

THT Parent Handbook

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is two-fold: to explain to new members just what the Terre Haute Torpedoes (THT) swim club is and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers, year after year. It should be read by all families so that they may become familiar with the important facts of the club.

The Terre Haute Torpedoes (THT) is a competitive age-group swim club affiliated with [Indiana Swimming](#) and [United States Swimming](#). The club was incorporated in September 1997 as a result of the consolidation of the Terre Haute Area Swim Club (THAC) and the Wabash Valley Swim Club (WVSC). The Torpedoes have grown to one of the top 10 clubs in the state by number of members. Kids, ages five through high school, are encouraged to participate. The Torpedoes utilize the Vigo County Schools Aquatic Center for all practices and swim meets. We are very grateful to the Vigo County School Corporation for their support of our programs and the use of their facilities.

The only requirements to become a Torpedoes member are to be able to swim one length (25 yards) of the pool and have a desire to learn and have fun. By teaching healthy fitness habits, age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health. Swimming is considered by many physicians and pediatricians as the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth. Why do doctors like it so much?

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports, an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swimming teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills.
- Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does as well!
- Swimming 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.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports. Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's swimming programs are still training and racing well into their eighties.

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences.

In addition to this handbook, you will find a great wealth of other team information on the team's website. You will find items such as practice and meet schedules, team news, results, swim links and much more. The team's website is www.terrehautetorpedoes.com. Please bookmark it and check it frequently for the latest team information.

Team Philosophy

When a young person becomes a member of the Terre Haute Torpedoes Swim Club they learn the values of sportsmanship and teamwork. Swimming, through the Terre Haute Torpedoes, provides physical, emotional, and intellectual skills that will last a lifetime.

The mission of the Terre Haute Torpedoes is:

- A. To provide an opportunity for all members to engage in a wholesome, lifesaving, lifetime sport and recreational activity.
- B. To promote physical fitness and good patterns of physical development and to encourage proper conditioning and health habits.
- C. To provide opportunities for social, emotional and educational growth.

The team philosophy is encompassed in the phrase: **“Train Hard Today; Be a Champion Tomorrow”**

Training Hard Today suggests a focus on what is required in reality and the present moment. Working hard on the techniques and maintaining a willingness to learn with an open mind allows for greater personal success in the future. Every goal worth achieving requires personal sacrifice and commitment.

Be a Champion Tomorrow signifies the reward of future endeavors and a goal of personal accomplishment. Not everyone can be an Olympic gold medalist, but champions are defined by their own self-worth. We strive to build that self-image so that every athlete experiences the championship atmosphere.

Parents, Your Athlete Needs You!

To have a successful program, there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress that your athlete makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join the Terre Haute Torpedoes Swim Club and reacquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning Torpedo Swim Club parent.

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children’s athletics. The following guidelines will help you keep your child’s development in the proper perspective and help your child reach his/her full potential as an athlete.

The coach is the Coach! We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces the best results for the athlete when it comes to accomplishing their goals. When parents interfere with the opinions as to how the swimmer should compete or train, it causes considerable, and oftentimes, insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. This type of confusion is a major detriment to the

swimmer accomplishing their goals. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact the coach directly.

The best kind of swimming parent: The coach's job is to motivate and to give constructive feedback to the swimmers. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition.

Twelve and under: Twelve and unders are the most inconsistent swimmers when it comes to performance and this can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and swimmers alike. Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these young swimmers to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer first joins THT, there may be a brief period of time in which he/she appears to be slowing down. This is a result of the added concentration on stroke technique compounded with the body adjusting to the new training demands, but it will pass and lead to faster swimming.

Not every time: Even the very best swimmer will have meets where they do not improve their times. The road to success is full of peaks, valleys, and plateaus in swimming. It is important to keep this in mind and to support your swimmer through the good times and the bad.

THT Parent Responsibilities

Please make every effort to have your swimmer(s) at practice and at meets on time. Encourage good eating and sleeping habits. This is the "hidden training" that you can really help your swimmer with.

1. The greatest contribution you can make to your swimmer(s) progress is to be a loving and supportive parent. On [page 5](#), you will find a reprint of an article titled, "The Ten Commandments for Parents of Athletic Children." It offers some very useful and sound advice on communicating with your swimmer.
2. A large percentage of our annual operating costs are generated from our swim meets that we host. One of your commitments as a parent of an athlete on our team is to sign up for various jobs at these THT sponsored swim meets. We typically host three large meets a year, one in late October, one in mid-February, and another in mid-June. We also host several other small "THT only swimmers" meets throughout the year. Every family is expected to contribute their time. Two (sometimes three) sessions per invitational and 1 session per time trial are required per family. The exact number can sometimes vary from meet to meet, so the exact number of sessions will be posted in the details of each THT home meet listed on the "[Events](#)" section of the website. If a family does not work their required sessions, then a fee of \$100 is charged per missed session. These fees are waived when all job slots have been filled. The meets are our only fundraisers of the year and the money generated from these meets helps to keep our dues lower. More about THT's Job Signup Policy can be found on the "[Job Signup Info](#)" section of our website.
3. The following is a transportation policy that is in effect for all functions related to the THT swim club; " It is hereby the stated policy of the Terre Haute Torpedoes Swim Club, effective immediately and until either revoked or restated by the Board of Directors, that transportation of swimmers and/or coaches to practices, meets or any other event considered to be a club function

by any non-public conveyance, as defined to include privately owned vehicles, is recognized by the Terre Haute Torpedoes Swim Club as a purely private agreement the parties involved can be or will be considered as a party to such arrangement and that any liability in any form arising from such arrangement is purely and completely the responsibility of the parties involved”.

Communication

Torpedo Briefs: The coaching staff publishes a newsletter that is posted on the website and sent to our members via email. The information in this newsletter can range from important meet information to upcoming team functions. Parents are encouraged to look for this newsletter as it may contain important information about upcoming events or changes.

Website: The club has a website at www.terrehautetorpedoes.com that lists all pertinent information about the team and allows for dues to be paid through autopay. The website contains meet results, athletes best times, practice and meet schedules, coaching staff information, general information about our club and the programs that we offer, team records and links to other competitive swimming websites. Postings regarding last-minute changes with meets and practice schedules are also found on our website.

School Intercom: This is a downloadable app that is available for use on your Android and/or Apple mobile devices. The app is a messaging system that allows the coaches to quickly update anyone subscribed to the team about the latest news from THT. It is great for last minute practice changes or messages with time sensitive material.

Problems with the Coach?

When contacting the coaches, please be considerate. The best way to speak with the coaches is to meet with them after practice. The coaching staff is typically at the pool 15-20 minutes after practice anyway, so this is a great time to speak with them. You can also send a note or an email to the coach to get important information to them. Please avoid sending emails that have “feelings” in them. Emails can be interpreted differently by those writing them and those reading them and this can lead to lots of misunderstanding and hurt feelings. Also, before and during practice are not good times to discuss issues with the coach, because these are typically very busy times for the coach. The coaching staff is always willing to speak with the parents regarding their questions and concerns, but it is important to do it at the right time and in the correct manner.

One of the most traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but, in fact, this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with the coach.

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interest of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach’s goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or a training group that can range from 10-300 swimmers. On occasion, an

individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interest of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for an occasional short-term inconvenience.

3. If your child swims primarily with an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask the head age group coach or head coach to join the dialogue as a third party.
4. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen emphatically but encourage them to speak directly with the coach.

The 10 Commandments for Parents of Athletic Children

(Reprinted from The Young Athlete by Bill Burgess included in the Swim Parents Newsletter)

- I. Make sure your child knows that – win or lose, scared or heroic – you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and that you are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life that they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
- II. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/hers competitive attitude, their sportsmanship and their actual skill level.
- III. Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way home, or at the dinner table, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks, and often critical instruction.
- IV. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying their best" to be working to improve his/her skills, times, and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying their best, and for having fun.
- V. Try not to relive your athletic life through your child. You were frightened, you backed off at times, and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, sensitive, free spirit out there in that swim suit who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his/her world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you -- win or lose – he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
- VI. Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc. with your athlete.
- VII. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with the other members of the team, at least within his/her hearing.
- VIII. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.
- IX. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
- X. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, but are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone has their own set of fears. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear of discomfort.

Swim Meets

It is extremely important for swimmers to participate in swim meets. They are great fun and a good confidence builder for children if done in the right way. Realize when a child swims they are racing against their own best time, or to try and achieve a new time standard. Swim meets always have multiple heats so a swimmer is always swimming with others that have similar times. Again, they WILL do better and have more fun if they race against their own best times and not whoever is next to them. Swim meets will be posted on the web with deadlines for entering. Please talk to a coach if you ever have any questions. Be sure to watch for the deadlines, it is next to impossible for coaches to get swimmers entered in a meet after the deadline has passed.

Below is some general information regarding swim meets. If you have any questions or need further details please see a coach, a “veteran” parent, or a board member.

Before a Swim Meet Begins

Always arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time. It is very important to warm up with the team and get some extra coaching guidance before the meet. The team usually sits together near the coaches. Just look for THT apparel.

There are usually sign-ins for the swimmers, which means they need to highlight or cross his/her name off a list of the events they are swimming for that day. The sign-in sheets are posted at different areas at different meets so be sure to ask when you get there. Swimmers are not allowed to swim if they don't sign in. There can be many unhappy people if you drive a long way, warm-up, and then aren't able to race because you forgot to sign in.

After signing in, find the THT coach for the meet. The coaches will rotate and the same ones will not be at every meet, however the coach will always know who is swimming at the meet, their events, and will help in any way they can.

NO parents are allowed on the pool deck, unless they are officiating. Any questions concerning results, an officiating call, or any conduct of a meet should be referred to the coaching staff.

Once a Swim Meet Begins

It is important for each swimmer to know what event and heat he/she is in. Some children write this information on their hand others will simply check posted heat sheets before each race.

Younger swimmers SOMETIMES have a clerk of course to report to. Eleven and older and sometimes the younger kids report behind the starting blocks. Each meet will have an announcement for each event. The swimmer should report wherever they are told at the first call. When in doubt, ask the coach to figure it out!

Swimmers should have their caps and goggles on and ready to swim. The starter will not wait for a swimmer to prepare themselves. If goggles break before or during the race, the swimmer should still race. Please go over this with the swimmer beforehand. Many of our greatest swimmers swam before the era of goggles; it should not be an excuse not to swim.

Since there are multiple heats for each event and everyone is crowded behind the starting blocks, it is a good idea for swimmers to check in with the timers to let the timers know that they are there and ready to swim. Timers have a sheet with the names of the swimmers for each heat for their assigned lane.

After Each Event and at the End of the Swim Meet

The swimmer should go directly to the coach after every swim. The coach will discuss the swim, always giving positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

Please don't yell down at the kids or try to disturb them after they have finished a race. The coaches will coach-parents should be there to encourage and hug.

It is very important to keep hydrated between events. It is also important and fun for the swimmers to refuel and eat light snacks.

After the swimmer's last event they MUST ask for permission from the coach to leave the meet. Relays are usually at the end of the meet and it lets down the rest of the team if a relay is not able to swim because one individual left early. ALWAYS check with the coach before leaving a meet!

If your child swims in a relay, they are expected to stay with their relay team until everyone on their relay finishes swimming. Swimmers should be cheering for their teammates during relays. Relays are one of the most exciting parts of a swim meet.

Supplies for a Swim Meet

- Swimmers obviously need a suit, THT cap, and goggles.
- You will want to take more than one towel, they get wet very quick.
- It is nice to have an old blanket or something to sit on. Typically, there is a lot of down time for the swimmers between their races.
- A sweat suit or sweatshirt is a must have. The kids are usually very cold coming in and out of the water and these items help them to stay warm.
- Games, food, water, sports drinks, anything you would take for a 4-hour trip is appropriate, again there is a lot of down time for the swimmers between races.

Parent Tips for a Swim Meet

- The pool area is usually VERY warm. Dress appropriately.
- Most facilities have bleachers. Some do have room and allow for folding lawn chairs.
- **The most important tip is to be a good parent.** You can make this a great experience or a horrible experience with your actions. Please remember that you are representing THT when you attend meets. Parents are first and foremost there as a positive support network for their child and all the other children swimming. Please remember each child is trying to do well AND have fun and respect every individual in a positive way. If there is ever a negative issue or problem at a meet, see the coach. We want to represent THT and our children in the best way possible; lots of encouragement and love go a long way for any child.