

POWER AQUATICS/POWER FOR LIFE

Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Power for Life is a Level 1 USA Swimming Member Club currently owned and operated by Power Aquatics. Founded in 2009, Power for Life has coached two Senior National, eight Junior National, and more than 50 Sectionals/TAGS qualifiers.

*** OUR MISSION ***

EmPOWER

*our athletes through the sport of swimming with the skills needed to be successful in
LIFE*

..... the POWER difference

100% Athlete-Centered Approach = We will ALWAYS Put the Swimmer First

Low Swimmer-to-Coach Ratio = More Personal Attention to the Swimmer

Coaches Encouraged to Think Outside the Box = Creative Workouts That Make Learning FUN

Focus on Technique vs. Distance = More Speed and Fewer Injuries

Hire and Keep Top Coaches = Continuity and a Personal Connection With Our Swimmers

Competitive Fee Structure + Focus on Individual Swimmer Needs = Enhanced Value for Your Dollar

Coaching Commitment at Meets = Swimmers Will ALWAYS Have a PFL Coach on Deck = Active
Engagement at all Times and all Levels

Fostering a Lifelong Love of the Sport = Happy Kids Swim Fast

Our #1 Objective is to Keep Kids Swimming

OUR VISION

We seek to provide competitive training and racing opportunities for school and college age swimmers to achieve the highest level of performance their ability, commitment, and desire will allow. Our goal is to build a competitive team of swimmers who are driven to perform at their top ability level, to develop a strong work ethic, to work well with others, to display good sportsmanship, and to demonstrate those traits that will enable them to be successful in life and become good contributors to the community.

We want our athletes to be proud of their team and respect their competition.

We want our athletes to graduate from this team feeling it has made a strong contribution to their development as a confident successful young adult.

We want this team to make positive contributions to Gulf Swimming, Inc.; USA Swimming, Inc.; and, the high school swimming community in the Katy area through developing young athletes who will represent these associated groups with dignity and pride in addition to performing at their highest capabilities.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

The seven rules for swimmer deportment and behavior are generally the ones first learned in Kindergarten. Because we are very proud of our swimmers and our team, it is very important that each and every swimmer understand and agree to the following policies regarding behavior and deportment:

Respect Others. Treat every person on the team and associated with the sport with respect. This includes, but is not limited to other swimmers, all coaches, officials and facility personnel. What would your Mother say?

Respect your 'House'. Treat all of the facilities we attend with the utmost respect. Damage to any facility (pool, hotel, bus) caused by a swimmer will be the responsibility of the swimmer and their parents.

Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Personal physical contact between swimmers is not permitted.

Play Well with Others. Hazing, bullying or harassment of other swimmers is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Swimmers do not have to like everyone on the team, but they must get along with everyone on the team.

Display Good Sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship is the standard of behavior expected at all times. Congratulate and encourage other competitors. Cheer each other on. Overt emotional displays (either positive or negative) are strongly discouraged.

Keep your Body Clean. Use of prohibited substances including drugs, alcohol, banned substances (such as steroids) and tobacco is not permitted. There is a zero tolerance for these actions and will result in expulsion from the team.

Make your mother proud. When the team is travelling, swimmers of opposite genders will not be permitted in same hotel rooms.

Swimmers who do not conform to these behavior expectations are subject to removal from the team.

Swimmers aged 12 and older must sign the Registration Form in Acknowledgement of having read, understood, and agreed to these policies.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

We have moved what we consider to be sensitive, child-specific information onto password-protected pages on our website. To create an account and request a password, see the *Create An Account* option on our website. For further instructions email the Team Manager at teammanager@poweraquatics.org

Practice Locations

Our home pool is the James E. Taylor High School Natatorium at 20700 Kingsland Blvd in Katy, Texas. We may also conduct certain program-specific practices at other local pools. You will always be given ample advance notice of location changes. For more information on locations, check "Locations" on the website.

Newsletters

Team Information is sent out via email every week, usually on Wednesday, to update parents on upcoming events, outstanding achievements, and other notable news. ***Make it a habit to look for this every week – all the information you need will be right there***

Visit the Newsletters page on the website for archived copies.

Volunteering & Fundraising

Unlike many club teams, PFL does not require family volunteering and/or fundraising activities. However, **TIMING at all meets your swimmer attends is a MANDATORY** part of your club membership.

Remind 101

Last minute changes and weather-affected practice changes are texted via Remind 101. Please sign up to receive text messages.

Text your Group Code to 510-447-1105

Group Code:

Thunder 1: @pflth1

Thunder 2: @pflth2

Thunder 3: @pflth3

Lightning 1: @pfltl1

Lightning 2: @pfltl2

Rain: @pflrain

Shark School: @pflss1

Contact Us

POWER AQUATICS

22526 Cove Hollow Drive

Katy, Texas 77450

phone: 832.622.2561

email: teammanager@poweraquatics.org

Communication is always open between parents and coaches. In line with USA Swimming athlete protection policies, PFL coaches do not communicate directly with athletes via electronic devices.

Phone calls, emails, etc. must originate from the parent's device.

Power for Life Competitive Team

Thunder I is our elite, competition-based group for swimmers ages 15 and up who have achieved outstanding performance and dedication to USA Swimming. Qualifications include:

- Aim to qualify for National level meets
- **Sectionals qualifier**
- **Achieve qualifying T-30 results**
- Must attend USA meets throughout the year
- **Must maintain seasonal IMX score**
- 5 practices per week
- May not participate in summer league as an athlete

Thunder II

- Ages 14 & up
- Member of High School JV or Varsity swim team
- Placed by the Head Coach
- Focus is primarily high school swimming
- Must attend at least 4 USA meets per year
- 5 practices per week

Thunder III

- Ages 13 & 14
- Must attend at least 4 USA meets per year
- Focus on technique with introduction on training methodologies
- 5 practices per week

Lightning I

- Ages 11 & 12, age 10 with IMX
- IMX/IMR score encouraged
- Must attend at least 4 USA meets per year
- Focus on technique in an atmosphere that promotes learning and fun
- 5 practices per week

Lightning II

- Ages 9 & 10
- Must attend at least 4 USA meets per year
- Focus on technique in an atmosphere that promotes learning and fun
- 4 practices per week

Rain

- Ages 7 & 8
- Must attend 2 USA meets per year
- Focus on technique in a fun learning environment
- 3 practices per week; M/W/F from 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM

PowerFit Summer – For high school swimmers seeking a challenging workout during their off-season and/or to prepare for their varsity tryouts. (Not eligible for USA/Gulf Swimming meets.)

- Summer only
- 4 practices per week, 90 minutes each (mornings)
- Afternoon practice add-on option available

PE Waiver Program

We participate in the Katy ISD PE Waiver program. Students must practice with PFL a minimum of 5 hours per week to achieve a passing grade. Because of the practice time requirement, this program is not available to Shark School swimmers.

Pre-Competitive Programs

SHARK SCHOOL -- For school-age children who are able to swim and need to improve their technique before joining the competitive team. Minimum age is 6 with one year of kindergarten.

- All swimmers must be able to complete two lengths of the pool in freestyle and one length in backstroke across the deep end.
- Fun environment with age-appropriate drills to encourage skill development
- Three levels allow targeted instruction customized to skill level
- 2 practices per week, 40 minutes each; Monday/Wednesday
- School year only (switch to **Stroke Clinics** in the summer months)
- Not a part of USA Swimming

SWIM UP– An advanced Shark School practice offered during February, March, April, and May. Designed as a bridge program to the competitive team and to give summer league swimmers a firm head start to their season. Placement is at the Shark School head coach's discretion. Level 3 Shark School competence or equivalent is required.

- 2 practices per week, 40 minutes each; 5:15 PM Monday/Wednesday
- Curriculum includes 100 Individual Medley (IM)
- Not a part of USA Swimming

Summer Stroke Clinics – A continuation of Shark School & Swim Up during the summer months

- Two-week sessions offered in June and July. Schedule announced in spring.

2023-24 Fee Structure

ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO "POWER"

Registration Fee: \$100. A separate USA Swimming registration is required. *Premium* for competitive team (\$98) and *Flex* for Shark School (\$30).

Save money and pay one-time-only annual fee by Sept 1

	Monthly:	Annual:
Thunder 1:	\$300	\$2175
Thunder 2:	\$290	\$2100
Thunder 3:	\$290	\$2100
Lightning 1:	\$275	\$1965
Lightning 2:	\$265	\$1890
Rain:	\$205	\$1425
Shark School:	\$ 90	
Swim Up:	\$ 90	

No Refunds

**Prices quoted represent a
check discount **

**Pay by check, PayPal, or
credit card (via invoice)**

Summer Programs:

PowerFit Summer: \$650 (includes registration)

Summer Stroke Clinics: \$90 per session/ \$125 per session(new to Power)

Please don't hesitate to contact us to discuss alternative financing plans.

Bill Pay

The most effective way to ensure timely payments is to set up a regular recurring payment with your bank's online bill pay. Payment should be made payable to POWER. List your swimmer's name as the account number.

Mailing address:

**Power Aquatics
22526 Cove Hollow Drive
Katy, Texas 77450**

Handwritten checks may be mailed to the above address or hand delivered to practice. We do not accept cash payments. Credit card payments may be made from the link on the invoice.

MEET FEES

Meet entry fees are \$70 per day IF PAID BY the HOST CLUB DEADLINE. Fees are \$120 for two days and \$150 for three days. CHAMPS MEET FEES ARE \$75 per day. Late fees apply if you miss the deadline. This ensures a PFL coach on deck at every meet and more evenly allocates costs such that swimmers can afford expensive championship meets.

Team travel may be more expensive.

Meet entry fees are non-refundable once they have been submitted to the host team.

A NOTE ABOUT INHALERS, EPI PENS, ETC:

Swimmers who require the use of a rescue inhaler or other such device must keep it ON DECK AT ALL TIMES. Inhalers should be placed in a sealed plastic baggie and LABELED with the swimmer's name. It is the swimmer's responsibility to ensure such devices are in reach. Inhalers, etc. may NOT be left at the pool overnight.

EQUIPMENT LIST

All PFL Swimmers must have:

*Pull Buoy *Extra Goggles *Fins (Positive Drive)
*Mesh Equipment Bag *Water Bottle *Kick Board

Thunder Swimmers please add:

*Snorkel (oval, adjustable tube) *Paddles (Strokemakers preferred)

Competitive Swimmers will be required to have the following available at MEETS:

Current year T-Shirt & Power for Life Swim Cap
(You will receive one shirt and 2 caps with your registration. Lost items must be purchased to replace.)

*Power for Life Team Suit

*Power for Life Team Backpack

Also available for order / purchase are:

Parkas Jackets Pants Shorts Hoodies

Shark School:

*Kickboard*Goggles*Swim Cap* Rash Guard (if cold) **NOTHING BAGGY**

Throughout the season, equipment may be purchased at our supplier, D&J Sports, at 617 South Mason Road next to Fuzzy's Pizza.

***If you forget equipment on deck and a coach must pick it up,
you have to buy it back from us for \$1***

MEET FAQs

How Does My Swimmer Sign Up For Meets?

Power Aquatics has implemented a procedure for letting the coaching staff know if your swimmer is available to compete on a given weekend. The process is:

- 1)** Parent fills in the online meet entry form telling us which days the child will be available to swim. YOU WILL HAVE THIS LINK WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE DEADLINE. We will NOT ENTER a swimmer into a meet unless we have this form in hand.
- 2)** The swimmer will pick events in conjunction with the coach ONLY AFTER WE HAVE YOUR MEET ENTRY FORM IN HAND.
- 3)** Parent pays the meet entry either via invoice, PayPal, or by dropping off a check at practice.

Please make your check payable to POWER.

What is the difference between "Short Course" and "Long Course?"

The swim year is divided into two seasons:

- Short Course Season (25 yard or meter pools) runs September through March
- Long Course Season (50 meter pools) runs April to August

How Frequently Are Meets Held Through the Year?

USA Swim meets are offered roughly once a month at various levels for all age groups. Our competition area is managed by Gulf Swimming, Inc. You can find out more about Gulf Swimming at their website.

USA Swim Meets take place over weekends, often starting on Friday evening. At **OPEN MEETS**, Saturday and Sunday events are often split into two Sessions with a group warm up at the beginning of each session. Right now younger swimmers can expect to compete in the afternoons and older swimmers in the mornings. This may change from year to year, however. Open meets do not have finals.

CHAMPS MEETS, which require qualifying times, have preliminary sessions in the morning and qualifying finals in the afternoon.

How Do I Find Out Information About the Meets?

Meet details including dates, qualifying times, cut-offs, event limits, directions, and maps to the pool can be accessed from the Meet Invitation posted on the Gulf Swimming Website under their "Meets" link. We always post this information on our Wednesday newsletter.

About a week before the meet, the host team will post warm-up sessions start times and lane assignments for each team, plus the estimated timeline for each event offered. This will be on the Gulf Swimming website. However, remember that the timeline is an estimate and that the meet may run faster or slower. You should always plan on arriving early. We recommend arriving before the time posted for the first warm-up of the session.

What Should We Bring to the Meet? (required items in yellow)

- Official PFL competition suit
- Team cap (plus a spare – they can rip)
- Team t-shirt
- Goggles (plus a spare – they can break)
- Towels – 2 to 3
- Beverages to re-hydrate – water or sports drinks
- Snacks to refuel – carbohydrates, protein, fruit (no candy or greasy food). There is usually a snack bar, but they may not offer appropriate selections
- Chairs –depending on the pool facilities, you may or may not need them
- Print-out of the meet timeline. warm-up sessions, times, and lane assignments from the Gulf Swimming Website. Look for "PFL."
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What Do We Do When We Arrive at the Meet?

Arrive in time for the **first warm-up** of the session. For long course meets, generally swimmers must **"Circle In"** (check-in) for certain events to be eligible to swim. Check with your coach if you need clarification. Near the entry to the pool, locate the swimmer listings which are typically posted on poster board and organized by gender, then by age-group. On each age-group poster board, you will see the events of the day, with a listing of each swimmer who entered the event. The swimmer needs to circle the number next to their name for EVERY event they entered for that particular day. **Lists are**

pulled by the host team 45 minutes prior to the start of the meet. If you don't circle in, your swimmer will be excluded from the meet. No exceptions.

Locate other Power for Life swimmers and parents in the stands. Look for the navy and gold! In some venues, swimmers sit on deck and parents sit outside or in bleachers. If so, you can come in to watch your swimmer race.

Swimmers should start getting ready to warm-up. When the session is about to start, the swimmer should proceed to the pool deck and locate the PFL coach for instructions. *Swimmers are not allowed to enter the pool without a coach on deck.*

Parents must stay in the designated seating area unless they are timing. Only swimmers, coaches and officials are allowed on deck. Some helpful parent tasks:

- Double-check to make sure your swimmer circled in all of his or her events
- When the swimmers finish warm-up, review with your swimmer what events he/she is competing in that day.
- Encourage swimmer to drink or eat something if they are not scheduled to swim for at least 30 min. Hydration is VERY important.
- ***Please remain positive and encouraging with your swimmer. They are working hard to do their best! The PFL coaches will review race strategy and suggest areas for improvement with each swimmer after each race.***

Can My Swimmer Talk to the Coaches During the Meet?

YES! In fact, this is an expected and extremely important part of a swimmer's training.

- **BEFORE THE RACE.** After swimmers get their heat and lane assignments, they are expected to talk to their coaches to get race instructions and to discuss their race plan. Only after speaking to the coach should the swimmer proceed to his or her assigned lane. Once there, the swimmer must check with the TIMER to make sure they are in the correct spot. Mistakes happen! Always verify.
- **AFTER THE RACE.** Immediately after each race, the swimmer is expected to speak to their coach to get feedback on their race. Swimmers will be told what they did correctly and what they need to work on to improve, regardless of how well they did or did not do in the race. They will be asked about their race plan and whether they stuck to it.

What is a “warm-down?”

Warming down (swimming slow laps) helps to loosen strained muscles and reduce the lactic acid build-up from the race. By warming-down, the swimmer's muscles recover sooner for their next race. Swimmers **MUST** “warm-down” after a race if the facility has space available (most do). Only after completing the warm-downs should the swimmer return to his seat and/or speak with parents.

How Do I Know Which Meet My Swimmer Will Attend? PFL swimmers attend meets **AS A TEAM.**

Swimmers must be accompanied by a coach in order to compete and will attend the meet location assigned to PFL. A meet location and associated information will be emailed as soon as it is released by Gulf Swimming.

The meet level your swimmer will attend is decided by their fastest official USA Swimming Times and their age. **OPEN MEETS** are available to all swimmers including those with no official recorded times. Thunder swimmers may also attend **SENIOR CIRCUIT** meets if they qualify.

First-time USA Swimming competitors will be entered with an indication of No Time (NT) for each event they swim. Experienced competitors will be placed in heats based on their fastest recorded official time.

Swimmers compete within an age category, against their own gender, based on their age on the day of the meet. A swimmer may change age groups mid-season and will begin competing with the higher age group at the next available meet. Age groups are:

- 8 and under
- 9 - 10
- 11 - 12
- 13 - 14
- 15 & up

Can My Swimmer Pick His or Her Favorite Events?

The coach will determine which events your swimmer will compete in. This decision may be done with or without input from the swimmer. This policy ensures that the swimmer is competing in appropriate events for their personal development. During the course of the season, coaches work with swimmers on age-appropriate technical aspects of competing. It is critical for the swimmer's development that he/she be able to apply those aspects during competition, not just at practice, if he/she is going to be able to swim at their full potential at their end of season championship meet.

Swim meets leading up to the season championship meet are not focused on "winning" and "placing" but rather on technical improvement. Technical improvements result in faster swimming, but not always right away. Swimming fast is important, but so is technique, endurance, and race strategy.

PFL policy is that at all meets, swimmers are limited to three events per day, excluding relays. Further, it is PFL policy that ONLY COACHES may deck enter swimmers in events. Parents MUST work with the PFL coach on deck entries.

What is an IMX or IMR Score?

IMX is a motivational program that allows swimmers across the nation to compare themselves to the thousands of other athletes in their age group. All you have to do is swim a combination of events, at least one time per season, and USA Swimming will automatically give you your ranking.

IMX stands for "IM Extreme" and IMR stands for "IM Ready." During each season, whenever you swim an event the time is registered on the USA swimming web site. Then a score is calculated on the web site and the score is compared to other swimmers of the same age. Learn more about how IMX/IMR points are calculated at the USA Swimming Powerpoint Calculator.

I am annoyed that an official DQ'd my swimmer. Can I discuss this with him?

NO. Only coaches are allowed to approach officials to question a call or to inquire if a swimmer can be placed in a subsequent heat due to missing their race. If you have a question for an official, please speak to one of the Power for Life coaches at the meet.

Officials have the authority to remove parents from the pool area if they are abusive or interfere with the running of the meet. Parents should at all times conduct themselves in a manner which upholds the PFL athletes' Code of Conduct and which models polite behavior for our swimmers.

My Kid is Having All the Fun! How Can I Get Involved?

USA swim meets are run solely by volunteers, each critical to the success of the meet. No matter what your level of swim experience, there is a volunteer job for you!

TIMERS. Timers are required from all teams for every meet. Each team is assigned a number of lanes or seats for which they are responsible. Those assignments are based on the number of swimmers the team has entered in the meet. The host team provides a head timer which provides stop watch backup.

For PFL, there will be a Sign-Up Genius posted before every meet. **TIMING IS MANDATORY FOR PFL PARENTS.** Meet officials will not proceed with competition until all the timing chairs are filled. It reflects very poorly on our club if the starter is calling for PFL timers over the loudspeakers.

Want to Dive in Deeper? Become an Official. The Meet Referee, Deck Referee, Starters, and Stroke & Turn Judges have all gone through a rigorous USA Swimming certification program for each position they fill. Many fill more than one role during the meet. Unlike many officials in other sports, USA Swimming officials are not there to “catch” swimmers doing something wrong. They are there to “observe” and to make sure the races are conducted fairly. Disqualifications are not viewed as a penalty, but as an opportunity for the swimmer to learn what he or she did incorrectly so that they can work with their coach in correcting the mistake.

PRACTICE SCHEDULES

Subject to change based on weather, pool availability, etc

School Year -- Taylor High School

Thunder 1:	4:00 PM to 6:00 PM daily
Thunder 2:	4:00 PM to 5:30 PM daily
Thunder 3:	5:00 PM to 6:30 PM daily
Lightning 1:	6:00 PM to 7:30 PM daily
Lightning 2:	6:15 PM to 7:30 PM daily (pick 4 days)
Rain:	6:30 PM to 7:30 PM M/W/F
Shark School:	6:05 PM to 6:45 PM M/W
	6:50 PM to 7:30 PM M/W
Swim Up:	5:15 PM to 6:00 PM M/W

All Friday practices end at 5 PM.

Saturday practices will be announced during the season.

Summer Schedule

Mornings & afternoons only. Announced in the spring.

A Few Hints on Helping Your Swimmer Be Successful

ENCOURAGE. Your swimmer is trying to reach his or her best, focused on swimming fast and staying legal. Encourage your swimmer to trust his or her coach. Let the coach do the coaching and the parent do the cheering.

SUPPORT. The swimmer is the only one who knows how much effort went into the race. He or she is already under a lot of pressure to perform. What your child needs from you is love and support.

COMFORT. Everybody has a bad race once in a while. Recovering from disappointment is a life lesson that will spill over into other areas. Let your swimmer know you are proud of their efforts.

"The Ten Commandments for Swim Parents"

Adapted from Rose Snyder

1. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what. There is only one question to ask the child "Did you have fun"? If meets and practices aren't fun, the child should not be forced to participate.

2. Thou shalt not impose thy ambitions on thy child. Remember that swimming is the child's activity. The child will progress at his or her own speed. All we expect is that they do their best.

3. Thou shalt not coach thy child. You have taken your child to a professional coach; do not undermine that coach by trying to instruct your child on the side. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part. Offering offer advice on technique or race strategy will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.

4. Thou shalt have only positive things to say at a swim meet. You should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.

5. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears. It is totally appropriate for a child to be scared to death at his first swim meet, or her first 500 free or 200 fly. Assure your child that the coach would not have put him or her in that event if she did not feel she were ready.

6. Thou shalt not criticize the officials. If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are giving their time to support your child.

7. Thou shalt not criticize the coach in the presence of thy child. The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Approach the coach privately to discuss concerns.

8. Thou shalt not be a team hopper. It's not always true that the water is always bluer at the other team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch may have a long time adjusting to the change. Talk to us first if there is an issue.

9. Thou shalt have goals besides winning. Encourage your child to do his or her best. Giving an honest effort no matter what the outcome is much more important than winning.

10. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian. There are 225,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in about 4,300.

Swimming is much more than just winning. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal they may have won. Swimming just builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate.

LATE PICK-UP We are responsible for all swimmers until parents pick them up. Because all coaches are required to stay until all swimmers are picked up after the last practice of the day, parents who are late picking up their swimmer will be assessed a baby-sitting fee of \$5 for every minute after the 15 minute grace period to pay the coaches for their time.