



MTHSSA

*Coaching
Handbook*

2008-2009

Middle Tennessee High School Swimming Association

MTHSSA

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Introduction

MTHSSA welcomes you to High School Coaching in the Middle Tennessee Region. MTHSSA is the governing body of High School Swimming in the Region, and this Coaching Handbook has been designed to help you understand the processes, and resources out there to help you, the coach, understand how MTHSSA functions. Hopefully we'll make your life easier as well.

NISCA Overview and NFHS Rulebook

NISCA stands for National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association. They are the governing body of High School swimming in the United States. NISCA also recognizes High School Swimming All-Americans for performance standards, academic standards, diving standards, and team scholar awards. More on these awards and the process to submit your swimmers for recognition will be discussed in the section titled: "NISCA All-American Awards Overview".

Coaches can join NISCA as members, to do so visit their website at www.NISCA.net and download the membership application. Membership in NISCA is not required to coach High School Swimming.

The National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) publishes the NFHS Rule Book that sets out the rules and regulations for High School Swimming. Rule changes typically take place in April. The Rule Book is handed out to our local coaches at the MTHSSA Fall Meeting. Please take the time to read it, it will answer such questions regarding stroke technique rules and scoring options.

TISCA Overview and Registration

TISCA is the acronym for Tennessee Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association. TISCA is the governing body of swimming for the State of Tennessee and establishes the rules and regulations concerning issues like State Meet Qualifying Times and Eligibility, Academic requirements to participate, Transfer Rules, and Home School Student participation guidelines. Their website is www.TISCA.net.

At the start of each season, MTHSSA Coaches shall print off the TISCA Registration Form (posted on the TISCA website or the MTHSSA website). This Form needs to be turned into the MTHSSA Treasurer during the MTHSSA Fall Meeting, and will be sent in to the TISCA Treasurer. Any team not registering by the MTHSSA Fall Meeting will be responsible for sending in the Form and Fees to TISCA themselves. Registration with TISCA is required if you want your swimmers to participate in the State Championship Meet.

TISCA is governed by an elected Board of Directors, and has two meetings per year. Once in the Fall, and again in the Winter. The Winter meeting takes place the night before the State Championship Meet starts.

MTHSSA Overview and Registration

MTHSSA is a self-governing body consisting of the collective membership of High School coaches in our Region. The governing Board is elected by the membership, and the Bylaws are approved and adopted by the membership. Membership meets twice a year. There will be a Fall meeting before the season begins at which time the member coaches schedule meets. Prior to this Fall meeting, there will be a "New Coaches" meeting conducted by the MTHSSA Board. This meeting will take place one hour before the start of the regular MTHSSA Fall Meeting. The second meeting during the year is held shortly after the season concludes. MTHSSA sponsors the MTHSSA Region Meet held two weeks before the Tennessee State High School Swimming Championships. At the Region Meet, Divisional Champions will be announced.

MTHSSA requires all High School Swim Teams wishing to participate in the High School Region Championship Meet to register as members. Registration forms can be found on our website, www.MTHSSA.net, under the Coaching Documents page. Forms and fees should be completed and sent in to the MTHSSA Treasurer by the start of November.

Admin Submissions:

1. Student-Athlete Lists

- Each school must file a team roster prior to the first competitive meet. This form will be provided by MTHSSA in the coaches' packet. Form must include:
 - 1) school name and address
 - 2) coach's name
 - 3) athlete's name (first, last)
 - 4) athlete's age and date of birth (DOB)
 - 5) athlete's current grade
 - 6) years in competition
- The roster should be sent to the Treasurer of MTHSSA with a check for the \$1.00 surcharge per athlete (please remember to include divers). Make checks payable to MTHSSA. Treasurer will report any member's failure to pay dues to the President of MTHSSA.
- The President or a designated member of the Executive Committee will send a copy of each school's roster to the President of TISCA.

MTHSSA.net Website

In the Fall of 2002 the MTHSSA membership commissioned a website to consolidate useful information and post schedules and results. The website is located at www.MTHSSA.net.

Topics on the website include:

- All-American Listing
- Board Member Contact Info
- Coaching Forms
- College Signings Listing
- Division Committee
- Links
- Meet Information
- Meet Results
- Meet Schedules
- Middle TN Diving Information
- Pool Directions
- Regional Meet Information
- School Contact Information/Quick List
- State Meet Qualifying Times
- Swimwear Suppliers

When the Meet Scheduling takes place at the MTHSSA Fall Meeting, coaches need to turn in a copy to the website "webmaster" for posting on the website. If the schedule is incomplete, you can turn in a preliminary schedule, and corrections can be emailed or faxed in later.

After Dual/Tri/Quad Meets are held, please send in the results to the webmaster. Please do not assume the competing coach will do so, duplication of score entries are better than none. Keep in mind that the webmaster will only post schedules and scores from coaches or team representatives as approved by the team coach. This is needed to reduce the chance that an enterprising student posts false scores as a joke. It is important to submit the results in a timely manner. Incomplete score submissions will delay the awarding of Division Champions and Runner-Ups at the Region Meet. If you want your Divisional Championship Team to be publicly recognized at the Region Meet, your scores need to have been sent in.

Division Placements

MTHSSA is divided into six Divisions in order to try to create fair and competitive competition during the dual meet season. Newer and/or smaller teams generally start in Division I, while the older and more established teams are in Division V or VI.

The Divisions are reviewed at the MTHSSA Spring Meeting on an annual basis, and realignments take place in order to ensure that more competitive teams move up, and those that are struggling are moved down. This is designed to foster parity within the Divisions as best as possible and to ensure that swimmers and teams are challenged in their meets. Dominant teams will not stay in a low division just so they can win their Divisional Championship every year.

In the Fall of 2005 a Division Committee was formed to review the consolidated results report provided by the webmaster, and determine the Divisional lineups each year. Each Division has a representative on the Committee.

Dual Meet/Invitational Scheduling

During the MTHSSA Fall Meeting, coaches meet with the other coaches in their Division and schedule their meets. Feel free to contact the coaches in your Division before the Fall Meeting and get a jump on scheduling. In order to be eligible for a Divisional Championship, you must swim in a scored meet versus each of the teams in your Division.

Coaches can schedule meets outside of their Divisions in order to expose their swimmers to different levels of competition before the various High School Invitationals, the Region Meet, and the State Championship Meet.

Some High Schools and USA Swimming Clubs host Invitationals throughout the year. Some Invitationals are "Open" to anyone interested in participation, and some are "Closed" with the participating teams having been specifically invited to attend.

Meet invites for some of these Invitationals are handed out at the MTHSSA Fall Meeting, while others are mailed out and/or posted on the MTHSSA.net website.

There is no limit on the number of Dual Meets or Invitationals that a High School team can attend. Usually the limiting factor is time, budgets, and pool availability.

For the proper scoring format based upon the number of pool lanes utilized, please refer to your NFHS Rule Book which is handed out at the MTHSSA Fall Meeting.

Guidelines for Meets:

- Whenever possible, should be held on Tuesday or Thursday starting November 1 and ending the week prior to Mid-State Region Championships.
- Warmups will be thirty minutes long for each team, with the host team warming up first whenever possible.
- Alternate Boys events and Girls events when co-ed. The Boys would be odd numbered events and the Girls would be even numbered events.
- Home team has even lanes, visiting team has odd lanes. In the case of a tri-meet, home team coach should provide lane assignments for visiting teams. This can be found in the NFSHSA rules book.
- Home team coach should call visiting team coach at least one week prior to a meet to verify time, location, and any other details.
- Whenever possible, the home team should invite a USS or NSL official to actively monitor the meet. This would be done so that the swimmers would be better prepared for the Championship season.

- The home team is responsible for faxing the meet results to the local newspaper(s). Upon agreement of both coaches, it is permissible for the visiting coach to be responsible for this. The intent is to create greater awareness of high school swimming in our area.
- Each team is responsible for sending dual meet results to web master within 24 hours of the conclusion of the meet. Form is posted on the MTHSSA web page at www.mthssa.net

Workers for Meets:

Unless otherwise agreed upon, the host team shall supply:

- 1 Timer per lane (*The visiting team is expected to help supply timers and there should be two timers per lane*).
- 1 Head Timer
- 1 Starter
- 2 Scorers (*visiting team should also supply 2 scorers*)
- 2 Place Judge (*2 should also be supplied from visiting team*)
- 1 Runner

Home Team should supply:

- Score sheets
- Clipboards (with order of events attached)
- Pencils
- Lap Counters (can ask visiting team coach for help with this one)
- Starting Equipment if available
- Enough watches for home team timers (*Visiting teams should supply their own watches*)

Entry Cards/Sheets - will conform to a standard format agreed upon by the MTHSSA and will include the following:

- First and last name of swimmer
- Name of event
- Name of school
- Distance of event
- Lane Assignment of swimmer

NOTE: Cards should be filled out prior to the start of the meet.

Relays - Must be completely filled out with each swimmer's name listed on each card. Swimmers actually swimming the race should be indicated.

Events - No swimmer may swim more than 4 events total, consisting of no more than two (2) individual events in a dual meet or championship meet.

Scoring - Federation guidelines should be followed at all times (see current rule book). Official scoring sheets will be distributed in the coaches' packet given at fall meeting.

Results - Federation guidelines should be followed at all times (see current rule book). The home team (or visiting team if agreed upon) is responsible for faxing results to the local newspapers by 8:00 p.m. the day of the meet. A fax form will be available on the website.

MTHSSA Region Meet

"Region" as it is popularly called is the end of year Regional Championship that brings together all the MTHSSA teams to swim against each other regardless of Division lines. The meet was started by Excel Aquatics years ago and has evolved to be one of the largest High School meets in the State, if not the largest. The Meet is typically held the second Friday in February, or two weeks before the State Championship Meet. It is a Timed Finals format meet (i.e. it is not a Prelim/Finals format). In the Fall of 2005 it was decided that the meet be opened to bid by any local entity that wishes to host it.

2006-2007 marks the first year that Qualifying Times have been instituted for the Region Meet. This was done to gain control of the size and time-line of the meet in accordance with a request from the Centennial Sportsplex. The Region Meet it is open to all swimmers on High School teams, as well as all Home School students who meet the Region Qualifying Times. For more information on the Region Meet, visit the MTHSSA.net website and look for the Region Records, Meet Information, and Meet Results.

In order to participate in the Region meet a school must be a member of MTHSSA and is current on their dues.

Like Invitational meets, there are entry fees for the teams to participate.

Division Awards

At the conclusion of the MTHSSA Region Meet, the Division Awards for the Dual Meet Season are given out. The Champions in the Girls, Boys, and Combined categories are given out for each Division. These awards are based on the results from the dual meet season, and if there are any delays in submission of the results then awards in a division may be delayed.

If there are teams with identical records in contention for the Champion or Runner-Up awards, then the first tie-breaker will be who won in heads-up competition. Because of the differences in scoring based on pool lanes available in a meet, we cannot use score totals for the second tie-breaker. In the event of a three way tie with no clear winner after the first tie-breaker, the decision for the award is in the hands of the MTHSSA Board.

TISCA State Meet

The State of Tennessee High School Swim Meet is hosted by TISCA. The time frame is typically on a Friday and Saturday, the latter part of February, and is a Prelim/Finals meet format. The location is up for bid by TISCA to any entity that wishes to host it.

There are qualifying times which swimmers have to obtain during the season at their respective Dual meets, Invitationals, or Region Meet. Those qualifying times are posted at the TISCA website (tisca.net), and are linked from the mthssa.net website. The times are posted in both yards and meters format, and are reviewed annually in order to keep the meet as competitive as possible.

Like the Region Meet and Invitationals, there are entry fees for the teams that participate.

NISCA All-American Awards Overview

Every year NISCA awards All-American status upon swimmers that have achieved certain time standards. The time standards are posted on the NISCA website, nisca.net. There are two levels, Automatic and Consideration. If your swimmer achieves an Automatic time, they are automatically eligible for All-American status. NISCA awards 130 "All-American" winners in each event per year, all others who were submitted are listed as "Consideration All-Americans".

Please note above the term "eligible". Just because your swimmer makes the time does not mean they will be recognized by NISCA. You, as their coach, have to fill out and file the All-American Application and submit it to NISCA before the deadline. The application forms for Swimming and Diving can be found on the NISCA website, and are also on the MTHSSA.net website.

Academic All-American awards are also issued by NISCA. This is only available to High School Seniors, and requires a minimum GPA from 7 semesters of High School, using a NISCA formula, as well as a minimum of three years participation in High School swimming by the nominated swimmer. It is not swimming performance based, but rather a recognition based on academics and participation in High School swimming. Again the responsibility with ensuring that your student/athlete receives this type of award rests with you, their coach. If you do not submit, they will not receive the honor.

In the past few years, NISCA has also instituted the Team Scholar Award. It takes your team's cumulative GPA for all swimmers and has three different levels of awards ranging from Bronze to Gold. What's the recurrent theme with these 3 awards? Yes, you as the coach have to submit the application for the Team Scholar award if you want your team to be recognized, if eligible.

Forms for these all of these different awards are located on the NISCA website (www.Nisca.net), as well as the MTHSSA website.

Middle School Meets

In the last two years there has been a movement to start Middle School Swim Teams, and as a result several Middle School Invitational Meets have started. As of now Middle School swimming is very informal in organizational structure and operates under High School rules and meet event formats. Scheduling for these meets, and discussion of the details, typically has occurred at the Fall Meeting of MTHSSA. The MTHSSA website has started listing Middle School Invitational Meet Information when submitted, and this can be found under "Middle School Meets" link as well as the "Meet Information" page.

Team Manager Software

"Team Manager for Swimming" is computer software that has been developed and published by Hy-Tek to help you manager the administrative and performance information for your High School Swim Team. Many of the High School Invitationals are held at pools where electronic timing takes place, and the software systems used for that typically use Meet Manager software by Hy-Tek. Both the Region and State Meet prefer for electronic submission of entries. Team Manager allows for you to electronically submit your meet entries to meets utilizing electronic timing in a seamless fashion that helps minimize entry errors. After the conclusion of these large meets, you can download the Team Manager results file from the host team's website and import it into your Team Manager software. You can then easily analyze and compare the performance of your swimmers with prior performances.

Team Manager also includes Workout Manager, a feature that allows you to write workouts for your team and analyze the different energy levels applied.

More information on Team Manager and other Hy-Tek products can be found on their website, www.Hy-TekLTD.com. Since your school is a member of MTHSSA then they qualify for a discount from Hy-Tek. When placing the order be sure to ask for the MTHSSA discount.

Conclusion

This Handbook is a work in progress. If you find any errors, glaring omissions, or have any suggestions for new topics, please feel free to email us at coachbarnes@charter.net.