

FAST Dolphins – 2025

Welcome to the Fairfield Area Swim Team! This handbook is designed to provide you with most of the information you will need for a successful season. Please take a few minutes to read it and keep it for reference during the season.

FAST is a volunteer run organization and the active participation of every team family is essential.

Good communication is vital for a successful team. Information is updated regularly on the FAST Facebook site, our team website: <https://fastdolphins.swimtopia.com>, REMIND 101 and via e-mail. Please do not assume that rain will automatically cancel a practice or a meet. However, practices, meets and other events may be cancelled, moved, or postponed due to inclement weather, pool conditions, neighborhood mandates, or other unforeseen circumstances if necessary and will be communicated via aforementioned methods of communications.

Summer Swim League goes very quickly and can seem overwhelming at times. The FAST Dolphins handbook is your essential source of information for all swim season questions. Contact a current board member for additional help.

2025 FAST Board Members

President - Rachel McCann, president@swim4fast.net 832-725-0642

VP of Administration - Faith Robbins, vpadmin@swim4fast.net, 832-312-3838

VP of Volunteers - Maci Rash, volunteers@swim4fast.net 832-465-2238

Treasurer - Ashley Collum, treasurer@swim4fast.net 281-513-4302

Secretary - Cassie Ellinger, secretary@swim4fast.net, 817-832-3788

Team Representative- Dani Thompson, teamrep@swim4fast.net, 713-449-9982

Clerk of Course - James Lewis, clerk@swim4fast.net

Equipment Manager - Kevin Vorhaben, kdvorhaben@gmail.com, 281-620-9730

Social Activities - BrieAnna Barnett, social@swim4fast.net, 713-459-4159

Sponsorships - Nancy Weber, sponsorships@swim4fast.net

FAST Practice

While Cy-Fair ISD is in session, FAST practices will be held at the Central Park Pool (15015 Heath Green Circle, Cypress TX 77433) in the afternoons Tuesday thru Friday. Once Cy-Fair ISD breaks for summer vacation practices will move to the morning hours of Tuesday thru Friday at the Central Park Pool. . Any changes to the practice schedule will be communicated via the aforementioned communication methods.. As with all sports, practice is critical in developing your swimmer's skills. We encourage all swimmers to attend practice each day and should arrive 5-10 minutes prior to their scheduled start time. Your swimmer should be prepared to start practice with dry land exercises and be wearing tennis shoes.

Due to insurance liability all parents must stay off the swim deck during practice times. This also helps our coaches focus on the swimmers. If you have a question or concerns, please see a board member or the coaches before or after practice. You may also contact them via email including the FAST president and FAST Secretary in all coach communications.

Practice Gear

On the day of practice, swimmers should come equipped with a swimsuit (girls must be in a one piece suit while boys maybe in jammers or speedos), goggles, towel, a swim cap and tennis shoes (for dry land). All hair not cropped at the neck must be contained in a swim cap. ***All items must be labeled with the swimmer's name.***

Swim Meets

Event and Relay Sign Up

All swimmers must let the coaches know of meet availability (declaring yes or no) no later than the end of practice on Tuesday prior to the swim meet via the FAST Dolphins website (https://fastdolphins.swimtopia.com/swim_meets). Declaring is done online by clicking the attend/not attend button under specific meet name in the Events section on the FAST Dolphins website (https://fastdolphins.swimtopia.com/swim_meets). **IF YOU DO NOT DECLARE “attending” by the end of practice on Tuesday prior to the meet, YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SWIM IN THAT WEEKS MEET, no exceptions.**

When declaring your swimmer attending, you can choose up to three (3) preferred events by noting them in the notes section of the declarations or by choosing the event options box. Final event assignments are at the sole discretion of the coaching staff. Swimmers may be expected to swim in events that they do not necessarily prefer. Please note in the notes section if the swimmer will not be available for the entire length of the meet as this may affect later events.

Relay Etiquette

It is very important that all swimmers participate in the relays that they are assigned. Unless there is an emergency, backing out of a relay or leaving the meet early when already assigned to a relay may cause a meet disruption or delay. Swimmers who do not participate in the relays they commit to will not be selected for future relays. If your swimmer does not want to be considered for a relay please note that in the notes section when declaring otherwise they will be considered available for relays.

All relays are prepared by the Head Coach and are selected to give the team the best possible chance for accumulating team points. A swimmer’s split time in an event may be considered when preparing relays.

Meet Logistics

On the morning of the meet, please arrive no later than 10 minutes before the close of “circle in”. By circling in/check you are confirming your swimmer is present and available to swim all assigned events. The circle in sheets will be available on a wooden easel in the shape of a dolphin, beside the volunteer sign in tent. After your swimmer is circled in/checked in they need to check in with their age level tent

parent (for swimmers 12 and under). If you are sick the morning of the meet please call the Vice President of Volunteers and/or the Secretary to let them know. Swimmers will be replaced on the relays and scratched from events if they have not circled in prior to the close of circle in.

We will have tents set up for each age group 6 and under through 12 at meets. These tents are for swimmers ONLY. Parents will not be allowed to sit inside the tent unless they are volunteering. We encourage all swimmers under 12 to sit in their age group tent for the meet. Tent Parents are responsible for getting swimmers to the ready bench on time for each event and cannot go searching for a swimmer when an event is called. Please give the tent parent a cell phone number in the event your swimmer needs assistance. If your child does not sit in their age group tent, please make sure they are in their tent when their event is called. If your child is 13 or older, it is the swimmer's responsibility to be in line when their event is called to the Ready Bench.

We strongly encourage parents of young swimmers to sit near their child's age group tent to help tent parents with the supervision of their child and to assist their child in preparing for their event. Young children often need assistance with their cap and goggles. If a swimmer needs to leave their area for any reason, they should check with their tent parent to ensure they have enough time before their next event.

Communications

Each swim family will have a file folder maintained in a file box. The folders will be available at all practices and meets. Ribbons from the previous weeks meet and new information will be placed in the respective files which the swimmers should check weekly. Always check our website and Facebook for up to date information and last minute changes.

Divisional Meet

Divisional meets will be held at the end of the summer swim season. It is expected that all qualified swimmers will participate. ***Swimmers must have attended and participated in 2 dual meets in order to swim at divisionals.*** There will only be one relay team for each relay event at the divisional meet.

Invitational Meets

Invitational meets are fun and exciting meets for swimmers who have qualifying times. It is expected that all swimmers who qualify will participate. These meets generally take place towards the end of the summer swim season and the information on invitational meets will be communicated via the aforementioned communication channels.

Swimmers are responsible for the fees required to participate in invitational meets with the exception of relay participation which is covered by the team. Parents **MUST** volunteer at invitational meets if their children are swimming. This is in addition to your team volunteer hours during the normal season.

Swimmer's Checklist for Meets

1. Team Swimsuit (swimmers will not be allowed to compete in the meet if they are not in an approved team suit, no exceptions).
2. Goggles
3. Team cap (swimmers will not be allowed to compete in the meet if they are not in an approved team cap, no exceptions)
2. At least 2 towels
3. Team T-Shirt
4. SUNSCREEN
5. Water
6. Healthy and nutritious snacks/food, sport drinks, fruit, protein bars
7. Books, Games and activities labeled with the swimmer's name (no slime, small beads or glitter are allowed). Please note any mess made by the swimmer or with the swimmers materials in the tent must be cleaned up by the swimmer prior to leaving the area.
8. Concession stand money, snacks may be available to purchase but is not guaranteed
9. Sharpie Marker to write your child's event numbers on their hand/arm.
10. Extra pair of goggles and extra team cap (these items maybe be available for purchase but is not guaranteed)
12. Something to sit on, i.e. blankets or towels. . There are blue tarps provided by our team that way the swimmer does not sit directly on the grass or concrete. Due to space constraints chairs are not permitted within the tents.

*****Be sure to label ALL of your swimmer's belongings! *****

FAST Volunteers 2023

Unlike other sports that your children may have been involved in, we need a vast majority of parents volunteering some of their time at EVERY meet. Fortunately, all positions are easy and take no previous training (except the officials).

It is important to note that EVERY family must volunteer each week in order for us to continue hosting great meets. We simply cannot run meets without **YOU!!!** Without adequate staffing the meet will not take place and FAST will forfeit all points to the other team.

Your Volunteer Commitment

Each family needs to be ready to volunteer at every meet that your child swims in. If your child is swimming, you are expected to sign up to volunteer. This year we ask that each family work a *minimum* of 7 shifts. **You also will be required to volunteer at any divisional meet or invitational meet that your child attends (this does not go towards your overall team volunteer requirements).** **If you do not meet your volunteer requirements, there will be a \$400 penalty. This fee will be collected via credit card upon acceptance of your registration. Once the volunteer requirements have been met and the season is complete, the fee will be refunded to your credit card account.**

There will be a number of home meets and the more people we have to help out before and after the meet, the quicker we all get to go home!

All high school age children in need of community service hours for their college and scholarship applications should contact the Vice President of Volunteers at volunteers@swim4fast.net. Any hours worked as part of community service does not count towards your family's team volunteer requirement hours. We will happily acknowledge any hours worked during practice and meets with a letter from the FAST board.

Social Events

We have a number of social events throughout the season in order to foster team unity. There may be some volunteer opportunities at these events but is not guaranteed. See the Vice President of Volunteers for more details.

Online Job Sign Up

Volunteer sign-ups take place through the FAST Dolphins website (https://fastdolphins.swimtopia.com/swim_meets). Volunteer sign ups will open on the Sunday prior to each meet. Jobs will be available on a first come, first served basis. Sign-ups will close at midnight on Wednesday prior to the meet. On Thursday, the Vice President of Volunteers will assign open positions to any families with a swimmer participating that is not yet signed up for a volunteer shift. The Vice President of Volunteers will notify these families they have been assigned. If you are unable to fulfill your volunteer duty for any reason, contact the Vice President of Volunteers. Failure to show up for an assigned shift will result in a \$50 fine.

FAST Swim Meet Jobs

Age Group Tent Parents – Take roll before warm-up. Supervise assigned age group tent and assist them to ready bench for each event. This position is from the start of circle in until the end of the shift. Tent parents cannot leave the tent until all swimmers have been picked up or their replacement has arrived. If problems occur contact the Vice President of Volunteers.

Ready Bench Support – Line up swimmers according to the heat sheet and supervise swimmers as they are waiting on the ready bench for their next event.

Meet Runners – Take time sheets to timers and/or data entry station. Post results.

Head Timer – Provide on-deck timing backup during events.

Meet Timers and scribes– Three volunteers per pool lane. Two timers take the swimmers start and finish time while the scribes record swimmers’ results on the sheet and may hand out heat ribbons.

Tent Team – Strong parents to set up and take down tents for meets and transport, set up and take down at away meets. (Pickup trucks and/or trailers are a plus)

Meet Data Entry/Computer – Input swimmers’ statistics into the computers during the meet. Training will be provided.

Ribbons– Apply meet stickers to ribbons and file them in family folders. This volunteer must stay till the completion of the meet in order to receive all necessary paperwork.

Hospitality – Keep coaches coolers full and bring drinks to timers, volunteers, scribes, and officials only.

On Deck Helpers – Help swimmers on deck stay in event order (answers to Ready bench lead).

Concessions - Will assist in the set up, serving food items and tear down (at the completion of the meet) of all concession items. Will answer to the Concession lead.

Officials – Training by NWAL is required for the following jobs. Please contact the FAST Team Rep, if interested.

Stroke and Turn Officials – monitor swimmers’ strokes

Starter – Officiates start of each heat

Referee – On-deck authority over swimmers, officials, starters and other meet personnel

FAST Board Positions – If you are interested in joining the fun, exciting and rewarding job of serving on the FAST Board, feel free to mention your interests to any Executive Board member. We’d love to have you join the group!

FAST Swimming Etiquette and Safety

When swimmers get too comfortable in and around the water, they sometimes forget to be safe. Listed below are some rules to help your child remain safe in this potentially hazardous area.

1. NO RUNNING. The deck is always wet and may be slippery. One verbal warning will be given, upon subsequent violations the swimmer will be removed from the pool deck.
2. NO CHEWING GUM. Do not have anything in your mouth while swimming.
3. NO DIVING EXCEPT UNDER DIRECT SUPERVISION OF COACH. Diving should only be done when practicing starts with a coach. Swimmers should be tested in the deep end to check for proper entrance for safety. Starts should be done in water that is 5 feet or deeper.
4. NO JUMPING IN THE POOL UNLESS GIVEN PERMISSION FROM COACH. The most common injuries among swimmers occur when a swimmer is jumped on. Enter the pool by sitting on the edge and turning to enter.
5. CIRCLE SWIM. This means that during practice, swimmers stay on the right side of the lane, move to the center for a turn, and push off on the other side, near the rope.

6. **PASSING.** Passing is done at walls only. To pass a swimmer, gently touch their foot during the swim so that they know to let you pass at the wall. If at a turning wall, the swimmer that is being passed should not do a flip turn, but should move to the corner of the lane so that the passing swimmer can turn. At the finish wall they should simply get in front of the swimmer they need to pass.

7. **ORDER.** Stay in the same order. If you know a swimmer behind you is faster on certain strokes, let them in front of you on those strokes.

8. **FIVE SECOND INTERVAL.** The next swimmer should leave 5 seconds behind another swimmer, except for backstroke, which is a 10 second interval.

9. **NO DQs!** Swimmers should follow DQ rules when doing full strokes. Sometimes we do drills to increase stroke efficiency. Make sure your child knows the difference.

10. **WEAR SUNSCREEN** whenever swimming outdoors. Swimmers will be in the sun a lot. Tell your child to seek shade whenever possible.

11. **NO SWIMMING IN STORMS.** Listen for the Coach's instructions, get out immediately and seek covered shelter.

F.A.Q's of F.A.S.T.

SKILLS: The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. The combination of all four strokes is called individual medley.

COMPETITION: Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances, depending on the age group and classification. Each swimmer will have a limit to the number of events he or she may swim each day, depending on the meet rules.

- In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn for distances longer than a 25.
- Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.
- Breaststroke is the oldest stroke dating back hundreds of years, requiring simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.
- Butterfly features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissor the legs or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish. The butterfly is the newest stroke and was developed in the early 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.

- Individual Medley, commonly referred to as the IM, features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle
- Medley Relay is where all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle. It is usually swum at the beginning of the meet for the 8 & up swimmers.
- Freestyle Relay consists of four freestylers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the event.

TYPES OF MEETS

During a summer swim season, there are several types of meets:

- Time Trials – this first meet of the season is a FAST-only meet to establish swimmer seed times. Under NWAL rules, **“no swimmer may be entered in a competitive swim event unless entered by fastest time achieved at an official meet or time trial.”** Time Trials are **NOT OPTIONAL**; if your swimmer is not timed, they will not be able to swim dual meets. Time trials are run just like a regular meet to give new swimmers the true meet experience. Time Trials make-ups will be made on a case by case basis.
- Dual Meets – these are the meets we swim against other teams in our Division. The number of meets will depend on the number of teams swimming in our Division that year and/or our ability to schedule out-of-division meets.
- Divisionals – this is an end-of-season meet in which all teams in our division participate to determine a Division Champion. All swimmers are expected to participate; there are no qualifying times however, you must have participated in 2 Dual-Meets.
- Invitationals – these meets require swimmers to meet qualifying times in order to participate. All qualified swimmers are expected to swim in invitational meets. We coordinate registration and provide practices. However, it is the swimmer’s responsibility to register and pay for their events with the exception of relays which are covered by FAST.

RIBBONS & AWARDS

Swimmers receive several types of awards for their accomplishments:

- Place Ribbons--These are awarded to swimmers finishing 1st through 8th place in individual events at home meets, the number of places awarded are determined by the host team and to the 1st – 3rd relay team winners at home meets.
- Personal Best Ribbons--Every swimmer 10 & under who improves over their best time in a given event, may receive a Personal Best Ribbon.
- Heat Ribbons--During the meet, scribes may hand heat ribbons noting the event and swimmers’ time to swimmers age 10 and under from each participating team.

AT THE MEET

Before the Meet Starts:

- Arrive at the pool at least 10 minutes before the scheduled close time of circle in.
- Upon arrival, take your child over to the Dolphin Boards and circle or high-light EVERY event they are entered in. This is extremely important and is our only way to know who is at the meet. These circle-in sheets will come down usually about an hour before the meet begins.
- On the morning of the meet, please arrive no later than 10 minutes before the close of “circle in”. By circling in/check you are confirming your swimmer is present and available to swim all assigned events. The circle in sheets will be available on a wooden easel in the shape of a dolphin, beside the volunteer sign in tent. Swimmers will be replaced on the relays and scratched from events if they have not circled in prior to the close of circle in.
- After your swimmer is circled in/checked in they need to check in with their age level tent parent (for swimmers 12 and under). It is important to let your child know where you will be seated. That way if they need anything from food, sunscreen, restroom breaks or just a good luck hug they will know where to find you.
- Your swimmer will go to warm-ups with their tent parent (for swimmers 12 and under). For swimmers 13+ they should report to the pool for warm up. The Meet Announcer will call the levels to the pool.
- Prior to the start of the meet it is suggested that you write the swimmers event number on their hand with a Sharpie. This helps them remember what events they are swimming in and will aid the tent parent in getting them to the ready bench. It allows older swimmers to know what event number to listen for when their event is called to the ready bench.
- A heat sheet is available on the Swimtopia App for a fee. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of seed time.

Meet Starts:

- A swimmer’s event is called over the loudspeaker. Tent Parents will assemble the swimmers and take them to the ready bench. Swimmers need to bring their caps and goggles with them and listen carefully for their name so they will be placed into the correct lane.
- There are usually at least 4-8 heats of each event.
- After each swim, the swimmer needs to ask the timers (person behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.
- **The swimmer should then go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.**
- The parents then should congratulate their swimmer on how great they did. The Tent parent may or may not take them back to their tent, in the event that the Tent parent has already taken the other swimmers back, the swimmer should make their way back to their tent to relax and wait for their next event. The

swimmer should check in with their Tent parent once they return to the tent so that they are properly accounted for.

- ***VERY IMPORTANT!!*** When a swimmer has completed all of their events, they need to check with the Tent Parent before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. Do not leave without the Tent parent acknowledging your child is leaving in order to maintain security.
- Results are usually posted at the meet or can be found on the Swimtopia app.. Awards/Ribbons are not awarded at the actual meet but will be placed in the swimmers family folder and can be picked up during practice times.

WATCHING YOUR CHILD'S EVENT

When it is time to watch your child swim, you may watch from the deck as long as you stand behind the rope or sit in the spectator bleachers (at away pools or indoor locations). When your child is finished please return to your seating area so that other parents will be able to see their swimmer. Swim meets take time so bring something to occupy your time while you are not cheering or volunteering.

Do not hesitate to reach out to the board if you have questions or concerns, we are all in this together!

See you poolside!