



GOLD *Swimming*

PARENT HANDBOOK



goldswim.com

Table of Contents

COMPETITIVE SWIMMING 101	
Welcome	1
Contact List	2
Why swim	3
Governing Organizations	4
Geographic Structure	4
Seasonal Structure (Short vs. Long Course)	4
Time Standards	4
PARENT ROLE AT GOLD	5
Parent-Athlete Support	5
Guidelines for watching practice	6-7
Parent-Organization Support	8
Volunteering	8
Communication	9
GOLD GROUP PLACEMENT STRUCTURE/ PHILOSOPHY	
10-11 PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS	
Goal & Objectives	12
Practice Facilities	13
Practice Schedules	13
Required Practice Equipment	13
Practice Behavior	13
COMPETING FOR GOLD	14
GOLD's Competition Philosophy	15
Competition Schedule	16
Entering Meets	15
Swim Meet Procedures	16
What to Bring	16
Competition Apparel	17
Competition Suit Policy	17
GOLD POLICIES	18

Welcome to Chattahoochee Gold Swim Team!

Chattahoochee Gold Swim Team offers swimming programs for people of all ages and experience levels. Our mission is to encourage the pursuit of excellence while nurturing a love for the sport of swimming and developing the values and skills for success in life. Gold is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and positive environment for all athletes to grow and appreciate their sport, teammates, and community.

The Parent Handbook is a starting point to help you understand the sport and our club. We encourage your questions and participation. Group parent meetings will be held in September, and you can reach out to us anytime via the provided email addresses. We look forward to your active involvement and enthusiastic support for your swimmer(s) and our organization. Thank you for choosing GOLD!

*Encouraging the pursuit of excellence while
nurturing a love for the sport of swimming and
developing the values and skills for success in life*

Who to contact with questions:

Mt. View

Owner: Mike Wardwell (mikewardwell@goldswim.com)
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Team mailing address: Chattahoochee Gold, P.O. Box 387, Woodstock, GA 30189

“WHY SWIM?”

Physical Development:

Swimming is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth by many physicians. Why do doctors like it so much? Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, which is the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports, an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of this meaningful exercise. Age group swim teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills. Swimming uses all of the body's major muscle groups, allowing proportional muscular development. No other sport does this as well. Swimming also enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it), by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.

Intellectual Development:

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally, their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self-image.

Social Development:

Swimming provides an excellent balance between team sports and individual sports. The individual aspect is obvious...it's the swimmer against the clock....his/her training, ability and attitude will determine the result. The team aspect is just as important in the experience. Working with other swimmers, traveling with them, winning, and losing with them, are all part of the team experience.

Personal Development:

Unlike many sports, where at the end of the tournament there is one winner and many losers, age group swimming focuses as much on beating your best previous time as it does on beating the swimmer in the next lane. This gives the opportunity for each swimmer in a meet to be a winner, to feel good about themselves and to develop good self-esteem. Our philosophy is to help the swimmer be the best all around that they can be in their long term development, not just to be fast

COMPETITIVE SWIMMING 101

Governing Organizations

USA Swimming:

USA Swimming is the national governing body for swimming. Participants in the GOLD year-round competitive swim programs must be members of this organization.

Membership, renewed in the fall of each year, provides limited, co-benefit accident and liability insurance for swimmers participating in supervised workouts and swim meets. Visit www.usaswimming.org for more information, including rules, current time standards, and other resources for parents and swimmers.

Georgia Swimming: Georgia Swimming (GASI) is a USA Swimming member and the Local Swim Committee (LSC) that governs our geographic area. Its responsibilities include processing memberships, scheduling competitions, training /certification of officials, athlete recognition programs, and assembling the GASI Zone Team. Visit www.gaswim.org for more information.

Geographic Structure

USA Swimming divides the country into four zones: Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern. Gold, is part of Georgia Swimming and competes in the Southern Zone.

Seasonal Structure (Short vs. Long Course)

Swimming is a year-round sport divided into two seasons, with championship-level meets held at the end of each season.

The short course season lasts from August through March. All practices and meets are typically conducted in 25-yard pools. The United States is the only country that competes in 25-yard pools. High school and collegiate competitions are conducted in the 25-yard format and are considered a winter sport.

The long course season lasts from April through July. Most swim meets are conducted in 50-meter pools. All international competition takes place in either 25-meter or 50-meter pools. The Olympics are always held in a 50-meter pool.

Time Standards

USA Swimming establishes motivational time standards for each age group every four years.

The current time standards are available on USA Swimming's website here:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/times/time-standards>

Time standards and age determine the type of meet in which a swimmer may participate. Age group standards progress from (slower to faster) B, BB, A, AA, AAA, and AAAA. In addition, there are specific time standards for various championship meets. Your swimmer(s) coach will let you know which meets you should be looking at.

PARENT ROLE AT GOLD

Parent-Athlete Support

It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's role to provide love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help a young athlete feel positive about him/herself. Be the person that your swimmer can look to for constant, positive reinforcement.

Strive to provide your swimmer with the basic opportunities s/he needs to have a positive swimming experience. Make sure your swimmer regularly attends practice and swim meets.

Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of skill presentation. Some swimmers take more time to learn; this requires patience on the part of the coach and the parent, both of whom must remember that the swimmer's ultimate swimming potential may be as great or greater than that of a faster learner.

Avoid comparing the skill, courage, determination, attitude, performance, or improvement of your swimmer to other swimmers. Swimmers mature physiologically and psychologically at different ages; the weakest swimmer in a practice group this year could be leading practices in the future.

The etymology of the word "competition" goes back to the Latin words "com" and "petere," which mean "together to strive." It is important to teach young swimmers to compete with, not against others, and to use competition to help them strive to be their own best selves.

*"Your child's success or lack of success in sports does not indicate what kind of parent you are. But, having an athlete that is coachable, respectful, a great teammate, mentally tough, resilient and tries their best, **IS** a direct reflection of your parenting "*

Guidelines for Watching Practice

Parents if you like to watch practice from time to time. Here are some important guidelines when observing practice.

First, young swimmers want parental approval more than anything in the world. For swimmers to learn as much as possible during practice, it is important that the coaches have each swimmers's undivided attention. Communicating with your swimmer in any manner during practice will distract your swimmer as well as their teammates when being provided feedback or instructions from their coach.

Second, we ask you to communicate with a coach, if it is a yes or no answer 15 minutes before the beginning of practice or once the coach ends their practice and all swimmers are out of the pool safely. If you need to communicate with a coach on a subject that requires more than a simple answer, please schedule an appointment with the coach so it can be answered appropriately.

Third, our coaches spend a considerable amount of time planning weekly training sessions for each of their practice groups. Every training set or instructional drill has a purpose. One practice and/or practice set often builds on another during each week. Remember, what you may be seeing is a snapshot of the bigger progression; you may not understand the purpose of what the swimmers are doing on any given day. Take your child's lead and having a good/positive conversation on the ride home may help you better understand and may also provide a stronger relationship that can encourage your swimmer to continue to grow in the sport.

Lastly, to help continue to build positive relationship moments with your swimmer, when observing practice, there should be no video recording or filming of any kind. Please do not coach

Peachtree City on deck Specifics

To comply with USA Swimming Insurance coverage, anyone on the pool deck must be a USA Swimming member. USA Swimming's Insurance is void if the rules are not followed. Practice at Kedron should be observed in the following locations:

- *When the bubble is down*
 - *You may stay in the shade as long as you are not in front of the GOLD table and are not blocking the lifeguard's path to the pool. This includes staying away from the guard room entrance.*
 - *You may also sit against the fence on the far side of the pool (opposite from the parking lot.). Please leave the parking lot side of the pool for the swimmers.*
 - *When the bubble is up*
 - *Chairs will be available on the far side of the pool (opposite from the parking lot.). Please leave the parking lot side of the pool for the swimmers.*
 - *Chairs must be kept away from the edge of the pool. Please leave chairs against the side of the bubble.*
 - *The outdoor picnic tables are always available, weather permitting.*

Peachtree city practices primarily out of the Kedron Aquatic Center, but we occasionally use one of the local summer league pools. We do not own a facility, and we rent all the water we use. Please always be respectful and help us maintain positive relationships with these important partners. Any concerns about any facility should be directed to Denise (denisesturman@goldswim.com) and not to the facility.

Note: Please make sure siblings are safe, courteous, and well-behaved. Also, please make sure the area is clean before leaving. We rent Kedron and any inappropriate behavior could lead to us looking for a new home.

Parent-Organization Support

Be a **G.R.E.A.T.** parent

G - Get involved! Volunteer to do more than just be a timer at meets. If you are not sure what you might want to do, email your respective Head Site Coach, and they will help get you headed in the right direction!

R - Read the emails! Emails will come from coaches, the business/billing office, coaches, and others. They would not be emailing if it was not important for the parents to know!

E - Educate yourself. Ask questions. Make friends with other parents. Use the substantial online resources available to you:

Gold Website	www.goldswim.com
Captyn website	https://goldswim.captyn.com/
Georgia Swimming	www.gaswim.org
USA Swimming	www.usaswimming.org

A - Attend meetings and ask questions. Coaches' meetings, parent meetings, parent coffees, college information meetings, to name a few.

T - Think fun and be positive! Your child will enjoy the sport so much more if it is fun! Yes, they will lost their goggles three times in the first two months, and yes, there will be moments when they are frustrated or tired, but if you do all you can as a parent to make it fun you will ALL have a better time!

Volunteering

GOLD hosts several competitions throughout the year to provide our athletes opportunities to hone their skills with the expense and inconvenience of travel. We encourage all Gold families to pitch in and sign up occasionally as many hands make light work, and it's a way to get connected to our community.

Communication

Great communication between athletes, parents, and coaches is one key to a successful experience in the GOLD program. GOLD lead coaches work to communicate all the information you need for you and your swimmer to be in the know, have a good experience, and be excited about our program and all the opportunities we offer. There are several critical paths that coaches can communicate with you, aside from direct communications and interactions:

- Your child's lead coach will send weekly emails that are your primary source of information. Please read them carefully. You will also be invited to a seasonal parent meeting at the beginning of short and long course seasons.
- You will receive team emails to help keep you informed on GOLD opportunities and items of interest. These are often from the head coach and contain program-wide information.
- Join the GOLD Facebook group for your pool! This is a private group (you will need to answer a couple of questions to gain access), and we use this to post weather updates and share interesting articles/videos. It is also a great place to look to other families with questions (e.g looking for a carpool.)

We encourage you to communicate with your coach. It is important that parents ask questions and engage in the process to support their swimmer by developing a healthy relationship with their swimmer's lead coach. This starts with communication. When you have a specific question or concern regarding your swimmer, please email your swimmer's lead coach directly. Most questions are answered quickly at this level. Staff roles and email addresses are listed above and on the website, and you may look for a response within 24 hours of reaching out with either a direct answer or a time to meet for further discussion.

If you need to set up a meeting with your coach, please set up a time for a face-to-face meeting by emailing them. Please note it is up to the coach if they wish to share their phone number.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

Goals & Objectives

GOLD strives for continuity and developmental progression throughout our program.

White

FUNDamentals

These groups focus on establishing a strong foundation of skills and techniques in a fun environment that encourages continued participation in the sport. Athletes and parents are introduced to competitive meets in a family-friendly atmosphere. Swimmers may have opportunities to qualify for state-level competitions.

Yellow

Learn to practice

In the Gold and Gold Advance groups, GOLD athletes will build on the fundamental skills and techniques taught in Silver and Silver Advance. They will progress to an advanced level of learning that requires implementing specific skills in practice sets. Establishing good habits in a practice setting translates to better performances at meets, as well as long term development in the sport of swimming. These athletes will be led towards [IMX events](#) to promote and reward versatility in age group swimming as they compete at the local, state, and possibly regional levels.

Black

Practice to compete

These groups, GOLD athletes' focus broadens substantially. Swimmers learn about the effect their decisions and behavior outside of the pool have on their performance in the pool. Athletes continue to build on good practice habits with progressive skills, drills, and a variety of techniques, working to challenge themselves and prepare for the senior level. These swimmers will compete at the local, state, and possibly regional levels. Competing at the highest level meet they are qualified for starts to become a priority to give them a glimpse of their future swimming experiences.

Senior 2, Senior 1 & National:

Compete to excel

At this level, GOLD athletes continue to learn and be taught progressively, but emphasis is placed on taking ownership of their individual goals and the path to achievement. Swimmers will be introduced to collegiate opportunities, mentored through goal setting, and encouraged to be positive role models for the younger age group swimmers.

Our Group Structure: Built for Progression

Over time, our sport has evolved. Training methods have improved, expectations have changed, and swimmers are developing at different rates than they did even 10–15 years ago. As a program, we've continued to grow alongside that.

This group structure is a natural evolution of what we've done in the past—designed to better support each swimmer at every stage of their development while maintaining the standard of coaching our families expect.

The goal is simple:

Create clear, appropriate training environments that allow every swimmer to progress at their own pace.

How the Structure Works

Our groups are organized by both age and development:

- * Elementary School (10 & Under): White 1, White 2, White 3
- * Middle School (11–12): Yellow 1, Yellow 2, Yellow 3
- * Middle School (13–14): Black 1, Black 2, Black 3
- * High School (15 & Over): National, Senior 1, Senior 2, Senior 3

Within each level, the groups are designed to narrow the range of ability and experience so coaches can be more focused and intentional in how they train and develop swimmers.

This allows us to meet swimmers where they are—whether they are just getting started or preparing for high-level competition.

How Placement and Movement Work

Group placement is not based on a single factor, and it is not automatic based on age or time in the program.

We evaluate swimmers using a combination of:

- * Attendance and consistency
- * Developmental maturity (both physical and mental)
- * Performance progression
- * USA Swimming Power Points

Most importantly, placement and movement are guided by coach evaluation and judgment, with the goal of putting each swimmer in the environment where they will improve the most.

Movement between groups can happen at different times for different swimmers. There is no fixed timeline, and progress is not linear for everyone.

A Simple Way to Understand Power Points

USA Swimming Power Points are a tool we use to help measure performance across different events and age groups.

In simple terms, they take a swimmer's time and compare it to national standards. The faster and more competitive the time, the higher the score.

This allows us to:

- * Compare performances across different strokes and distances
- * Track improvement over time
- * Better understand where a swimmer fits within their peer group nationally

Power Points are one piece of the puzzle, not the sole decision-maker

Expectations at Higher Levels

As swimmers move into more advanced groups, expectations increase—especially in areas like attendance and training consistency.

- * Black 1: ~80% attendance expectation
- * Senior 1: ~85% attendance expectation
- * National: ~90% attendance expectation

These expectations reflect the level of commitment needed to succeed at those levels and are part of preparing swimmers for higher-level competition.

What This Means for Your Swimmer

Every group in our program is intentional. Each one serves a purpose in the long-term development of the athlete.

This structure is not about labeling swimmers—it's about placing them in the right environment to succeed right now, while building toward what's next.

Progress will look different for every swimmer. Our job is to guide that process, challenge them appropriately, and help them continue moving forward.

Practice Conduct Rules

Swim practice is a time for the swimmer to learn how to improve strokes and turns, get to know new friends, and build self confidence. All swimmers must follow these rules in order to ensure a smoothly run practice. One key to a team's success is that all swimmers respect one another and their coaches. The 3 rules are as follows:

1. No talking when the coach is talking
2. Look and listen
3. Do not get out of the pool without asking first

Practice Schedules:

Schedules will be available on the website under the resources section and on the calendar. Coaches will send weekly emails to the families in each practice group detailing any updates or changes. If you have questions, please contact your coach. Keep in mind that the more consistent practice is attended, the more improvement swimmers will see.

Inclement Weather:


GOLD uses several different facilities, and each has its own inclement weather policy. Coaches will notify families of changes to the practice schedule by email. Last-minute weather changes will also be posted on the Facebook page.

Required Practice Equipment

All practice equipment can be purchased through our Swim Vendor- Reddiset

 **Order equipment online:** [Reddiset Swim Shop](#)

 **Reddiset Swim Shop Contact Info**

 **470-845-7565**

 **hello@reddiset.com**

Please mark all equipment with your swimmer's name.

COMPETING FOR GOLD

GOLD's Competition Philosophy

In preparing for your swimmer's meets, the following are some basic fundamentals of competition that GOLD coaches stress.

- 1. Each swimmer should compete with him or herself. Improving one's time and/or technique is more beneficial than winning a ribbon or medal.**
- 2. Besides earning best times, the coaches praise swimmers for working on technique and/or racing strategies. Swimmers may not improve their time when trying something new (i.e. flip turns, underwater dolphin kicks, etc.), but if a swimmer continues the skill or technique, the time will improve more in the long run.**
- 3. Swimmers are taught to set realistic goals, and as they age, they are taught to relate their practice performance to their goal times.**
- 4. The coaching staff encourages age-group swimmers to compete in every event they are eligible for. This helps to promote versatility since swimmers are continuously switching best events as they grow, mature, and change body shapes and sizes.**
- 5. Sportsmanship is a MUST at GOLD. We expect all swimmers, parents, and coaches to respect the officials, competitors, and the facilities we use. We also want swimmers to encourage and support their teammates.**
- 6. SUCCESS = Improving one's own best self.**

Competition Schedule

The competition schedule is located under meets on the website:

<https://goldswim.captyn.com/>

7. Besides ribbons and medals awarded at swim meets, swimmers are also awarded at Gold

- a. Iron Man award- swim all the races for your age group
- b. Whopper Dropper- male and female swimmer in each group who has the best time drop per meet.
- c. Speeding Tickets- every time a swimmer drops time in an event at a meet they receive a speeding ticket. Swimmers collect these tickets and can cash them in at the speed shop at the award ceremony at the end of the season.

Entering Meets

GOLD families are required to sign up for competitions through their account. Coaches will notify families when the event becomes available for sign up and the deadline for registering their swimmer.

The process to indicate your swimmer will be able to participate in the meet (or any portion of the meet) is as follows:

1. Go to www.goldswim.com and sign in to your account. (<https://goldswim.captyn.com/>)
2. Upcoming Events will be listed at the top saying your swimmers needs attention, click on edit commitment for your child. (Please note the meet will say when registration opens and closes. You will not be able to register outside this time period.)
3. Click on your athlete, and you will be given a drop-down menu that says “No, decline” or “Yes, commit.” Select the appropriate option.
4. If you would like to leave a message, click on the messages tab. This is a good place to let your coach know if you won't be attending on a certain day.
5. You select the sessions you want to attend and the Coach will enter the events
6. You can also sign up for any Volunteer opportunities at the same time.

Once the deadline has passed, you will NOT be able to commit your swimmer. At this time, the entries are processed. Declaring for a meet will turn off at midnight on the day of the deadline. All meet fees will be billed through your account. We will create an invoice the day before the meet starts, and all billing will be processed the Monday after the meet. Once the entry deadline has passed, there will be no refunds if a swimmer pulls out of the meet.

Swim Meet Procedures

1. Arrive at the pool 15-20 minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time, and locate the GOLD team area where all team members sit. The meet warm-up time will be listed in the meet information provided by your coach, as well as within the event listing on Commit.
2. The GOLD coaching staff always conducts warm-ups. It is very important for all swimmers to warm up with the team.
3. All GOLD swimmers must wear their SPEEDO brand team suit with Gold Logo and are required to wear a GOLD team cap during both warmups and actual competition. Swimmers also are asked to wear their team t-shirts. All other team apparel is optional but encouraged to promote team unity and pride.
4. Each swimmer is responsible for knowing which events s/he is swimming and for being on time to swim his/her event. It is customary to write event numbers, heat, and lane assignments on a swimmer's hand, arm, or leg. You can get that information by purchasing a heat sheet.
5. At the conclusion of each race, younger swimmers are expected to go immediately to their coach. Older swimmers should warm down first, if possible, and then see their coach. The coach discusses the race with each swimmer individually and gives positive comments concerning splits, stroke technique, and race strategy.
6. Electronic timing is used at most meets. Generally, the official time is the one recorded in the computer when the swimmer touches the touch pad. This time appears on the scoreboard; however, if a swimmer misses the touchpad, or if there is a mechanical failure, various back-up times may be used. The timing and score keeping personnel analyze all ties to determine the official times, which are then posted as final results.
7. According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed in the immediate competition venue unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet should be referred to the GOLD coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
8. In between races, swimmers are asked to rest and stay warm. All energy should be stored up and used in competition. Stay hydrated and eat light, nutritious snacks as needed.
9. It is very important that parents and/or swimmers check with the coaching staff before leaving the swim meet to ensure that their swimmer has not been placed on a relay.

What to Bring

1. Team SPEEDO brand swimsuit
2. Two team swim caps
3. Two pairs of goggles
4. GOLD team t-shirts

5. Two towels (minimum)
6. Old blanket or sleeping bag
7. Quiet games or books
8. Food—nutritious snacks
9. Water bottle

Be sure to put your swimmer's name on all belongings and equipment. Please do not hesitate to ask any veteran parent on the team for help or information.

Competition Apparel

Championship Meets

Coaches, not swimmers, determine which meet is considered correct for wearing Tech Suits for each swimmer. The exception being the 11-12 years age group, where the Championship meet is determined by the LSC. Team caps (black Chattahoochee Gold Cap) should be worn at championship level meets, with a few coach dictated exceptions (example dome caps).

Approved championship swimwear varies by Age Group and ability as follows:

10 and under:

At this age the coaches at Gold do not feel that wearing a Tech suit justifies the cost. Swimmers at this age would not benefit enough from an advanced tech suit. These swimmers only need their black Speedo with gold logo team suit. This is in accordance to USA Swimming guidelines as well.

11-12:

In addition to the black team suit mentioned above this age group can wear, to championship meets and when their coach feels it is ok. Female: the Speedo Power Plus Kneeskin, Vanquisher Kneeskin and Aquablade Recordbreaker, LZR Pro Recordbreaker W/Comfort Strap (Not Kneeskin) and Male: Aquablade Jammer, Aquablade brief, Vanquisher Jammer. Again, only when their coach approves wearing such a suit for Championship Meets.

13 and older:

In addition to the team suit and the suits mentioned above, these swimmers can wear any color Speedo Tech suit when their Coach approves of the usage. Please ask their coaches for approval before purchasing any Tech suit.

Please do not purchase these expensive suits without the coaches approval, we do not want

you to waste your money on the wrong suit. As of 9/2025 Tech suits can be any color.

GOLD Policies

All GOLD members must adhere to the following policies and waivers on the our website in the Parent resources section.

- GOLD Code of Conduct and Travel Policies
- GOLD Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy
- GOLD Safe Sport Policy and Bullying Action Plan
- GOLD Medical Waiver

Violations of team policies posted may result in suspension or termination of GOLD membership. These policies and releases have been created to ensure the safety of GOLD members and staff and promote the betterment of GOLD as an organization.

As always, we look forward to being a part of your family's swimming journey here at Chattahoochee Gold!

