

Ringgold TigerSharks



Handbook

Summer 2007

**Letter from the President of the
Ringgold TigerSharks Swim Team**

TigerShark Swimmers and Parents,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I enthusiastically welcome you to the 2007 summer league season. Our objective is to organize and run a quality swim program that encourages and develops swimming skills, sportsmanship and teamwork. We focus on improving technique and performance. Though the TigerShark Team is very competitive, it is also designed to have a lot of fun. Please remember that we hold safety, good sportsmanship and conduct above all other aspects.

Competitive swimming is one of the best sports available to youth today. Through competition, it gives immediate individual feedback while developing a commitment to teamwork. When individual team members make a commitment to challenge themselves and improve, team success follows.

Swimming is a "family sport", which is another way of saying the team needs you to volunteer. Swimming provides ample opportunities to "actively" participate with your children in the experience. Volunteers are needed to, setup the pool for competition, organize swimmers, time races, sell concessions, and many other activities. During swim meets, more than 20 parents are needed to staff various positions. Some positions require league training and certification, but by far the majority does not. Please volunteer and participate wherever you can to help us ensure that our children experience competition that is well run and fair.

The TigerSharks have a long history of excellence. Last year, the TigerSharks moved up to the more challenging Blue Division and with a season filled with strong swims and fast times we were able to maintain a spot in the fastest of the CASL divisions. Many TigerSharks develop continuing interest and successful careers in competitive swimming. I personally regard our swimmers, coaching staff and volunteers as the best in the league. Our success and competitive accomplishments are widely envied; therefore, our conduct is closely scrutinized. Let us all, swimmers, parents and coaches, resolve to lead by example and hold ourselves to the greatest standards of conduct, fairness and sportsmanship in the league.

As we go through this season, please remember that your commitment to help and support your children is the reason that this team is so successful! Thank you for joining us, and I hope the experience is one that you will treasure and never forget, not for the hours in the hot summer sun, but for smiles on children faces as they swim a personal best, or as their relay team squeaks out a hard fought win, or as a group stand by the pool cheering for a teammate, or for the friends you will make. Welcome to the 2007 Ringgold TigerSharks!

Sincerely,

Jim Chow

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of the 2007 TigerShark Swim Team Board of Directors are provided below. If you would like to volunteer in any way, please contact any board member below.

Jim Chow (<i>President</i>) jim.chow@ge.com (home) 706-965-7506 (work) 706-638-5100 ext 549 (cell) 423-313-4339	Cathy Clifford (<i>Vice President</i>) cclifford@aol.com (home) 423-894-4986 (work) 423-855-7091 or 855-4999 (cell) 240-4063
Dale Conerly (<i>Treasurer</i>) (work) - (cell) -	Mike Patrick (<i>Pool Rep</i>) mfpatric@catt.com (cell) 423-596-7671
Linda Carabo (<i>Secretary</i>) dcarabo@bellsouth.net (home) 706-937-7701 (cell) 423-667-8343	Joey Fitzgerald (<i>Head Coach</i>) (home) 706-281-2629 (cell) 706-537-8893
Toni Chow (<i>Special Events</i>) (cell) 423-313-4340	

CHATTANOOGA AREA SWIM LEAGUE

The Ringgold Swim Team swims in the Chattanooga Area Swim League (CASL). CASL is a non-profit organization formed for the purpose of sponsoring competitive and developmental swimming events and activities in and between the community swimming pools in the Chattanooga and north-Georgia areas. CASL rules and guidelines govern all CASL meets. The following documents are available on www.chattanoogaswim.com:

- CASL By-Laws
- 2007 Rules & Regulations
- CASL Dual Meet Handbook

COMPETING TEAMS

There are currently 16 teams in the CASL. These teams are divided into three divisions according to competitiveness - the Blue Division, the Red Division, and the White Division.

Blue Division	Red Division	White Division
Signal Mountain	Cumberland	Ft. Oglethorpe
Dalton	Ridgeside	Fairyland
Colonial Shores	Mosby Park	Calhoun
Ringgold	Country Club	East Ridge
Red Bank	Cleveland	Hamilton Club
	Stuart Heights	

EVENTS

The majority of the summer meets are *dual meets* (two teams swimming against each other). CASL provides 2 meet officials who conduct and oversee the events. Each swimmer can be entered in a maximum of 3 individual and 2 relay events. The assignment of swimmers to various events is the responsibility of the coaching staff. To be able to compete in an event, the swimmer must be able to complete the stroke correctly. Incorrect execution of a stroke results in disqualification (DQ) and the loss of points for the team.

The staff recognizes dedication to practice and reliability of the swimmer. *The coaching staff must try to balance participation with the best line-up for the team's benefit.*

A swimmer's age for purposes of competition is their age on June 1. A swimmer does not change age groups during the season. Birth certificates will be required of all swimmers who plan on attending the GRPA District and State Meets. Events include the following:

Event	8 & under	9 and over
Freestyle	25 yards	50 yards
Breaststroke	25 yards	50 yards
Butterfly	25 yards	50 yards
Backstroke	25 yards	50 yards
Individual Medley	N/A	100 yards
Freestyle Relay	100 yards (4 swimmers x 25 yards)	200 yards (4 swimmers x 50 yards)
Medley Relay	100 yards (4 swimmers x 25 yards)	200 yards (4 swimmers x 50 yards)

At meets, swimmers compete against other swimmers of the same sex and age group. There are five age groups: 8 and under, 9 & 10, 11 & 12, 13 & 14, and Seniors. A meet includes competition in seven event types. There are five individual events: Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Individual Medley. There are two relays: Freestyle Relay and Medley Relay. Each age group participates in each event type except those swimmers under age 9 do not swim Individual Medley.

Swimmers are limited by CASL rules to three individual events per meet and up to two relays. All swimmers who are not swimming for points are encouraged to swim in the exhibition heats. Exhibition heats are timed and recorded.

In addition to the dual meet schedule, CASL teams are invited to participate in the end of the year City Meet. The CASL City Meet is a two-day swim meet, which will be held this year at the Baylor School in Chattanooga. Swimmers from the teams in all three CASL divisions will compete in the meet. The city meet is a fun and exciting experience for both new and experienced swimmers. It is also one of the few meets for which TigerShark swimmers have the opportunity to select their own events. Details and registration forms will be distributed later in the season. All league teams compete in this meet for top honors in each division. Please plan to participate in this meet!

2007 CASL DUAL MEET SCHEDULE

June 11	BYE
June 14	Dalton @ Ringgold (6:00)
June 18	Ringgold @ Signal Mountain (5:30)
June 21	Colonial Shores @ Ringgold (6:00)
June 25	Ringgold @ Red Bank (5:30)
June 28	BYE
July 9	Ringgold @ Dalton (5:30)
<u>July 10</u>	<u>Red Bank @ Ringgold (6:00)</u>
<u>July 12</u>	<u>Signal Mountain @ Ringgold (6:00)</u>
<u>July 16</u>	<u>Ringgold @ Colonial Shores (5:30)</u>
<u>July 17</u>	<u>Red Bank @ Ringgold (6:00)</u>
<u>July 23</u>	<u>Makeup date</u>

CASL MEETS

Each competing CASL team participates in eight regular season meets. Each of these meets matches two teams in the same division. Following the regular season, a final CASL City Meet is held.

Start time for meets are as follows: Colonial Shores and Ringgold begin at 6:00; Red Bank, Dalton and Signal Mountain begin at 5:30. Plan to arrive at the host pool no later than 30 minutes before the meet begins. This is essential to allow ample time for warm-ups and final coaching instructions. Maps to away meets can be found on the team website (www.tigersharks.net) or the CASL website (www.chattanoogaogaswim.com). Maps will also be available at the Ringgold city pool.

WELCOME TO THE TIGERSHARKS!

The safety and well being of your child is of the utmost concern to us. The following guidelines have been set to help ensure their safety. Please discuss these rules with your children so that everyone understands what is expected.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. If dropped off, go immediately inside the fence to the pool area. All children must stay in the fenced pool area during practice.
2. Do not climb on the lifeguard stands. City pool rules must be observed at all times. Remember - there is no lifeguard on duty.
3. A swimmer should inform one of the coaches if he/she leaves the pool to go to the restroom or must leave practice early.
4. During a meet, no one is allowed in any part of the pool unless they are participating in an event. This includes dangling feet in areas not used for competition.
5. No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products are allowed at practices or meets.
6. The diving board is off limits except when supervised by a coach.
7. Swimmers are expected to stay with their practice group for the duration of the practice.
8. If a swimmer needs to leave the group for any reason he/she must first notify the coach.
9. Any swimmer that is at the pool but not involved in a practice should be sitting in the covered area (pavilion).

Swimmers must maintain good self-discipline. During practices or meets, if a swimmer misbehaves excessively, a coach or board member will contact the swimmer's parents. If the swimmer's behavior does not improve, he/she will be dropped from the team. Under this circumstance, registration fees will not be refunded. This is entirely at the discretion of the board and/or coaches.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Parents are welcome to stay and observe practices but we request that you follow a few general guidelines:

1. **Avoid distracting the coaches and the swimmers during practice.**
The coaches need to keep their full attention on the swimmers at all times so please wait until a break or until after practice is over to talk to a coach.
2. **Leave the coaching to the Coaches!** Our staff has been selected for their training and experience in competitive swimming and they will be able to give your swimmer the best possible coaching. Again, if you have a concern about something your swimmer is or is not doing then feel free to discuss it with the coach (after practice of course!). However, you should keep in mind that our summer program is not geared towards intense skill development – there is simply not enough time for this during the brief summer season. There are several year-round programs in the area that provide more opportunity for stroke and skill development.
3. **Have reasonable expectations!** Although there is some stroke instruction during practice – especially for the younger swimmers, our summer program is not a replacement for swim lessons. A beginning swimmer may still benefit from some private or group lessons if he/she is having difficulty with a particular stroke. If you want to see further development in your swimmer's skills, talk to the head coach about swim lesson possibilities.
4. **Be willing to pitch in when asked.** There are often times during practice when a coach or board member can use some help getting something moved, sorted, written, filed etc. Your help is always appreciated.
5. **Be supportive of swimmers and coaches at the meets and be respectful of the competition.** The coaches spend a lot of time putting the line up together trying to balance competition and participation. The day of the meet is NOT the time to question or undermine the coach's decisions. If you have a concern about lineups or your swimmer's events, you can talk to the head coach AFTER the meet or contact a Board member.
6. **TigerShark parents are expected to display sportsmanlike conduct during all meets.** During swim meets, any questions or complaints about actions of the officials or the opposing team must be directed to the Pool Representative, who will relay the question or complaint to the Referee. CASL rules prohibit parents or swimmers from approaching Judges and/or the Referee directly, only an official league representative may do so. Disregarding this rule could cause the team to incur sanctions or prompt your removal from the competition. Please represent yourself, your swimmer and the team well by being courteous and respectful of officials as well as all other meet volunteers
7. If you have any other questions or concerns, please direct them to a board member.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

All practices and home meets are held at the Ringgold City Pool. Practice is Monday through Friday. Practice times are listed in the following table.

Age Group	AM Practice Time	PM Practice Time
8 & Under	7:30 – 8:30	5:30 – 6:15
Beginner 9-10	7:30 – 8:30	5:30 - 6:15
Returning 9 - 10	7:30 – 8:30	6:15 – 7:30
11-12	7:30 – 8:30	6:15 – 7:30
13-14	7:30 – 8:30	6:15 – 7:30
Seniors	7:30 – 8:30	6:15 – 7:30

Parents are welcome to attend practice but are asked to stay in the picnic area under the shelter. Coaches must be able to give their undivided attention to the swimmers in the pool and so this is not a good time to speak with a coach. Please wait until after practice to talk to a coach.

Swimmers will not swim if there is thunder or lightening. Parents may wish to remain at the pool or be prepared to return early if the weather seems threatening or becomes inclement during practice time.

We practice in the rain!

Practice attendance is critical to the success of our team. Swimmers should strive to attend 5 practices per week, this can be a combination of morning and evening practices. Swimmers will benefit greatly by regular attendance at practice sessions. At practices, they receive instruction in the competitive strokes and are given an opportunity to build physical endurance. Swimmers also can keep up with the latest news as information is distributed at practices.

Swimmers should be picked up from the pool as soon as their practices are complete. The coaches will not be available to supervise swimmers who are not involved in the current practice.

Any swimmer that is at the pool before or after his/her practice time will be required to remain seated in the covered picnic (pavilion) area. This is extremely important in order to ensure the safety of our children. Our coaches cannot safely supervise a work out and monitor the activities of children that are not in the pool. This means that swimmers will not be at liberty to wander around the pool deck or play in the parking lot.

Please make sure that your swimmer is aware that this rule will be strictly enforced. You can help the team by being punctual both in delivering and retrieving your swimmers.

Swimmers should bring cap, goggles and towels to all practices. Parents should help their younger swimmers adjust their goggles before practice. It really bogs things down when swimmers stop in the middle of a lane to adjust goggles. It is also distracting when coaches have to help fix goggles.

Swim caps are recommended – especially for swimmers with long hair. The cap will help protect the hair from the chlorine and it will also keep the hair out of the swimmer's face and eyes. If a cap is not worn, long hair should be firmly secured by some other means. Swimmers are encouraged to wear TigerShark swim caps during competition.

Kickboards, swim fins, hand paddles and pull buoys are not required but older and more advanced swimmers may benefit from purchasing and bringing their own training gear. The team has a supply of kickboards and a very limited supply of other training gear.

Swimmers are expected to follow oral directions from the coaching staff. Disrespect or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. While on deck, coaches are in charge of discipline and have the authority to discipline swimmers according to the discipline policy set by the TigerShark Board.

Age appropriate disciplinary actions may include time-outs from practice, removal from practice, additional dry land exercises or additional laps. In the case of a severe or persistent behavior problem the coaches will confer with the TigerShark Board to determine the appropriate course of action.

Abusive language, lying, stealing, vandalism, horseplay, running on the pool deck and physical violence are not acceptable. Additionally, any behaviors which compromise the safety of the other swimmers or which impair the ability of other swimmers to practice will not be tolerated. These behaviors are detrimental enough to warrant strict disciplinary action and will be brought before the TigerShark Board.

SWIMSUITS

The team has chosen the TYR “Starsearch” swimsuit as the official team suit for 2006 - 2007. These particular suits are NOT required for practice or competition. While the team suit is optional, the team requires girls to wear one-piece swimsuits suitable for competition to all practices and meets. The cost for female suit is \$42.75 and \$27.75 for male jammer.

The Tiger Shark cap is part of the “uniform”. The cap is encouraged, but not required, for all swimmers unless the swimmer has a shaved head or a very close haircut. Silicon and latex swim caps and a limited selection of goggles are available for purchase.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS

Meets can be hectic and confusing. You may find it helpful to hook up with a veteran swim team family at first to learn the ropes. Let someone know if you need help.

In dual meets, all swimmers are limited to a total of 5 events, including relays. An individual may swim a maximum of 3 individual events and the two relays. At special meets (non-dual meets) the line-up of swimmers, called *Heat Sheets*, will be available for purchase on the day of the meet. During dual meets, the Ringgold line-up will be posted at the pool. At away meets, it will be posted at a central location.

Meets are held rain or shine, so bring your umbrella, sunscreen, sunglasses, water bottle, etc. Meet officials will cancel the meet in the event of thunder or lightening for safety reasons, but please do not make your own assumptions. When in doubt, show up at the meet!

It is very important for new swimmers to allow plenty of time before the meets. Swimmers need to arrive by **5:15 P.M.**, and will warm up from 5:30 to 6:00 P.M. when the meet begins at **6:00 PM**. Swimmers should arrive at **4:45 P.M.** when the meet begins at **5:30 P.M.** For both home and away meets, check in with a coach when you arrive. This is an attendance check. If you are going to be late to a meet or if you are going to miss the meet, **please** inform the coach as soon as possible. For some it is helpful and customary to write the events and heats that your child will be swimming on their arm with a ballpoint pen or sharpie marker.

Meets last 2 to 3 hours so be prepared to sit back and enjoy the swimming. Since the activities run through dinnertime, families are encouraged to think ahead about food. Concessions are usually available at each host club, or you can bring your own picnic. Listen for announcements during the dual meets for the name and location of the team get-together after home and away meets. Typically a local restaurant will be designated as the team gathering spot for an after-meet meal. All TigerShark swimmers and families are invited to come!

Each dual meet consists of 68 events. The order of these events is always the same and is as follows:

Exhibition Freestyle

Freestyle

Breaststroke

Individual Medley

Medley Relay

10 minute break

Exhibition Backstroke

Backstroke

Butterfly

Free Relay

The youngest age groups swim first. There is no individual medley in the 8 and under group. Be sure and listen to the announcer to know which heats are coming up so that your child will know when to report to the starting blocks. If the swimmer is not there on time, they will miss the event—the heat will not wait for missing swimmers.

Parents can help by ensuring their kids arrive behind the blocks before their race begins. It is absolutely necessary that all swimmers report to the staging area prior to their race. This will ensure each child's presence for each heat, eliminating last minute scrambles searching for these little ones.

Sometimes there are exhibition heats, which are not scored and occur before the scored heats. If your child is swimming in an exhibition heat, there will be an E or EX next to their name on the line-up sheet. Typically, these exhibition events occur before the freestyle and backstroke events. This is a great chance to get times for your swimmer. Your swimmer does not have to swim freestyle in the exhibition heats. Get with the coaches before the meets to determine what stroke will be most beneficial for your swimmer.

IF YOU NEED TO MISS A MEET

If you know in advance that your child will be missing a meet for any reason, it is critical that you sign out on the "absent log" hanging in the pool office **no later** than the morning of the day before the meet your child will not participate in. Don't forget to include all swimmers in the family who will be absent. Signing out allows the coaches time to prepare the best possible line-up for the upcoming meet. **An empty lane means a loss of points for the team.** Last minute changes and no-shows are unfair to the coaches and are very disappointing to the swimmers in affected relays that are then unable to swim. If unforeseen circumstances arise and your child is unable to swim the day of the meet, please call Joey Fitzgerald (home) #706-281-2629 or (cell) 706-537-8893 so the coaches can reorganize the lineups.

WHAT TO BRING TO A MEET

Your swimmers need dry warm clothes to wear between events. Experienced parents rule of thumb is: One dry towel for warm up, one towel for the meet, and one for the shower after the meet.

Many kids like to have their events written on their arms. A ballpoint or *sharpie* pen does this nicely. Swimmers should wear team suits (if they have one) and caps. They should also make sure they have their goggles (a spare pair is also nice to have on hand). Don't forget sunscreen, even on cloudy days.

Swimmers and parents will follow all rules of the host team and host pool. Swimmers should be ready for warm-ups at the designated time and place. Swimmers should be aware of what events they are swimming, a line-up will be posted for this purpose. Parents and swimmers should check the line-ups at every meet and keep up with meet progress so swimmers will know when to report for events. Events will go on with or without the swimmers that are entered in them. If a swimmer is late to the starting block he will likely find that the event has started without him and any points will have been forfeited.

TigerShark swimmers should be supportive of their teammates' efforts. Show good team spirit by cheering for teammates. Older swimmers should set good examples for younger swimmers.

Kids get hungry when they workout so plan on bringing a healthy snack and beverages or buying at the concession stand. Each host club will usually have snacks, drinks, and a variety of dinner items. The concession stand is a source of revenue for the host club, so please patronize them.

Meets may be held in rain conditions so an umbrella does come in handy for spectators. Also, not all host clubs have bleacher seats. You may want to bring your own compact, folding chairs.

LEAVING A MEET

It is imperative that the coach be notified of any early departure. Please remember that if your child swims on a relay, his/her absence will affect 3 other swimmers. Please don't leave 3 other teammates, who may have waited hours to swim, hanging.

Also remember, sometimes your child may be placed in an individual or relay event as a replacement swimmer during the meet – or may have forgotten that they are swimming in the last relay. Please check the schedule before actually leaving.

STAY WITH THE TEAM AT THE POOL DURING THE MEET

During meets, swimmers should stay near the team in the designated waiting area. They will be notified when it is time for them to report to the blocks for an event. Assistant coaches and other volunteers will assist the swimmers in getting in their appropriate heats. Ultimately, it is the swimmer's responsibility to be in the block area at the appropriate time or they could be scratched from the event.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Swimmers are judged according to the CASL Swimming Rules & Regulations for competition with the following exception. One false start is allowed before disqualification. Unfortunately, swimmers are sometimes disqualified during a race, usually for executing a start, stroke, turn or finish illegally. They may also be disqualified for early takeoff in relays. The starter and the referee may disqualify swimmers. It is important to remember that the meet referee has the ability to disqualify individual competitors for poor sportsmanship and conduct as well.

These officials have received specific CASL training. Their purpose is to assure that no swimmer gains an unfair advantage over another swimmer. When time permits, an official will seek out the swimmer or their coach to explain the reason for disqualification. Do not, under any circumstances, approach any official regarding a disqualification. By CASL rule, only an official league representative may do so. Disregarding this rule could cause the team to incur sanctions or prompt your removal from the competition.

As with any concern, please approach a board member for assistance. Please represent yourself, your swimmer and the team well by being courteous and respectful of officials as well as all other meet volunteers.

TIMES AND RECORDS

Swimmers should realize that they are competing against the clock as well as other swimmers in the water. Their goal should be to better their times at each meet. Trying to improve personal times in a particular event can be very motivational to swimmers. Parents can help swimmers track their times, so they can see how they are progressing. The Ringgold City pool is a 25-yard pool. With the exception of the East Ridge pool, all other pools used for CASL competition are 25-yard pools.

SPECIAL MEETS

TigerShark swimmers will have the opportunity to compete in several special meets throughout the summer. These meets use a different format than the CASL dual meet format. Typically, swimmers will have the option to choose the events they want to compete in. The order of events, heat assignments, and seed times are assembled in a packet known as a heat sheet. Host teams typically sell the heat sheets for \$5 to \$10. Heat sheets are a source of revenue for the host team and an absolute requirement for swimmers and their families in order to keep up with the progress of the meet and ensure the swimmers are ready when their race begins.

The special meets typically ask swimmers (especially younger swimmers) to report to the "Clerk of Course" before the event begins. The Clerk of Course ensures the swimmers are checked in and begins to assemble the event heats. Swimmers may be asked to report directly to the "Bullpen", a staging area set up near the blocks. Results for each event are typically posted near the pool 20 – 30 minutes after the last heat.

For 2007, the following is a list of the special meets for TigerShark swimmers:

Ringgold Summer Splash – June 16th

Signal Mountain Developmental Meet – June 23rd

GRPA District Meet at Ft. Oglethorpe (Georgia residents only) – July 7th

GRPA State Meet at Tifton, Georgia – July 20th and July 21st

CASL City Meet at Baylor – July 27th and July 28th

The CASL City Meet format has 8 & under and 9 -10's swimming in the morning session and the older kids in afternoons. Finals are held each night?

Special meet details will be available at practice. All questions regarding special meets should be directed to Toni Chow. Swimmers will have the opportunity to win ribbons at all special meets. All ribbons will be collected by the coaching staff and distributed at the end of year banquet.

FUNDRAISING - This year we have had to purchase new blocks and a new starter system.

It takes money to run a summer swim team, and the TigerSharks Swim Team operates on funds from a variety of sources. Revenue is derived from swim fees, corporate sponsors, concessions and fundraisers. Expenses include coach's salaries, CASL dues, insurance, t-shirts, training, equipment, and awards. The TigerSharks Board is striving to maintain the lowest swim fees possible while maintaining a quality program. Swim fees cover only a portion of the expenses incurred throughout the year. During the season several fundraising activities are currently being planned. This year we will host the first annual Ringgold Summer Splash, it is expected for all of our swimmers to attend and all parents to help volunteer. It is up to all of us to make this event a success.

AWARDS BANQUET

An annual TigerShark Banquet will be scheduled with dinner followed by presentation of awards and all earned ribbons. Tickets for the catered banquet will go on sale during the season. Please watch for the announcement and information regarding the banquet.