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Geneva River Rat Parent Manual Summer 2009

**Geneva River Rats Swim Team Parent Manual
Overview**

Mission Statement: The Geneva River Rats is a summer age group swim team that strives to create a positive environment where young members of the community can advance their skills in all four strokes, have an opportunity to compete in a competitive conference that encourages good sportsmanship, and to develop life long skills necessary to achieve success.

History: Summer swimming is where the River Rats got their start. Established in 1972 by eleven swimmers, who had their first meet against each other, the River Rat program has grown to an average of 150 swimmers per season. The River Rat program is a member of NCISC (North Central Illinois Swim Conference) that includes fourteen other teams throughout the Chicago Suburbs. As stated in our mission statement, the River Rat program promotes the sport of swimming through teaching the mastery of all four strokes and an introduction into competitive swimming through teaching qualities of good sportsmanship.

Geneva Swim Club Parents ORG: The Parent Board is the governing body and has been since the creation of the Geneva River Rats Swim Team. The Parent Board selects members and officers at the end of every summer season. The Board meets regularly to plan and implement the various activities for the team, set fees, employ professional coaching staff and the approval of the yearly budget.

The Board is a group of dedicated River Rat parents that help ensure the development of the team, but are still only one small part compared to the overall parent participation needed to make every season a successful one. Once a member of the Geneva River Rats, you automatically become a part of our Parent Group that will allow you to help out the team in many ways. As a member, you are required to help at our four (inter-squad included) home meets while your swimmer is participating.

Communication: All communication outside of the pool deck is run through our email address genevariverrats@gmail.com. In addition our website <http://www.genevariverrats.com> provides all the information needed for important dates, session practice times, coaching bios, and meet registration. Also attached to this manual will be the contact information of every coach for the summer 2009 season. Questions regarding practice times, line ups, and other information related to your swimmers age group should be directed to the Head Age Group Coaches.

Click on the link on our website and register to receive emails. A mailbox system is set up at the pool for swimmers to receive awards. Other information may be available and swimmers should check their boxes on a regular basis. Informational flyers and meet sign-up sheets will be posted on the wall in the shed. Also, a sign-up facility has been incorporated into the web site for easier registration.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Head Coach	Joe Neukirch	genevariverrats@gmail.com
Board President	Michael Krass	mr_scuba@mindspring.com
Vice President	Julie Coyle	jrcoyle4@att.net
Meet Director	Susie Hart	3amigas@att.net

North Central Illinois Swim Conference: The Geneva River Rats are part of the NCISC and compete against six other teams within our "A" conference bracket. Our swim season concludes with the Conference Championship on July 18th, 2009.

Fund Raising- The Geneva River Rats Swim Team is not a part of a Park District, a YMCA and/or other school taxing body. Our program is only partially funded by your registration fees. The fees you pay are applied to an extensive budget. We have several categories of expenses such as, coaches' salaries, pool equipment, pool rental, insurance, awards, and conference fees, college scholarships along with other day to day operational costs. To meet the expense budget of this large team, additional fund raising is necessary each season. Parent support and participation is an integral part of our budget process in order to meet our financial goals and fund raising keeps fees low. The Geneva River Rats host three meets during the summer that assist our monetary needs through concession sales and 50/50 raffles.

Various other fund raising activities may be available during the swim season. Look for announcements in the newsletter and at the Rats home page. Please also feel free to contact any board member if you would like to run a fund raising idea or just to share a suggestion.

**Geneva Swim Team Parent Manual
Swimming Information**

Eligibility and Tryouts: The Geneva Swim Team is a community swim team that provides an opportunity to all levels of swimmers. In order to become a member of the River Rats, you must first be tested by the Head Coach at our Try outs or by appointment. The tryouts purpose is to ensure the safety of your swimmer in our program. The basic requirements include the ability of your swimmer to complete in the distances that their age group participates during our meets.

Practices: Summer practices will be conducted in the mornings, Monday through Saturday. Our main pool, Sunset, will be the site for most our age groups with the exception of our 8&unders at Eagle Brook Country Club. Six practices will be offered for our summer session and there is no practice requirement. However for meet lineups Head Age Group Coaches will take practice attendance under consideration in creating meet line ups.

Swim Meets: There will be approximately one swim meet per week during our summer season. Any swimmer wanting to compete at our Conference Championship Meet must attend at least three conference meets in order to be eligible. Swim meets will provide swimmers with a minimum of three events and maximum of four. All line ups will be created by the Head Age Group Coaches according to swimmer's ability, number of swimmers within an age group, and their practice attendance. A list of events will be provided at the end of this manual.

*The overall success of our team will be based off of the maximum participation of our swimmers in both practices and meets in order for our team to remain in the highly competitive "A" Conference.

Awards: Swimming awards consist of ribbons, metals, and trophies. Every away meet provides different awards based off our conference rules. Our home meets however allow for every swimmer who competes in an event (without a disqualification) will receive a ribbon. Ribbons will be distributed through our family folders that are kept at Sunset pool in our storage sheds underneath the drop slides.

Summer Awards Picnic: The end of the year banquet takes place at Wheeler Park off of Route 31. The banquet consists of families bringing lawn chairs, blankets, and food to the park. The banquet allows us to recognize the achievement of our swimmer's great season through participation certificates and age group leadership trophies. The banquet takes place the Tuesday evening following the Conference Championship Meet. More information will be available in July.

Socials - The Rats take time to have fun!!! Team photos are also scheduled each season and can be purchased at the family's discretion. The annual party/awards night at the end of the summer season is always anticipated and well received.

Team Apparel - Team members and their families take great pride in being identified with the Geneva River Rats. Rat swimmers are expected to wear the team cap in competitions. Suits and caps are available for purchase from Kiefer Swim Store. Kiefer will send a representative to the pool once a season for fittings. Other items such as sweat suits, logo bags & backpacks, goggles and fins can also be purchased through the Rats website.

Geneva Swim Team Parent Manual Parents' Responsibilities

Parents constitute the Parent Association and children constitute the Team. This reflects the attitude of family participation, which is a necessary element of the Geneva Swim Club's (River Rats) existence. Below is a list of parent responsibilities that help our program to be successful.

1. See that your swimmer is on time and ready on the pool deck at designated practice times. (This means get there a few minutes earlier than start times)

2. Pick-up should be scheduled no later than 15 minutes after the conclusion of practice.
3. Quiet observation of practice is welcome. Please try not to speak to your child or the coaching staff during practice.
4. The coaches encourage questions regarding swimming or a swimmer's progress and are willing to provide answers. However, to avoid disruption of practice, please do not attempt to discuss these matters during practice time. Parents may ask questions either before or after practice, or they may e-mail the coaches with concerns and they will respond as soon as possible.
5. It is required that at least one parent (although both would be appreciated) volunteer to work at all home meets their swimmer attends. A description of the various jobs is within this manual.
6. Parents volunteering for meet jobs should arrive slightly before the designated time to perform their work assignments. Please check in with the parent volunteer coordinator, located next to the swimmer check-in area.
7. Parents may leave after their swimmer's last event, and once volunteer commitments have been fulfilled.
8. Please be responsible for making sure your swimmer is checked in. A swimmer is considered checked in when their name has been highlighted at the check in table.
9. For away meets, you are responsible for arriving with your swimmer at least 15 minutes prior to the directed meet arrival time in order to ensure your swimmer checks in with his or her age group coach.
10. For home meets, you are responsible for making sure your swimmer has gotten to the bullpen when his or her events have been announced.
11. For away meets, if the hosting team does not run a bullpen, then parents need to assist the coaches with setting up our own bullpen area and running it. If a bullpen area is not set up, then parents need to make sure that their swimmer is lined up behind his or her lane two events prior to the start of their own event.
12. All of our swimmers are important. They all deserve our encouragement and support. Have a kind word for all of the swimmers including your own. Encourage by examples of "good sportsmanship" and "good manners."

Geneva River Rat Parent Manual
Parent Meet Jobs

As stated earlier, all families are required to work at the meets when they have a swimmer participating. The good news is, that with everyone pitching in, no one has the bulk of the work to do, and there is always someone available to cover your spot so that you should never miss your child's swim. Coordination of certain jobs may take a bit more commitment, but it's worth it getting to know so many of our families. If you're not sure, you can always try a job, someone will be there to teach you, back you up, and give you support. You might even be surprised - it's fun!

About 4 weeks prior to our meets, we will post the available jobs at the pool, in the newsletter, and on the website where parents can then sign up for their preferred jobs. If there are any questions with this – please let Coach Joe or Michael Krass know.

The following jobs need to be filled in order to run successful meets –

Timing Console - verifies times from the timing console and makes calculated changes if necessary and gives final times to the computer operator.

Announcer - Announces events and racers names over the PA system.

Awards –Responsible for organizing the ribbons for all home meets and distributing Best Time “Rat Pins” to the swimmer’s mailboxes.

Bull Pen (on deck) - line up and move the swimmers from the bench area to the starting blocks.

Concessions Coordinator - responsible to deliver concessions donations lists prior to meets. Determine quantities of inventory necessary for meets. Make arrangements for ice!!!

Concessions worker - work at selling concessions during the meet - may also be required to assist in set-up or clean-up during a session.

Computer - Runs the meet on the computer using Hy-Tek software.

Deck Marshal - Safety for the swimmers and guests is our primary concern. The River Rats are required to have marshals on deck throughout the meet. STAY ON DECK and control flow of traffic, kids running, and over-all policing to make certain that we provide the best environment possible. Must be available to be on deck no later than warm-ups for this job.

Official - Referee, Starter, Stroke & turn Judges.

Positive check-in - cross off swimmers names when they arrive for meet. Work with computer person to input. Must arrive no later then 4:45pm.

Runner - delivers paperwork from the computer table to the officials, coaches & timers. Hang heat/lane assignments and final results

Timer - Uses provided stopwatches to time each heat. Operate thumb switch for backup timing on designated lane. Starts their watches each race. Record times on heat sheets.

Timing Console -Operates the timing machine that registers official times as indicated by the touch pads.

Meet Director – Creates & posts volunteer sign-up sheets. Checks volunteers against swimmers entered and contact families who have not signed up and assigns them a job.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP - Besides helping out at meets, there are other opportunities to help out the team. If you have any questions on the various positions – feel free to contact: Michael Krass (Team President)

Awards Banquet/Summer Party
Fundraising Coordinator
Registration Committee

Geneva River Rat Parent Manual Swimmer's Responsibilities

In order to achieve both team and individual goals, certain rules must be established and followed.

1. Swimmers should be punctual for all practices and meets. Swimmers are to be dressed and on deck ready to practice at set times. Pool time is very valuable!
2. Swimmers are expected to attend as many practices as possible. Season after season the swimmers who attend the most practices, show the best improvement in their swimming skills and in their race times.
3. Our Coaches' purpose is to help you. You are expected to pay attention and do as they instruct at all times.
4. For safety, there will be no running on the pool deck, or the locker rooms, and outside the pool foyer entrance area.
5. At all practices, swim meets and team functions, you are a representative of the Geneva River Rats and your behavior is a reflection of our team. Misconduct of any kind (i.e. horseplay, rowdiness, fighting or insubordination toward any Coach or Meet Official) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with accordingly. The Coaches are authorized to dismiss a swimmer from practice for continuously disrupting others. Repeated offenses may warrant expulsion from practice, a conference with your parents, and/or suspension from the team.

RATS' CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY

Occasionally on a team like the Rats, we may have a behavioral issue with a team member. Almost always, a word or two from the Coaches has taken care of the inappropriate behavior. When verbal reprimands have not stopped the misbehavior, consequences are in place to provide the framework for the Coaches to deal with this inappropriate behavior. A "disciplinary continuum" has been developed which outlines the procedures that will be followed if further steps are needed to correct any misbehavior. The disciplinary continuum will involve:

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| FIRST OFFENSE | Verbal warning from the Coach. |
| SECOND OFFENSE | Parent notification of behavior and warn of suspension on next misbehavior. |
| THIRD OFFENSE | One week suspension from practices & meets. |
| SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE | Two week suspension from practices & meets. |