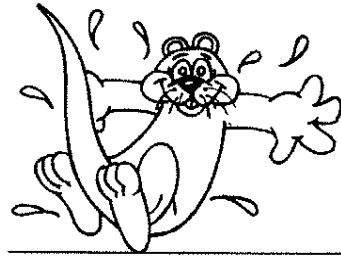


CATO MERIDIAN OTTERS

Swim Team



Handbook



OUR GOALS

Our goal is to teach competitive swimming skills through proper stroke technique for a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime. Although attendance at practice is not mandatory we strongly suggest you attend as many practices as possible.

“OTTERS”

Welcome to the 2008-2009 swim season with the Cato-Meridian Otters. This will be our 11th season as a club and our 9th year as a USS team. Our “home” is the Cato-Meridian Community Recreation Center Pool. Cato-Meridian Otters is a registered team member of the Niagara District of USA Swimming.

USA Swimming

All Cato Meridian Otters members are registered with USA swimming. This is where your \$56 USA Swimming fee goes and it is a requirement for all clubs. Each swimmer receives an ID# in order to swim in the meets. The website for USA Swimming is www.usaswimming.org.

Niagara District

Niagara District covers the western half of New York State, it is one of 59 Local Swimming Committees (LSC) in the country which comprise USA Swimming. The website for Niagara District is www.niagaraswim.org.

COACHING STAFF AND TEAM STRUCTURE

COACHING STAFF

Nothing has greater influence on the quality of children’s sports than the excellence and dedication of the coaching staff. Our coaching staff provides the assurances that the time your children spend in swimming will be quality time. The coaching staff is hired by **Cato-Meridian Community Recreation Center** and reports to the ***Board of Directors of the Cato-Meridian Community Recreation Center***.

The coach’s job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach, or in a lower group.
2. The coaching staff will advise parents and swimmers concerning which meets *Cato-Meridian “Otters” Swim Team* will be attending. *If there are questions about the events a swimmer is swimming or would like to swim, please talk to the coach directly about this.*
3. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff.

Parent note - Our coaches are happy to answer any questions you have. However please do not disturb our coaches during practice as it takes away from their time with the swimmers.

The best way to speak to the coaches is after practice, or sending in a note with your swimmer.

TEAM LEVELS

The *Cato-Meridian Otters* has two levels of swimmers: Blue group and Gold group.

- *The Blue group swimmers may swim two days a week, 75 minutes per day.*
- *The Gold group swimmers may swim up to five days per week, 120 minutes per day.*

It is the coaches' decision as to which training group a swimmer will be placed in. This is based on the performance during the try-out period at the beginning of each season, and prior knowledge of the swimmer's abilities and work ethic.

At each level the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmers.

PRACTICE AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES

No School = No Practice

Our goal is to have each swimmer attend every practice available for his/her team. It's understandable that attending every practice is not possible. There is a direct relationship between quality practice time and improvement in this sport. So, attendance at practice is expected, and will benefit the swimmer.

- *For the swimmer's protection, they should arrive for practice no earlier than 15 minutes prior to workout time. They should also be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their practice is over.*
- Swimmers should be **ON DECK AND READY TO SWIM** five minutes prior to the start of their practice.
- During practice sessions, swimmers are never to leave the pool area without the coach's permission.
- The team has an obligation to act as guests while in the Recreation Center (both swimmers and parents). Every member of the team needs to do everything possible to respect this privilege. Any damages to school property may result in financial liability of the swimmer's parents. Any damage may also result in the swimmer being asked to permanently leave the team.
- Due to our liability coverage with USA swimming, only swimmers and coaches are allowed on deck before, during, and after practice. We ask that all family members wait for their swimmers in the hall outside the pool or up in the balcony area.
- If your swimmer will be missing practice for an extended period of time due to an injury or illness, please notify the coaching staff.

Each swimmers should be prepared with the following properly adjusted training accessories:

Goggles
Caps
Swimsuits
Towels

Water bottle or gatorade

Typically the team practices Mon - Fri 3:30 - 5:00

CMSD AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITY BUS

- A special activity bus program has been implemented for Cato-Meridian Students that are participating in school activities after 3:05pm.
- **Cato-Meridian “Otters” Swim Team has permission to use the school activity bus to secure safe daily arrival home after practice.**
- If swimmers transportation home, an activity bus permission form needs to be completed and returned to the coach.
- If for any reason, a swimmer that uses the bus is not going home on the bus on a particular day, the coach must be notified in advance.
- As in any team sanctioned activity... polite courteous & respectful behavior on the bus is required. Violation of this expectation may mean suspension or termination of riding privileges for the individual and/or possibly the entire team. **THIS IS A PRIVILEGE GRANTED BY CMSD, NOT A RIGHT.**

MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

- Any swimmer who is known to use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco may be subjected to suspension from the team.
- No swimmer is ever permitted to interfere with the progress of another swimmer.
- At any and all team functions, whether practice, meets, or social gathering, **we expect each swimmer to behave in such a way that their actions reflect positively on the team.**
- There will be absolutely no horseplay in the pool, pool deck, or locker room.
- All members of the team, whether parents or swimmers, are expected to protect and improve the excellent reputation of the team.

COMMUNICATION

Website

The Team also has a website: www.cmotters.com which contains information about practice schedules, meet results, and other helpful information. We encourage you to check the website often. *Please note that the website is not updated daily, therefore the most current information will always be sent via email.*

Bulletin Board - check the bulletin board at the Rec Center for announcements and details.
Please feel free to add photos from meets.

Coaches - The Coaches will tell the swimmers of upcoming events
- Handouts extras on the board.

TEAM FEES

- The current team fees, as well as registration forms, for each season are published on the website: www.cmotters.com prior to the start of the season.
- The financial commitment to the *Cato-Meridian “Otters” Swim Team* is for a “Season” of swimming. Once a swimmer commits to the team, fees cannot be refunded. The current team fees are at the discretion of The Cato Meridian Rec Center, the Club fees are the USA Swimming registration fees.
If fees are not current, your swimmer will not be allowed to participate in practice.

MEET ENTRY FEES

At the beginning of the season, the meet calendar for that season will be posted on the team website: www.cmotters.com

You will receive a separate application for each upcoming meet the team is participating in. All applications will be collected prior to the date listed on the Niagara Swimming website- ***no entries will be accepted after the date given by our team for any reason.*** Please pay for your events in cash or with a check made out to *Cato-Meridian Otters*.

Typically you can expect to be charged \$3- \$4 per swim event depending on the meet entered. Many of the meets also charge a deck fee of \$2-\$3 per swimmer. In most meets, swimmers can only swim 3-5 events per day. *Cato-Meridian Otters* will then write the host team a check for all the entry fees collected for the swimmers on our team.

If your swimmer will be participating in the meet, please hand the meet entry fees into the Parent Representative.

Relays At the time of entry, if you know that you are unable to swim in a relay, please forward that information. Relays are paid for by the club. The number of relays entered is based on the number of swimmers available.

FUND RAISING

Fund raising is a very important source of revenue for the team. Generating revenue through fund raising helps to buy fins, pull bouys, hand paddles, timing system, and funding the relays at meets. We ask that you participate in all fundraising activities, so we can continue to provide these things to our swimmers.

INSURANCE

It is required of all *Cato-Meridian "Otters" Swim Team* swimmers that they have a current USA Swimming membership. This membership not only supports swimming throughout the country but also provides very important accident and medical insurance for every swimmer and every team.

Each swimmer is covered at any organized practice of *Cato-Meridian "Otters" Swim Team* and every competition that is USA sanctioned. More specific information about USA Swimming insurance is available on the USA Swimming official website, www.usaswimming.org

The membership cost for USA Swimming is currently \$56 per year. The fee is charged and collected at the time of registration.

TEAM SUITS

Team suits are optional. Order forms will be handed out at the beginning of the season. Additional suits and caps are available through The Deep End purchases can be made by going to the following website: www.thedeepend.com

In order to obtain the team discount on merchandise, you must use the following:

User Name: Cato Password: Cato889

It is highly recommended that each swimmer's name be placed inconspicuously on all pieces of the team uniform. IE name on tag of suit so it can be returned if left behind.

SWIM MEETS

MEET SCHEDULE

Each season's meet schedule is posted on the team website at the beginning of the season. Meets are scheduled to give the swimmers an opportunity to compete against swimmers of similar abilities within their age group. One can also choose to enter only one day of a two or three-day meet.

Swim Meets

- Arrive at the Gym before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information handed out to all swimmers.
- *The coach will* write each event number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for as it is announced.
- Your swimmer then gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm up with the team. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. Keep Warm
- According to USA Swimming (because of insurance purposes), parents are **not allowed on deck** unless they are serving in an official capacity.
- A meet program is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Programs generally sell for \$4 - \$10 per day. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time."
- In most meets, a swimmer's event number will be called, usually over a loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "Clerk of Course." Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggles and be ready to swim.
- The Clerk of Course will usually line up all the swimmers and take them to the pool deck in correct order.

The swimmer swims their race.

- After each swim:

- He/She should go immediately to their coach.

- He /She can then go back to the towel gym and relax.

The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again at the "Clerk of Course."

All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of the meet should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents may go home. However, before leaving, **parents must make sure to check with the coach because your swimmer might be included in a relay.** It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there.

Disqualifications

When a swimmer is disqualified (DQ'd) an official will notify the swimmer and tell them why they were disqualified. Don't get discouraged swimmers at all levels get DQ'd, it is part of the learning process. If you have a question ask one of the coaches to explain it to you.

Ribbons/Medals from the meet

Ribbons and Medals earned at the meet will be placed in the glass case at the Rec Center for display.

At the end of the season they will be handed out to the swimmers to keep.

Best Time Ribbons

Each time a swimmer earns a best time at a meet, they will be given a Best Time Ribbon from the Coach, at practice the following week.

Year End Party

End of the Season party - Pizza, soda and treats. All awards are handed out to the swimmers to take home.