



# **SEACOAST SWIMMING ASSOCIATION**



PO Box 272  
Dover, NH 03820  
(603) 749-2869  
website: [www.seacoastswimming.com](http://www.seacoastswimming.com)

# Team Handbook

Seacoast Swimming Association  
Mission Statement:

**“To empower young people to be  
champions in and out of the water for a  
lifetime.”**

Who should I contact?

- For information about swimming, contact the team office at: [parratto@seacoastswimming.com](mailto:parratto@seacoastswimming.com) or (603) 749-2869
- For information about billing, finances, contact the team treasurer at: [treasurer@seacoastswimming.com](mailto:treasurer@seacoastswimming.com)
- For general information about the team, contact the team president [tim@seacoastswimming.com](mailto:tim@seacoastswimming.com)
- For information about fundraising contact: [fundraising@seacoastswimming.com](mailto:fundraising@seacoastswimming.com).

Board of Directors

<b>Officers</b>	<b>Members</b>
Tim Paiva – President	Kelly Anderson
Jeff Gibson – Vice President	Amelia Chapman
Doreen Paiva – Treasurer	Bill Reeves
Mike Parratto – Head Coach/Executive Director	Jenny Thompson

Handbook updated: September 2009

# INTRODUCTION

Seacoast Swimming Association (SSA) is a nationally recognized competitive swimming team within the structure of USA Swimming. USA Swimming is the governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. Seacoast participates in USA Swimming competitions both locally and nationally and is also a member of the Granite State Swimming Association (GSSA).

SSA was founded in 1985 in Dover, NH. The origin of the team dates back to the beginning of organized competitive swimming in the Dover area, in the mid-1970's. Seacoast has emerged as the premier competitive swimming program in the state and the region. Seacoast athletes train in municipal pools in Dover and at the University of New Hampshire in Durham.

Seacoast Swimming Association has previously been awarded Silver and Bronze medal club status in U.S. Swimming's Club Excellence program. The Club Excellence program identifies and recognizes USA Swimming clubs for their commitment to excellence in operation, performance and development.

Seacoast offers a year-round training program, serving athletes from the youngest beginners to nationally-ranked competitive swimmers. Seacoast senior competitive team members have consistently qualified for and placed at US Swimming national championship meets. A number of Seacoast's senior athletes have participated in the United States Olympic Trials and have traveled throughout the world to represent the United States in international competition, including the Olympic Games. Seacoast athletes have gone on to successful collegiate athletic careers, many with full or partial athletic scholarships.

This Handbook is intended to introduce the new team members and their family to the team, as well as to provide each member family with the team's structure and policies.

Failure to follow any of the team policies and procedures could result in a suspension or dismissal from the team.

# TEAM PHILOSOPHY

Seacoast Swimming's philosophy is to provide young swimmers an environment that empowers them to be the best he or she can be, whether at local, regional, national or international level. We hope to also provide a clear understanding of the concepts that can help lead the swimmer to these ends. At all levels of the Seacoast program, swimmers are taught self-discipline, teamwork, independence, accountability, work ethic, goal setting and excellence. All these traits will lead each swimmer to be the "BEST YOU CAN BE"

# CORPORATE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Seacoast is a non-profit corporation with tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Service regulations. Under its bylaws, a board of directors, who elect the officers of the corporation, governs Seacoast. See Page 2 for a list of current board members.

The President acts as the chief executive officer, and except for certain financial decisions reserved to the directors, the President sets policy for and manages the operations of the organization. The President also oversees the work of the professional coaching staff.

Seacoast hires full-time certified coaches to conduct its training activities and supervise the competitive team. Decisions on the appropriate group level for athletes and selection of athletes to swim in meets are made entirely by the coaching staff.

It has been the experience of many involved with Seacoast that decisions, which directly involve the development of the athlete, are best made by professional coaches. Serious conflicts can and do develop when a parent of an athlete becomes too closely involved in decisions, which should be made by coaches. As parents, you are encouraged to support your child in as many ways as possible, but if you undermine your child's relationship with the coaches the results can only be detrimental to your child's development in and enjoyment of the sport.

There are many ways for parents to support their child's involvement in swimming. Please read the final pages of this Handbook for some guidelines to help your child.

## Relationship with SSA South (Seekonk, Mass.)

Seacoast Swimming is proud to have a long-standing working relationship with Seacoast Swimming – South, based in Seekonk Mass.

The two groups are run completely separate. We have separate team structures, treasurers and bank accounts. The two coaching staffs share information and coaching tips, athletes from each group swim relays together and the two groups combine to score at meets.

## COACHING STAFF

Seacoast Swimming's coaching staff meets all certification requirements set forth by United States Swimming. The team employs two full-time head coaches and several part-time assistant coaches.

## Head Coaches

**Mike Parratto:** Since the fall of 1984, Mike has served as head coach for the Seacoast Swimming Association. While Mike oversees the entire program, his main focus is coaching the Senior Group. Under his guidance, Seacoast has been one of the dominant teams in New England and has developed many Junior National, Senior National and Olympic Trial qualifiers.

Mike is a long time member of the New England Swimming Board of Directors and has served on a number of strategic planning and operations committees for USA Swimming. In addition, he has served on the coaching staff for several national team camps and meets for USA Swimming.

**Amy Parratto:** Amy began coaching for Seacoast in the fall of 1984. Serving as Head Age Group Coach, her duties include overseeing the team's pre-competitive program (Age Group II) and the first level of the competitive team (Age Group I). In addition Amy handles team administrative duties and is the equipment manager. Amy has also been an active New England Board member for many years.

For their efforts in developing swimming in the Seacoast, the Parrattos were inducted into the Dover Sports Hall of Fame, Class of 2007.

**Bill Reeves:** Bill is the team's Head Junior Age Group coach – the Fall of 2009 marked his 20<sup>th</sup> year on the SSA staff. Bill is a national-level triathlete and has competed in competitions around the country, including several Ironman events in Hawaii. Bill is also a full-time teacher at Oyster River High School.

## Assistant Coaches

It is the head coaching staff's responsibility to hire assistant coaches for the various age group levels. Our assistant coaches bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the team. For an up-to-date listing of assistant coaches please visit [www.seacoastswimming.com](http://www.seacoastswimming.com) and click on the link to the coaches page.

## TEAM GROUP STRUCTURE

Seacoast's swimming program ranges from the beginning swimmer to national level athletes. The program is structured around six groups. Individual athletes move from one group to the next based upon the coaches' assessment of the athlete's progress and the ability to make a full commitment to the requirements of the new group.

Each of the six groups operates at a different level of instruction and training, focused on developing in each athlete the skills and dedication to achieve his/her goals in the sport. Training, as such, is not emphasized in the younger age groups, but rather the focus of these groups is to teach the fundamental skills of the sport, allowing the young athlete to have fun. Once the athlete advances to the Senior Group, much greater emphasis is placed on physical conditioning: weight training and dryland exercise routines as well as intensive water training. Individuals in the Senior program are expected and required to make a serious and substantial commitment to the program.

# Age Groups

The following is a general breakdown of the various SSA groups. It is meant as a guideline and is not used as a final judgment of which swimmer belongs in which group. That is determined solely by the coaching staff.

**Age Group II:** Age Group II is designed to introduce individuals to the sport of swimming. Emphasis is on teaching the fundamentals of the four competitive strokes by means of drills and games, which are both instructive and fun. Swimmers in this group range in age from 5 to 10 and do not compete in meets. They are offered two 45-minute practices per week. At the end of each session (7-9 weeks) the swimmers have an in-house mini-meet.

**Age Group I:** Age Group I is for swimmers who can legally perform the four competitive strokes and who are ready to learn more advanced stroke techniques. Stroke instruction continues to be primary, but there is an increasing emphasis on learning how to train and to understand interval training. Participation in other activities is encouraged, as swimmers are expected to attend three 75-minute practices per week. Some basic dryland exercises, such as push-ups, abs and medicine ball are incorporated into their daily practices. Swimmers generally range in age from 7 to 10.

**Junior II:** Junior II is a level in which swimmers move from stroke instruction to actual competitive training. Careful attention is still given to stroke technique, but an equal emphasis is now placed on learning how to train. Athletes are expected to attend 4 - 5 practices per week. Each practice runs between 75-120 minutes with daily dryland training. Dryland training includes early season running, push-ups, abs, Pilates, tubing and medicine ball. Swimmers generally range in age from 11 to 13.

**Junior I:** Junior I constitutes the first level of the Seacoast program at which training is emphasized. Athletes at this level are provided a strong background, which will prepare them to progress to the Senior team. Athletes are expected to attend 5-6 practices per week. Each practice runs between 120-150 minutes with daily dryland training similar to the Senior program. Swimmers generally range in age from 12 to 15.

**Senior II:** Senior II is an entry-level senior group in which training and technique is emphasized in preparation for the Senior I group. Swimmers in this group have just moved up from the Junior program and are preparing for more volume and challenging intervals in the near future. Athletes in this group are expected to attend 6 days per week including one double practice on Saturday. Each practice session runs between 150 to 180 minutes with dryland training. Swimmers generally range in age from 14 to 16.

**Senior I:** Senior Group I is the highest level within the Seacoast team and provides motivated young athletes an opportunity to train seriously and prepare for higher levels of competition. These athletes attend a minimum of 9 practices per week. Each practice session runs between 150-180 minutes. Dryland training is an integral aspect of the senior program. The dryland program includes weight training, early season running, complex circuits including obstacle

courses, medicine ball, tubing, pilates, abs, push-ups and stretching. Swimmers generally range in age from 13 up to the collegiate level.

**Transition Swimmers:** At times the coaching staff will assign a swimmer to a transition group. The goal of this group is to help the swimmer transition from one level to the next. Transitions can occur between Age Group 1 and Juniors as well as Juniors to Seniors.

**NOTE:** At times the coaching staff will merge groups, add a group or discontinue a group for a time period. The decision is based solely on what is best for all swimmers and the program overall.

## PRACTICES

**Athletes:** Athletes must attend the required number of practices per week. If an athlete will not be at a practice, they must contact their coach in advance (via email or a call to the team office) – unless an emergency condition exists.

**Parents/Family:** Seacoast requests that parents not attend practice sessions. There is a “Parents Day” at practice once a month at which parents are welcome to watch their children swim. The coaches believe that parents’ presence at practice can sometimes create unnecessary pressure. If you cannot attend the scheduled “Parents Day”, speak to your child’s coach about another date to visit the practice. Athletes are expected to be on deck with all equipment at the scheduled practice hour. Athletes who misbehave during practice will be asked to leave.

As our practice facilities are in municipal buildings, it is strongly advised athletes secure their belongings in a locked locker or bring all items on deck with them during practice and during meets. SSA and the local facility are not responsible for items lost or stolen.

## Entering Meets

The coaching staff is solely responsible for entering all team swimmers in appropriate meets and events.

## Attending Meets

Athletes will be notified of the warm-up schedule for meets. It is extremely important that athletes be at the competition pool approximately fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of warm-up. Parents of athletes are not permitted on deck during meets unless they are working on deck as an official or timer. This is the established policy of USA Swimming and of Seacoast Swimming Association. At a meet, all swimmers are expected to meet with their coach before and after each of their races as well as warm up before and warm down after an event.

# IN THE POOL

## FACILITIES

Seacoast has the use of indoor short course (25 yard) competitive pools operated by the city of Dover and the University of New Hampshire. The Jenny Thompson Competition Pool, a long course (50-meter) heated outdoor pool operated by the City of Dover is used from early May to late Summer/early Fall. Seacoast also incorporates an extensive dryland program using local facilities.

## SEASONAL SCHEDULE

Seacoast operates two seasons:

- Winter short course season that generally begins in September and ends in March.
- Summer long course season that generally begins in April and ends in early August.

Seacoast's competition schedule is developed each season. Coaches select USA Swimming sanctioned regional competitions that dovetail with the training schedule. Meets will be selected for all levels of competition to ensure that each athlete has the opportunity to improve during the season. Not all athletes will attend all meets and occasionally the team will be at more than one meet on a particular weekend. Virtually all of the competitive meets are hosted by New England Swimming teams (including Seacoast) and run as one, two or three day events on weekends. Where overnight lodging is required, Seacoast arranges a block of discounted hotel rooms for families with athletes attending the meet.

Occasionally, members of the Junior/Senior team selected by the coaches will travel as a team, with chaperones to an out of district meet. Travel arrangements (including travel and lodging) for these events are made by the team. The cost for each athlete is assessed separately from dues obligations and may include lodging, food and transportation. In the winter season, each swimmer will attend one or more of several Championship Meets in New England. At the New England Senior Championship, athletes stay together as a team.

Similar travel arrangements are made for athletes who qualify for Junior or Senior National championship meets. See the National and Regional Travel Policy set out later in this Handbook.

## TEAM MEMBERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

Membership on SSA's competitive team requires a large commitment by the athlete and his or her parent(s). This section is intended to outline the obligations that an athlete and parent undertake with membership.

## ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITY

Each member of the competitive team is required to attend regular practices and swim at meets (including relay-only swimmers) designated by the coaches. Athletes are required to follow coaches' directions at all times. Athlete misconduct may be the basis of suspension from the team.

At team home, travel meets and at national competition, athletes will dress appropriately and refrain from any activity that reflects adversely on the team. Athletes may not possess alcohol or unlawful drugs at any time. Smoking by athletes is strictly prohibited. Athletes will show sportsmanship at all times by using appropriate language, congratulating other swimmers with respect, refraining from displays of disappointment, and picking up after themselves in their team area.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

**Financial:** The substantial revenue requirements of the organization for pool rentals and employee salaries are derived from team dues and fundraising efforts. The success of fundraising is directly related to the level of team dues. The more money the team is able to generate from fundraising efforts, the less dues will have to be. Because of the significant contribution of time and energy of dedicated parents, Seacoast's team dues are lower than comparable programs in the region.

**Dues:** All team dues are required to be paid on time. Excepting special arrangements with the treasurer, a member who is delinquent in dues may be excluded from training and competition. For the current dues schedule, contact the team treasurer.

**Meets:** A parent/family member is required to work each meet session that they have a swimmer entered in. For championship-level meets that Seacoast hosts where not all our swimmers are entered, each family is required to work at least one session at the meet regardless if your swimmer qualified for the meet or not.

**EXCEPTION -** You are excused from the championship meet requirement if you:

- 1- Have a swimmer attending a higher-level meet during the same time our meet is.
- 2- Are an entry-level family in AGI only (first year only).
- 3- Obtain approval from the Team President.

## FUNDRAISING OBLIGATIONS

**Meet work assignments:** Membership on the competitive team (above Age Group II) requires support by parents when Seacoast hosts regional swim meets. Parent/Guardian Work Commitment Agreement forms are handed out to each family at the beginning of each season. This document spells out the parent obligations for each season. They need to be filled out, signed and returned to the team treasurer as soon as possible. Failure to fulfill work obligations

may result in an athlete being barred from swimming, or additional financial obligations, as set forth in the Work Commitment Agreement form. See “Running Meets” section later in this document for more information about SSA-hosted meets.

**Other Fundraising activities:** Families may be asked to raise money through various fundraising activities such as selling Ads for Seacoast Meet programs, tickets to different fundraising events and Swim-a-Thons. Details regarding fundraising are reviewed at the beginning of each season.

## HOSTING/RUNNING MEETS

Seacoast will host a number of swimming meets during a season. These meets are completely staffed and operated by team members’ parents. These meets are typically held in October, late November, early January, mid-June, mid-July and early August. Each of these meets, which may involve as many as 1,000 athletes from throughout New England is entirely run by Seacoast and requires a commitment from every family. The meets are major fundraising events, requiring much advance preparation by parents of Seacoast swimmers. All families are expected to do their share (see parent responsibility above). Revenue from these meets is a vital part of the team’s financial structure. Parents are expected to arrange their schedules to be available to work at these meets.

## JOBS

No job is less or more important than another job when running meets. There is no hierarchy of jobs. Each parent assignment is just as important as any other assignment. Jobs at meets include (but aren’t limited to), timing, running the results system, being an official, selling programs, working the concession stand, safety marshal and crowd control. At the beginning of the season, parents will be given an opportunity to “request” a particular job and that request is taken into consideration when assigning jobs. No SSA parent will be placed into a job without some training first.

## WORK GRID

Prior to each meet, a work grid is created and distributed to team members. Please review the grid and ask the coordinator any questions you might have. Coordinator contact information can be found on the work grid. The bulk of the work falls into two categories: running the meet and running the concession stand.

The work grid will also contain information on concession food assignments. When a food is assigned to you, please make every effort to supply the item assigned. We count on parent donations to keep our overhead down. The food is expected at the first session you have a swimmer entered, unless otherwise noted. Please bring food on the specified day. Bring just what the grid specifies, a gallon of juice, etc. Each family is generally asked for two items. These items must be checked in upon your arrival.

## SEACOAST'S CONCESSION

Seacoast's concession is considered by many coaches, parents and athletes in the region as "New England's Best Concession." Over the years many people have worked very hard to earn this reputation. Our reputation is due to the significant contribution of time and energy of its dedicated parents doing their share of work and concession food assignments. Please remember that the work belongs to all of us, not just a few. If everyone does his/her share, we should be able to spell each other so no one is on their feet all day. We will trade off or pair you with another parent so you can see your own child swim. You will receive your assignments via a grid. The grid will contain your work and concession food assignment.

When assigned to work at the concession, you should be there at least 15 minutes prior to your child's warm-up time and plan to stay until the end of his or her session. A team assignment coordinator will be listed on the grid for you to call with questions.

When preparing food for the concession stand, there are a few things to keep in mind. The first is value; in order to make money we also must offer reasonable portions. When packaging any food, ask yourself, "Would I feel good about paying \$.50 for this?" Please follow the exact guidelines for each item requested. If you have questions feel free to contact the coordinator.

## COMMUNICATION

Seacoast believes in open two-way, honest and professional dialogs are the best way to communicate between coach, swimmer and parent.

**Team level topics:** Specific information such as practice schedules, meet entries and other pertinent information will be communicated through various methods such as the Family File folders, weekly e-mails, Website and the Team bulletin board. It is the individual family's responsibility to regularly check these locations for team communications.

**Individual swimmer topics:** All parents are encouraged to talk with their swimmer's coach regularly about their swimmers. However, it is important to remember that the coaches need to focus on the swimmers during the actual practice. Parents should not initiate discussions right before the practice and not interrupt the coaches during the practice unless there is a true emergency. If you need to speak with one of the coaches, make arrangements to meet with the coach well before practice or after practice. Phone appointments are also recommended.

General Topics: If you have further concerns, you may always contact the Team President.

## EQUIPMENT

Unlike many sports, the equipment requirements of swimming are minimal. Each member of the competitive team is required to have a team suit, team cap and team shirt for competition, fins, goggles and pull buoy for training. Optional equipment includes team warm up apparel and gear, which can be individually ordered. Seacoast has an equipment manager who maintains and sells equipment to team members.

# TRAVEL

## ROOM RESERVATION POLICY

For swim meets that require overnight accommodations, Seacoast will book a block of rooms at a hotel convenient to the swim venue. Information on the block of rooms, dates, rates, phone number, address, contact person, and availability of late checkout will be posted and included in newsletters. A cut off date will be set by the hotel, after which the guaranteed rate may not be honored. Each family must book its own room for those nights the family intends to stay. Families must indicate they are with Seacoast to get the negotiated room rate. For team travel meets, such as New England Seniors, where athletes stay together as a team with chaperones, Seacoast will secure rooms, coordinate transportation and meals. Advance payment is required for these meets. Additional rooms will be held as a block for parents under the same conditions set forth above.

It is Seacoast policy that, except for team travel meets athletes less than 18 years of age may not stay at an overnight meet without parent(s). If an athlete's parent is not available, that family may arrange for another family staying at the hotel to be responsible for the athlete. Seacoast does not assume responsibility for an athlete who stays at a hotel during a meet without a parent or responsible adult.

## REGIONAL AND NATIONAL TRAVEL POLICY

Seacoast Swimming Association has among its purposes the goal of developing the maximum potential of each individual athlete in its program. Seacoast has a commitment to assist the families of swimmers who qualify for national championships in meeting the travel expenses for attending such meets.

To the extent funds are available from fund-raising events, Seacoast will provide financial assistance for:

- Hotel rooms for individual and relay swimmers as well as coach(es) during national championship meets.
- Local ground transportation for swimmers and coach(es) between hotel and competition forum.

### **NOTES:**

- Swimmers who qualify for any reimbursement for national meets from New England Swimming must agree to have the reimbursements paid to Seacoast Swimming Association as a condition for Seacoast's financial support to each swimmer.
- Swimmers in individual events who do not qualify for available reimbursement from New England Swimming are required to finance their own proportionate share of hotel and local travel expenses in national championships.
- Swimmers who qualify for reimbursement of travel expenses from USA Swimming based on criteria set by USA Swimming for national championships meets will be entitled to retain all such awards.

## TRAVEL RULES

By agreeing to enter the meet each athlete and family acknowledges that it is the swimmer's responsibility to follow this policy. Chaperones will be available to assist swimmers in defining and meeting this responsibility. They will expect swimmers to represent themselves and their team appropriately. Anyone who violates this policy or otherwise engages in improper conduct will be scratched from the meet. They may also be sent home at their family's expense. That individual may not attend another team travel meet and may be suspended from the team.

The following rules are in effect for all team travel meets and for all national competition:

- All room assignments will be made by the coaches.
- All swimmers will follow coaches' guidelines on eating.
- Room curfews will be established and enforced, including the final night of the trip. Male athletes will not be permitted in female athlete's rooms and vice versa.
- Swimmers will follow the directions of the chaperones and coaches.
- All swimmers must be on time for team meetings and departures scheduled from the hotel/pool.
- Swimmers may not leave the swimming forum or hotel unless specifically permitted by a coach/chaperone. No excuses will be accepted.
- Rooms will be inspected randomly and before departure. Any damage will be the responsibility of the room's occupants.
- See athlete responsibilities for further items.
- Have fun.

# MISCELLANEOUS

## USA SWIMMING REGISTRATION

Every Seacoast team member must be a registered athlete with USA Swimming. The fee includes insurance for the athlete in team related activities.

## MEET FUND

Seacoast requires athletes on the competitive team to maintain a meet fund that varies for different groups. This fund is used to pay entry fees in competition. A separate accounting of these funds is maintained and any balance in the meet fund is returned upon leaving the team, assuming all dues have been paid. Members must replenish the meet fund by the amount of entry fees paid as notice of the entry for each meet is circulated by the coaches. If a swimmer is unable to attend a particular meet, notice must be given to the coaches at least three weeks prior to the meet. Entry fees paid to enter a swimmer in a meet are not refundable if the swimmer does not swim.

## Seacoast/Charles River Diving of New Hampshire

Seacoast Diving is a USA Diving member program that was founded by Coach Amy Parratto in 1985. Beginning in the fall of 2002, Seacoast Diving merged with Charles River Diving out of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Seacoast Diving is part of Charles River Diving.

There are two different practice groups at the Dover, New Hampshire site. Novice divers practice 60 to 75 minutes twice a week. Junior Olympic level divers practice four to five times per week for 105 minutes per practice. Practices in the fall, winter and spring are held at the Dover Indoor Pool (one 1-meter board) and the University of New Hampshire (one 1-meter and one 3-meter board). Practices during the summer are held at the Jenny Thompson outdoor Pool (one 1-meter and one 3-meter board).

All practices are coached by Amy Ayres Parratto. Amy is a USA Diving Safety Certified Coach and registered coach with USA Diving. She was a five-time All-American in diving while in college and has coached diving for over 26 years. Divers in the program range in age from 7 to 17. Tryouts are scheduled by appointment only. Once a diver is accepted into the program, they must register with USA Diving. If you have any questions, please contact Coach Amy at [parratto@seacoastswimming.com](mailto:parratto@seacoastswimming.com) or (603) 749-2869.

## Team records

Updated team records can be found on line at: <http://seacoastswimming.com/teamrecords.htm>.

# 12 GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTIVE PARENTS

Few youth sports programs are successful without the support of parents. Below are a few guidelines for parents to keep in mind as we strive to be supportive of our young athletes.

Supportive parents:

- Focus on mastering sport skills and strategies rather than competitive ranking. Sport mastery focuses on performance, which can be controlled by the athlete, while competitive rank and an under emphasis on sport mastery is a primary cause of the dramatic dropout rate from competitive sports by 12 to 18 year olds.
- Decrease the pressure to win. Supportive parents realize that sport creates its own pressure to succeed. Additional pressure from the parent is likely to be counterproductive, particularly in the long run.
- Believe that a sport's primary value is the opportunity for self-development. The probability of achieving lasting fame and glory via sport is low. Many outstanding athletes never achieve professional status, but their sports experiences have allowed them to develop lifelong values and positive self-esteem.
- Understand the risks. Competition places the athlete on center stage. Anytime you attempt to succeed publicly, you risk failing where others can see you. In the long run, competing is willingness to chance failure. Giving your best is what athletics is all about.
- Understand and respect the differences between parental roles and coaching roles. Both parents and coaches need to understand their different roles in supporting the young athlete. While parents are ultimately responsible for their child's development, once they have chosen a coach, they must leave the coaching to the coach. Even though supportive parents often play sports with their child, they avoid coaching "over the shoulder" of the coach and/or publicly questioning coaching decisions.
- Communicate their true concerns directly with the coach. A positive working relationship is based upon clearly communicated, mutual goals among parents, coaches and athletes.
- Control negative emotions and think positively. Few athletes wish to perform poorly. Negative reactions to poor performance only add to an athlete's pressures. Supportive parents realize that even the athlete who "chokes" is trying to succeed. In fact, part of the problem with many athletes is that they are trying too hard to succeed.
- Avoid the use of fear. The use of punishment and withdrawal of love can pressure kids to try to perform better. Unfortunately such strategies tend to trade short-term performance gains for long-term emotional risks to the youngster's health and well-being. Supportive parents recognize that a love for sport is rarely fostered by a fear of the consequences of failure.
- Avoid criticizing. Nagging parents often confuse support with constantly reminding the children that they need to practice more, condition more, concentrate more, etc. Overly involved parents frequently lose their objectivity. They are unable to provide critical emotional support that children often need before and during highly competitive contests.
- Recognize and understand expressions of insecurity. These expressions of high anxiety are normal and need emotional support. These fears and concerns are not a sign of weakness, but normal reactions of an athlete's desire to succeed.

- Avoid the use of guilt. “We’ve done so much for you;” or, “The family has given so much, the least you could do is take advantage of what we’ve provided for you,” are typical remarks of non-supportive parents.
- Show empathy. These parents show a true understanding and awareness of the pressures in this sport. An empathetic response might be, “Yes, it probably will be a tough competition, let me help you get ready.”