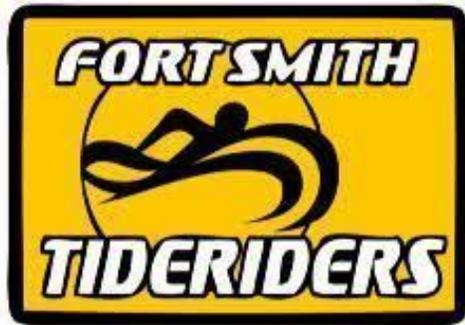


# Fort Smith Tideriders



## Swim Team Parent Information Packet

## USA Swimming

The Fort Smith Tideriders Age-Group swim team is affiliated with USA Swimming, which is a national governing body responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements the policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information, and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition. USA Swimming is organized into an international division, national division, zones, and local swimming committees. Tideriders are in the central zone and its local swimming committee is Arkansas Swimming, Inc.

- **Swim Seasons:** USA Swimming divides the swim year into two seasons. The winter or “short course” season runs from early October to late March. The meets are typically held in a 25-yard pool. The summer or “long course” season runs from early April to mid-August. These meets are generally held in 50-meter pools (Olympic size).

### **Short Course Season** (September - March):

USA Swimming Short Course season coincides with the school year. Swim meets begin in the fall and conclude at the beginning of the spring (typically the week of Spring Break). Short Course season has a longer training period and offers more meets than Long Course. Since the season is long, we emphasize base and sprint training in order to achieve best times at the Championship meets. The most important training occurs between the end of November through New Year.

### **Long Course Season** (April - July):

USA Swimming Long Course season opens around the end of April and concludes at the end of July. Long course is the opposite of short course season, starting and ending quickly. With summer vacations, camps, other opportunities, it is important that swimmers attend meets early in the season, as well as during our home Recordsetter Invitational.

## High School Swimming

The Fort Smith Public Schools (FSPS) offers swimming at the secondary level beginning at Middle School and ending student’s senior year of High School. High School Swimming is fun, and the season spans from Oct-Feb.

Out of district schools train and travel with FSPS students to High School Swim meets. This is unique and allows for optimal training for schools around the River Valley. Due to different districts and divisions, swimmers will represent their schools at their school’s designated Conference meets and State Championships.

*Example:* Fort Smith Northside and Fort Smith Southside are both in the 6A division, but Northside is in the Central conference while Southside is in the West conference. Van Buren and Alma are both in the 5A West division.

### **Basic Competitive Swimming Information**

**Competitive Events:** The four competitive strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. Events are held in all the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age group of the swimmer. In addition, the individual medley (IM) events require the competitor to swim all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. Relays: Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle (medley relay).

**Classifications:** The typical age group classifications recognized by USA Swimming are 8- Under, 10-Under, 11-12, 13-14, and Senior. In addition, many swim meets offer Open events, where any age swimmer can swim in the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmer's age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmers age for the entire meet.

**Levels of Achievement:** Within each age group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as "C" swimmers. As they improve, they advance from "C" to "BB", "B", "A", "AA", "AAA", and ultimately "AAAA". The times required for each ability level are published each year by USA Swimming ([www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)).

**2021-2024 USA Swimming Motivational Time Standards:**

<https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/timesdocuments/records/age-groups2024-agmts.pdf>

**Swim Meet Format:** There are several different formats of swim meets that Tideriders participate in. Previous meet locations have included the following: Fayetteville, Bentonville, Little Rock, Benton, Conway, Tulsa, and Joplin.

- Single Session: Swimmer competes in a single session meet (one day) Example: Friday Night Races
- Multi Session: Meet exceeds one session and may be a multi-day event. Example: 12 & under AM session / 13 & over PM session (Saturday & Sunday)
- Prelim / Final: Multi session meet in which swimmers who qualify (top 8 or 16) advance to compete in finals session. Depending on age group there may be an 'A' final (1-8) as well as a 'B' Final (9-16).

*Examples:*

- 14 & Under State Championship\*
  - 'BB' Times
- Senior State Championships
  - 'BB' Times (slightly faster)
- NWAA Winter Invite\*
  - 'B' Times
- Long Course State Championship\*
  - 'BB' Times
- Region VIII Sectional Champs\*
  - Sectionals Qualifying Times
- Central Zone Champs\*
  - 'AAA' Times
- Junior / Senior National Championships\*
  - 'AAAA' Times

**Levels of competition:**

- Local - Northwest Arkansas and the River Valley Area / Central Arkansas
- State - Arkansas State Championships (14 & under / Senior State / Long Course State)
- Regional - Region VIII Sectional Championships / Long Course Zones (Team Arkansas)
- National - Junior National / Senior National Championships
- Lessons: If you wish to schedule a private lesson with David, Nicole, or myself let us know. Rate and availability may vary by coach.
- Clinics: Offered at the beginning of each season (August & May). Covers fundamentals of starts, turns, and stroke technique. Details will be communicated via email.

**Common Swimming Terms:**

Scratch - Removal of swimmer from certain events or entirety of meet.

Deck entry - Entry or entries for swimmer who had not previously been entered and sent with rest of team. This is done day of the meet at the clerk of course before meet session commences.

Positive Check In - The process of checking in a swimmer who is scheduled to swim an event for that session. (Usually distance events 400 IM, 500, 1650)

Disqualification (DQ) - An infraction by the swimmer in event being swum. Ex. False start, wrong stroke or kick, mistakes on turns, etc.

Heat Sheet / Program - This is where you find out where your swimmer is swimming. Which event, heat, as well as lane assignment. These can be purchased and or downloaded.

\*Everything needed to know about a meet can be found in the Meet Information.

## **FSTR Objectives**

### **Tideriders Goals:**

Our goal is to attend one meet per month as a team. Swimmers should diversify their races, try new events (distance events, 400 IM, 200's stroke), and plan accordingly what meets you wish to attend. Both long course and short course seasons conclude with Championship swim meets. These are meets that require swimmers to adhere to qualifying times. We recommend setting season goals (such as improve times, qualify for the State Meet, try new events, etc.), regular practice attendance and attending swim meets. It is our goal as a team to have as many swimmers as possible qualified for these Championship swim meets.

Attending more meets does not directly equate with more best times, it is imperative that hard work be done beforehand in practice. Often, we see swimmers who attend as many meets as possible in hopes for instant improvement. This is typically the case in the beginning of the season. As stated earlier, the (short course) season is long and it is important to keep the end (of the season) in mind, focusing on personal goals set at the beginning of the year. Remember, less is more for kids as it is very easy to burn out a child by caring more about the sport than they do.

### **Role as swimmer:**

1. Come to practice.
2. Listen to your coaches.
3. Set specific, achievable, and measurable goals. (Example: drop 5 seconds by the end of the season in the 200 freestyle)
4. Compete every day. Take advantage of the time in practice to make not only yourself but your teammates better.
5. Be coachable - pay attention to detail.

### **Role as parent:**

1. Support and encourage your child. No matter what the outcome is, keep it positive.
2. Teach and educate about personal goals and what it will take to achieve them. Encourage your swimmer to talk to their coach after races to find out what they did well and what they can improve on.
3. If you attend practice please refrain from coaching your child from the deck.

4. Overcoaching (by anyone) is the quickest way to take the joy out of the sport. Nothing is more disheartening to see a kid, proud of his or her performance, be overcriticized for fixable mistakes by a coach or parent.
5. Let your child take ownership of his or her swimming. Encourage them to make goals and work towards them. Remind them it takes patience, discipline, and a lot of work (done in practice) to reach those goals.

### **FSTR Groups and Practices**

The Fort Smith Tideriders swim team is divided into five groups: Fast, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Senior. The Fast group is designed for individuals new to the sport of competitive swimming or for those individuals who do not want to compete. The goal of the Fast group is to establish the basic techniques of swimming and build enough endurance for the swimmer to progress to the next group. Practice for this group is 30 minutes in length.

Swimmers in the Bronze and Silver groups will be taught all four competitive swim strokes and be introduced to racing starts and turns. The focus will be on stroke development, technique, and endurance. Practices for these groups are typically one hour in length. Swimmers in this group have the option of competing in swim meets and are highly encouraged to participate in home swim meets and conference swim meets. Your child's coach will inform him/her when he/she is ready to move from the beginner group to the advanced group.

The Gold and Senior groups are designed for those individuals who have the desire to advance competitively. Swimmers will continue to work on stroke technique, with the focus on conditioning and competitive skills. Practices for this group are typically one and a half hours long with the option of dryland exercises prior to practice. Swimmers in this group are expected to participate in swim meets and championship meets in which they qualify.

#### ***2022 Summer Practice Times (AM)***

**Gold & Sr.** 7:30-9 Mon-Fri

**Silver** 9:00-9:45 Mon-Thurs

**Bronze** 9:00-9:45 Mon, Tues, Thurs

**FAST** 9:15-9:45 Mon, Tues, Thurs

#### ***2022 Fall-Spring Practice Times***

**Gold & Sr.** 2:45-4:30 Mon-Fri

**Silver** 4:30-5:15 Mon-Thurs

**Bronze** 4:30-5:15 Mon, Tues, Thurs

**FAST** 4:45-5:15 Mon, Tues, Thurs

**Practice:**

Swimmers build stamina and finetune their technique during practice. Regular practice attendance is necessary for swimmers to progress towards their desired goals. Practice attendance declares intention and level of commitment to the sport.

Swimming is a sport where you get out what you put in. It is important to remember “work still works” and performance tends to lack when the preparation is not there.

\*1-2 practices / week: Enough training to maintain proper technique. Lacking in aerobic base.

**Swimmer 12& Under / BRONZE and SILVER**

- 3-4 practices / week: Technical aspects of the four stroke disciplines are sharpened, aerobic base starting to develop.

**High School Swimmers / SILVER and GOLD**

- 5-7 practices / week: Development of baseline aerobic capacity. Stroke technique and turns become more ‘natural’. Minimum required practice number to be competitive at the state level.

\*Morning sessions are encouraged for this level and up.

**GOLD and SENIOR**

- 8+ practices / week: At this level, not all practice sessions are done in the water. Land, weight / resistance training, agilities, flexibility all play an important role.
- Morning sessions at the pool are required when offered for this level. Swimmers at this level are striving to be competitive at the regional level.

**Morning Practice:**

Morning sessions commence early to mid-October and last throughout the season. Expect a challenging 1-1.5-hour long session that is supplemental to the required afternoon practice. It is imperative that committed swimmers at the Senior level attend these sessions and arrive ON TIME. Practice time and schedule will be communicated via email.

## Equipment

**Suits:** Swimmers can wear any suit to practices. Swimmers who plan on competing in swim meets are encouraged to purchase a team suit but it is not a requirement.

**Caps and Goggles:** Goggles are required for all swimmers at both practice and meets. Caps are recommended for girls and preferable for boys. FSTR team caps will be available for purchase from Coaches.

**Other:** Fort Smith Tideriders provides training equipment, including kickboards, pull buoys and fins. Other swimming related products, such as parkas, t-shirts, swim bags, etc. may be purchased. Occasionally, a swim team parent will organize a group order.

## FSTR Program Fees

There are several different fees that must be paid before your child(ren) can participate in Tideriders Swimming.

**Registration Fees:** Registration fee varies by group. (FAST - Senior)

**SCAA Fee:** \$12 / Month per family included in the group rate. Goes toward our non-profit organization.

**USA Swimming Registration:** Required for athletes who wish to compete in USA Sanctioned meets. Yearly membership (for 2022) is \$85. This is an annual registration that is separate from any meet or Tiderider fee.

**Meet Fees & Sign-up Procedures:** You select which meet and days you want to attend. Swim meet fees vary depending on the type of meet. Please note that if you fail to register for a swim meet by the deadline, but swim entries and fees have NOT been sent to the host swim team, you may still register and/or cancel (& receive refund/credit). However, once entries and fees have been mailed, NO additions or cancellations will be accepted.