

## **TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS**

- 1. Make sure your child knows that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love him or her, appreciate his or her efforts, and are not disappointed in him or her. This will allow your child to do his or her best without fear of failure. Be the person in your child's life that he or she can look to for positive reinforcement.**
- 2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level.**
- 3. Be helpful, but don't coach your child on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, 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.**
- 4. Teach your child to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve his or her swimming skills and attitude. Help him or her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, and for having fun.**
- 5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure, lost as well as won. 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 swimsuit who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his or her world turns bad. If your child is comfortable, win or lose, then he or she is on the way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.**
- 6. Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, then the swimmer may become confused as to who they should take advice from.**
- 7. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, and work with your child to understand the difference between obtaining a BEST TIME and "beating so and so".**
- 8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his or her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge reflect the same goals that you are happy to have your child learn under his or her leadership.**
- 9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened under certain conditions. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear or discomfort.**
- 10. Encourage your swimmers to challenge themselves in practice and at meets. Honor their goals, and work to keep your goals in line as parents. A swimmer typically goes through several steps before making the Olympic Trials. An example of an appropriate goal is... attaining a higher time standard on the USA Motivational Chart. Another may be obtaining an "A" time or "champ" time; Or qualifying for the YMCA State Meet. Another example might be attendance at practice, or extending themselves at practice. Mostly, the swimmers just need to know that you LOVE THEM no matter what, and you love that they are swimming and getting so much stronger physically and mentally!**