timers as necessary, print ribbons labels for races, enter disqualifications, and print the final event page with times and a final score.

- Colorado System Operator (1 per home meet) – This is a trained position. The Colorado is the system that connects the scoreboard, touchpads and plungers, and the starter. The Colorado collects the race times that are electronically transferred to Meet Manager. The individual running the Colorado will match the preloaded race to the current swimming event on deck, verify times the system collects from the touchpads and plungers, and save the times to be pulled by the meet manager system.
- Starter/Meet Referee (minimum of 1 per home meet) – This is a trained position (training is provided by the league at the start of each season). Operate the starting device and announce the start of each race. Oversee the stroke and turn officials and all aspects of the swim meet on deck and in the pool.
- Stroke and Turn Official and (minimum of 2 per home meet) – This is a trained position (training is provided by the league at the start of each season). Observe swimmers and check for legal strokes and turns. Communicate with other officials as needed.
- Announcer (1 per home meet) – Announces the event and names of swimmers participating in each event.
- Timers & Back Up Timer (7 per meet) – Stand at the finish end of each race to time the swimmer in your lane. A back-up timer keeps time and can handover a stopwatch in the event that a lane timer's watch fails.
- Stagers (minimum of 2 per meet) – Monitor swimmers on the pool deck. Help swimmers write their event information on their arms. Follow meet events and line up swimmers by lane.
- Finish Judge (1 per meet) – Stand on deck at the finish end of each race. Watch swimmers finish and record finish place 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.
- Runner (1 per home meet) – Collect time sheets from timers and finish judge sheets. In some cases collect stroke/turn judge DQ slips and return paperwork to the Meet Manager.
- Ribbons (2 per home meet) – Receive information and labels from the Meet Manager and place labels on the correct ribbons. Sort ribbons between teams. Give the coach of the other team their ribbons before they leave the facility.
- Concession Stand Operator (minimum of 2 per home meet) – Prep and organize concession items before meet. Sell concession items during the meet. Clean up the concession stand after the meet.

ACWS is a competitive swim team and swimmers should plan to participate in meets. We understand that for many new swimmers, taking the first step and going to their first competitive meet is a big undertaking. Swim meets provide an opportunity for swimmers to measure the progress of their training and practice. They are also a social time, which enables the swimmers to build friendships with fellow teammates. Most new swimmers find that after they go to one meet, they are excited to attend more!

ACWS coaches will select the events that swimmers will participate in. The coaching plan, swimmer ability, and other factors will be considered as the events are being selected. Swimmers and parents/guardians are able to request events during the sign up process, but the coaches make the final decision. Newer swimmers will initially be placed in events that they will succeed in. As their skills build, they will be placed in more challenging events as determined by their coach.

All swimmers are expected to sit with the ACWS team during home and away meets. This encourages team building and ensures that no swimmer misses an event. Swimmers are expected to inform the Volunteer Stager if they need to leave the team area to use the facilities or eat. All swimmers are required to remain at meets until its completion. At the completion of each meet, swimmers are required to help with the cleaning up the pool area at home meets, and our team area at away meets. Swimmers who need to be excused early from a meet must request permission to do so in advance and must inform an ACWS coach prior to leaving on the day of the meet.

Meet Officials follow the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rule Book (as adopted by CPAL, CASL, and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)) and will be the basis of all ACWS swim meets. Both CPAL and CASL have made exceptions to the NFHS Rule Book, and those changes can be found in their respective bylaws.

## WHAT TO BRING TO MEETS

Items your swimmer will want to bring to the meet include:

- Extra swim cap and goggles
- Healthy snacks and plenty of water
- Two or more towels
- Blanket or yoga mat to sit on
- Sweats to wear between events and after the meet
- Something to keep swimmer occupied between events (for example, a book or deck of cards) \*Note: If your swimmer chooses to bring an electronic device, it is at their own risk. ACWS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property. If any items break and require custodial services to fully clean (e.g., broken glass on deck or in pool), the costs associated with the clean up will be charged to the swimmer's account.

No food is allowed on deck for home meets. At home meets we run a concession stand and tables are available for swimmers to sit and eat.

## SIGNING UP FOR SWIM MEETS

All dual/invitational/divisional meet sign-ups are done through the ACWS website. Swimmers must RSVP for every meet by indicating whether they will attend or not. Each meet has its own calendar event entry with important information, including the link to sign-up for the meet. Most signups for regular dual meets are due by the midnight the Tuesday before the meet.. This allows enough time for the Head Coach to complete the lineup of events for the meet. Special meets (invitationals, divisionals, etc) will have earlier deadlines, since they are larger events, and are posted with due dates clearly defined.

Meet sign-ups also include volunteer sign-ups. Parents/guardians should use the website to sign up for volunteer positions (more information included in the Parent/Guardian Expectations section). Meets cannot run efficiently without parent volunteers. If you are unsure what is expected in a specific volunteer position, please email and a board member will assist you.

### MEET AND INVITATIONAL FEES

There are no fees for local league dual meets and championships (i.e., divisionals, all-stars, mid-caps).

Each season league teams may choose to host Invitational Meets. Host teams generally charge entry fees for each swimmer. These meets are optional for our swimmers. Effective September 2023, fees for each swimmer to participate in two Invitationals are included in the registration fees. Swimmers who choose to participate in more than two Invitationals are required to pay any fees set by the Invitational host team. Invitational fees are typically between \$3-\$5 per event. Invitational fees will be collected by a board member and payment must be made before the swimmer can participate in the meet.

Invitational meet fees are non-refundable once meet entries have been submitted to the Invitational host. If a swimmer is unable to attend the meet (for any reason) after the submission of the entries and payment, the swimmer is still responsible for payment of the entry fees.

There are no spectator fees for local league dual meets. For championship meets and invitational meets, the host team typically charges a spectator fee (if you volunteer to help this fee is waived). Some meets may charge a fee if you want a meet program.

## TEAM ATTIRE AND EQUIPMENT

### TEAM SUIT

An ACWS team suit or other pre-approved suit is required for all swimmers at meets. Tech suits must be FINA approved suits. Tech suits are discouraged at regular age group meets. Suits and other swimming items can be purchased through the [ACWS Swim Outlet store](#).

### RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

All items can be found at the [ACWS Swim Outlet](#) team store, as well as sporting goods or other online retailers.

- Practice Suit
- Goggles
- Swim Cap
- Fins
- Water bottle
- Swim bag
- Towel

#### SPIRIT WEAR

T-shirts, sweatshirts, and other items, with the ACWS logo and/or name are available for purchase during each season through our [Artistic Imprints Spirit Wear store](#).

#### LOST & FOUND

You are strongly encouraged to label all your swimmer's equipment. Labeled equipment found at practice can easily be returned to the swimmer. Unlabeled equipment found around the pool deck will be placed in a bin in the rolling cart on the pool deck. It will be kept for 30 days and then, if not claimed, donated to the school district aquatics programs or possibly thrown out. During practice, swimmers can keep personal belongings on the bleachers on the pool deck, or in a locker in the locker room. The locker rooms may be used by other groups and the club is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Swimmers may not leave personal items in the locker room, or at the pool.

## FUNDRAISING

ACWS is a non-profit organization and fundraising efforts are essential in our efforts to keep registration fees affordable. All ACWS members are asked to donate concession items and participate in other team fundraisers.

Fundraising opportunities include: corporate sponsorships, concession stand donations, sub/sandwich sales, dine-Out evenings, team apparel, and others as developed by the Fundraising Coordinator.

## TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

ACWS utilizes the TeamUnify platform for general team management. Please be sure to keep your contact information up to date and log into your account when visiting the team site for full access. TeamUnify also makes a mobile app, OnDeck, which allows for some similar functionality.

We use email, social media, and the OnDeck app to communicate with members. We strive to send a weekly email with timely information and upcoming events. We encourage you to check the OnDeck app and your email account that used to register your swimmer.

The ACWS website is updated on a regular basis with information related to team events, team news items of interests, and team notices. Be sure to check the website frequently for new information and updates.

## REFUND POLICY

Refund/cancellation requests received within two weeks of the first day of full season practice will receive a refund of the paid registration amount less a \$25 cancellation fee.

If a swimmer has to withdraw from the swim season due to illness, injury, or other unexpected event, a pro-rated refund may be offered at the discretion of the board. A doctor's note or other documentation may be required for consideration of a refund.

No refunds are offered during pre-season after the first practice. Refunds are typically not available for pre-ordered equipment, invitationals, and other fees. (Policy adopted September 2023)

## OTHER POLICIES AND WAIVERS

All swimmers must accept and sign the following ACWS policies at the time of registration. Policy documents can be found on the ACWS website.

- Liability Release and Indemnification Form
- Photo/Media Release
- Medical Release