

CRANFORD GATORS SUMMER SWIM TEAM

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CRANFORD GATORS SUMMER SWIM TEAM



The Cranford Gators is an organization run by the township of Cranford Recreation Department and Centennial Avenue Pool and Fitness Center. The Cranford Gators Summer Swim Team is for swimmers ages 5 to 18. This program is a great introduction for those swimmers who want to learn the four competitive strokes, improve athletic ability or stay in shape for a year-round swim team. The program focuses on providing a fun and safe environment where swimmers can learn from a knowledgeable coaching staff while building a love of swimming! The team is part of the New Jersey Swimming and Diving Conference (NJSDC). The Gators are in the A-League, White Division, and information and schedules can be found at www.NJSDC.com.

Parents and Swimmers,

Welcome to the Cranford Gators Summer Swim Team (CGSS). Being part of the Gators Summer Swim Team is more than just swimming. It's about camaraderie, teamwork, learning to set goals, responsibility, volunteerism, respect, honesty, a competitive spirit, and family. Our dedicated coaching staff does an excellent job of developing our swimmers' body, mind, and spirit through training that is rigorous, yet age and ability appropriate, and fun.

COMMUNICATION

In any organization, communication is key. Most problems can be avoided or handled more efficiently if there is clear and timely communication between the involved parties. The Cranford Gators Summer Swim Club encourages open and frequent communication between its parent representatives, coaches, and parents. Most all CGSS communication is handled via e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter. If a member's e-mail address should change, it is up to the member to notify CGSS. We maintain a team website, www.cranfordgators.com. The website is updated with current team news and information. The team also maintains a Facebook page, which is a great way to publicly communicate general questions or see information on upcoming/past events. Finally, the team uses Twitter (@cranfordgators) to communicate real time information such as postponements, schedule changes, etc. It is the quickest way to get the word out in an emergency!

VOLUNTEERING

The Cranford Gators has a well-earned reputation for running efficient (and fun) dual meets thanks to our wonderful volunteers. Thus, it is a requirement of swim team participation that every family assist at home and away meets. We start on time and take advantage of combining events whenever possible to keep the meet moving along smoothly.

We would not be able to host meets without the assistance of our parents. There are numerous ways to help. Below are some of the various jobs that are required to run a successful meet. When more parents help, that means shorter shifts for all. We are happy to train you so don't be afraid to jump in and get your feet wet!

- Timers
- Runners - Home Meets
- Officials
- Scorer
- Ribbon Writer
- Marshaller

TIMERS: Timing is a very easy job. In addition, you have the best possible view of the meet! Timers need to be able to use a stop watch in order to be successful. You clear the time at the start of each race, start the stopwatch when you see the light flash on the starting equipment, and stop the watch when you see any part of the swimmer's body touch the wall. The only difficulty is making sure you're paying attention to the number of yards or meters the current race is. That information is announced prior to the start of the event and is also listed on the lane timer sheet on the timer's clipboard. There is always a Timer's meeting before each meet, and all of the above information is reviewed. Timers make a commitment to the whole meet however, this often changes if we get more parents to work as Timers (splitting shifts in half).

RUNNERS: The Runner takes the timing sheets from the Timers after each EVENT and the event slips from the Officials. Please make sure you check with the officials on the sides of the pool. Those timing sheets are taken to the scorer's table.

OFFICIALS: Our officials are essential to running a meet. Officials start each event and watch swimmers to make certain they are performing strokes and turns correctly. It takes a little training, but we have Official Ken to help you out and you get a great view of the meet when you're an official! If you are interested in becoming an official or would like to know more about officiating, contact Ken.

SCORER: Scoring is an important part of the meet the entire reason we are here. If you are good at math or can use a calculator you can score. If you are interested in sitting at the table during meets come and see your parent reps for more information.

RIBBON WRITTER: If you can copy names from a sheet this job is for you! Ribbon writer's sit at the meet table and write ribbons for our team. Ribbon writers are needed for both home and away meets.

MARSHALLER: If you are enthusiastic, organized and love kids, Marshalling is for you. The Marshaller organizes our swimmers aged 10 and under. The swimmers are arranged in order according to lane, heat, and event, and are guided to the blocks (or end of the pool for 8&U relays). Swimmers 11&Over are responsible to get themselves to the blocks. A reminder to swim team parents that the coaches do their best to make sure all the swimmers get to their designated lanes for each event; however, it is the responsibility of the swimmers and their parents get the younger swimmers to the Marshaller. This allows the coaches to focus their time and attention on swimmers in the pool.

SWIM TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT

Some of this goes without saying, but there are some simple rules of etiquette for your swimmers that help make the experience better for everyone on the team: Come to practice. Coming every day isn't mandatory, but it's encouraged. If a swimmer wants to drop time they need to practice.

Sign up for meets on time. A lot of work goes into submitting meet entries. **LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** Numerous reminders are sent via email about deadlines for signing up for meets.

Arrive at the meet on time- this means, get to warm-ups on time. In some cases, the very first event is a relay and three other swimmers may be getting very nervous if their teammate hasn't arrived by the time the meet starts.

Let the coaches know in advance if you're going to be unable to participate in a meet you signed up for or are going to need to leave early.

Attend the appropriate age group practice. If you have more than one child swimming, this may mean dropping off and picking up kids at different times.

EVERYTHING ELSE A PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW: STAY INFORMED

The primary method of communicating with parents is via email so make sure that Team Parent Reps have your email address. The other methods of communication are our website, www.cranfordgators.com, Twitter, and Facebook. In the event of inclement weather, notice will be posted there on whether or not practice will be held. Each year a couple parents take on the task of serving as 'team reps'. They organize team events and socials and make sure that everything is running smoothly so that the coaches can focus on coaching!

ATTEND MEETS:

There are 8 dual meets each swim season. Of the 8 meets, four meets are Home meets, meaning they are hosted in Cranford. We also have 2 bye weeks.

It doesn't take long to catch on to how meets run, but here are some tips to help make it a little smoother.

The concessions area is funded with donations from swim parents. Bring money! Your swimmer will undoubtedly find things at the concessions they'd like.

Parents are not allowed behind the blocks (unless you're a timer which is one reason why you should consider volunteering to be a timer!). Please wait for your child to exit the area. The area around the blocks is very crowded and it needs to be kept clear for swimmer and timer safety. Parents, as long as you make sure that your swimmer makes it to the Marshaller on time, they will get to their assigned lane and the coaches will make sure they swim their race! It really does get crowded here so please help us out and cheer them on from the stands.

IMPORTANT NOTE! You are encouraged and welcome to watch your child swim their event(s). If you need to take a break from the volunteer position you are working, please coordinate with your fellow workers so that the position is not left unattended. When your child is done swimming, please resume your post.

To help your kids remember what events they will be swimming, it is common to write the information on the swimmer's hand. The information is written in the following format:
Event# - Heat # - Lane #

You will see something like this in marker or pen on their arm:

| E | H | L |
|----|---|---|
| 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 17 | 2 | 5 |
| 27 | 1 | 3 |

Don't be alarmed.

HAVE FUN AT TEAM EVENTS:

End of the Season Swim Party

This event you don't want to miss! Traditionally held at the pool the Thursday after conference championships. First, we will host the end of season recognition ceremony which is an opportunity for everyone to relax and congratulate all the swimmers on a job well done. Then we will have the pool to ourselves for a while, and desserts will be served!

GLOSSARY

Blocks The platforms from which the kids enter the pool (optional)

DQ Acronym for Disqualification. Swimmers may be DQ'd for improper stroke, start or turn. They may try to tell you that it requires a trip to the other DQ in town (Dairy Queen).

Event Stroke of the race; Butterfly, Breaststroke, Backstroke, etc.

Heat Is the order in which the swimmer is placed in the event

Heat Sheet Is the time line of the meet. It tells the swimmers what events they are swimming an in what order.

IM Individual Medley. The swimmer will swim EACH of the 4 strokes in one event.

Medley relay Relay event with 4 swimmers where each swimmer does a different stroke in the following order: Back, Breast, Fly, Free.

Mini-Minnows This meet is open to swimmers 9 and under only! It is a great team event with kids from all over Central/Northern NJ. Event winners get a goldfish!

Staging Getting ready to swim. Younger swimmers will "stage" together so that they are assured to be in the correct lane.

Roycefield Sprints This meet open to all swimmers in every age group. All swims are 25 yards. Each team is given space where swimmers can hang out when they're not swimming. Swimmers can bring sleeping bags, decks of cards, etc., and parents can bring bag chairs, tents, and coolers.

A-League Championships To qualify for participation in A-League champs each swimmer must compete in a minimum of 4 dual meets during the season. Individual events are held on Friday night and Saturday morning.

Conference Championships To qualify for participation in Conference Championships swimmers need to have qualifying times please see the attached sheet or visit the NJSDC website. Swimmers finishing in the top 6 in their Events swim in the Finals. The Finals will be on Wednesday evening.