

THE DALLES
SWIM TEAM



2008
NEW FAMILY
HANDBOOK

THE DALLES SWIM TEAM
PO BOX 157
THE DALLES, OR 97058

www.tdswimteam.org

The Mission of The Dalles Swim Team is to support swimmers from learn-to-swim through regional, state and national competition by providing an enjoyable, competitive swimming experience by developing individual proficiency while encouraging life-long fitness and family recreation.

Welcome to The Dalles Swim Team and the world of competitive swimming.

Board of Directors

	Responsibility	Phone	E-mail
Traci Waddington	Manager	509-767-0589	Dir.traci.waddington@tdwimteam.org
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If you have any comments or concerns you are welcome to contact any of the members directly or please feel welcome to attend a board meeting, the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at Spooky's Pizza. If you are interested in serving as a Board member, contact president Traci Waddington.

Team Communication

The first primary source of TDST communications is the Team Bulletin Board located on the outside of the fence at the Ted Walker Swimming Pool, to the west of the locker rooms. Meet schedules, Meet entries, Meet results, Calendar, Coach's newsletter, and other important items will be posted there.

The second primary source of TDST communications is the "family file". Each family will have a folder sorted by last name in the rolling filing cabinet on the pool deck during all practices. Information on upcoming meets, events, fundraisers, newsletters, notes from various sources and miscellaneous communications will frequently be added to your file. In addition, you may place information and items in the file of the Team Manager, Board members, coaches or other families. Everyone is STRONGLY encouraged to check his or her family's files regularly. In fact, make it a daily habit!

TDST also has an up-to-date web site: www.tdswimteam.org.

And finally, just being around other swim families is still some of the best communication that goes on. Try to enter as many swim meets as possible, spend time

at the pool watching practices, and attend the team get-togethers. Find other parents who have “been around” awhile and know the ins and out of swimming and learn from them. Don’t be shy! A successful swim team becomes sort of like an extended family, with everyone looking out for each other as well as cheering each other on.

Volunteering

TDST is an all-volunteer, parent-run organization, with the exception of our coaches, who are paid. Volunteerism, however, is the lifeblood of our swim team and what keeps it running. Without parents generously volunteering their time, there would be no TDST. Make no mistake, TDST needs you!

Each family with a swimmer on the team is an essential part of the volunteer commitment needed to make our season a success. Therefore, we require that each family commits to volunteering for TDST.

Our greatest need for volunteers is at the Ted Walker Swim Meet (July 11-13), and this year, the Oregon Trail meet (August 8-10) as well. Please mark those dates on your calendar so you are available to help.

Splash and Dash

On Thursday evening, June 19th at 6:30 pm, TDST starts off the summer season with a practice swim meet at the Ted Walker Memorial Pool. At 6:30 pm, swimmers and coaches will put the lane lines into the water, and do warmups, while Board members have a parent meeting. Then swimmers will do their races, while parents do the timing, and everyone will enjoy dessert after the swimming is complete. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets.

Goldendale fun meet

On Saturday morning, June 21st, the Goldendale swimmers host a fun practice meet in their 25-yard pool. Warmups will begin at 8:30 am, events at 9:00 am. After events are over, swimmers can free swim, including a water slide, and lunch will be available for a fee. Bring your lawn chairs. The pool is rented for swim team until 2:00 pm.

We are hosting 2 swim meets this summer!

Ted Walker Invitational Swim Meet - July 11th, 12th & 13th

Meet Director: Traci Waddington

This is The Dalles Swim Team’s summer invitational swim meet. We invite not only the other teams in our district, but many from the Willamette Valley area, the Oregon coast,

and Southern Oregon. Total swimmer count usually exceeds 300. All parents must sign up for a volunteer position. If you didn't sign up at the annual meeting, please contact a Board member to sign up.

Oregon Trail (District) Invitational Meet – Aug. 8th, 9th & 10th

Meet Director: Traci Waddington

This is the final meet of the season, and rotates between The Dalles, Pendleton and LaGrande. We are hosting it this year. Unlike our other meets, this meet has prelims and finals rounds for all swimmers age 11 & Over. This means swimmers who qualify in the morning events will swim the same events again in the afternoon. 10 & Under swimmers will still swim timed finals events during the morning only. The meet is primarily for our "district" teams, but we call it an invitational to allow us to invite other teams at our discretion. We need all parents to sign up for a volunteer position at this meet also. If you didn't sign up at the annual meeting, please contact a Board member to sign up.

Team Structure

Practice location and schedule

All practices will be at the Ted Walker Memorial Swimming Pool located at 502 West 2nd, The Dalles, 541-298-2020.

TDST has the pool from 6:30 am to 10:30 am, and from 4:30 to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Goldendale swimmers practice from 8:30 to 10:00 am in Goldendale 4 days a week, and in The Dalles on Thursdays.

Practice Groups

The coaching staff will be evaluating all new swimmers on June 13th from 4:30 to 5:30 pm, and doing a skills assessment to determine where each swimmer should be placed. If swimmers are not determined to be ready for swim team, all fees will be refunded.

The coaches of the team may move swimmers to different squads as needed to best fit the mix of the team and the swimmers' needs. It is possible for coaches to invite swimmers to move up a squad even if all standards have not yet been met, if the coach feels it is in the best interest of the team and the swimmer. If a swimmer wants to set a goal to move up to the next squad, they should be talking with the coaches to set goals and workout methods to help them demonstrate their ability to benefit the team.

The following are guidelines only for practice groups:

Gold Squad

Minimum age 13 **and** demonstrated ability to swim 100 meters legally of each of the four strokes, including legal flip turns on freestyle and backstroke, a legal 200 individual medley, **and** strong desire to improve personal best times and firm commitment to working hard at practices toward this goal, **OR** if under 13, must have appropriate age-group “A” times in at least 4 events, and all other Gold Squad standards.

Silver Squad

Minimum age 9 **and** demonstrated ability to swim legally 50 meters of butterfly and breaststroke, 100 meters of freestyle and backstroke with legal flip turns, and a 200 individual medley, **and** minimum of 1 appropriate age-group “B” time, **and** strong desire to improve stroke technique and personal best times with firm commitment to working hard at practices toward this goal, **OR** if under 9, must have 8 and under “A” times in at least 4 events, and all other Silver Squad standards.

Bronze Squad

Demonstrated ability to swim 50 meters freestyle unassisted, without stopping, **and** the width of the pool backstroke, **and** strong desire to improve stroke technique with firm commitment to working hard at practices toward this goal.

Fishies

Minimum age 5, **and** demonstrated ability to swim width of pool in any manner, face in the water, unassisted, **and** demonstrated ability to listen to coach and accept instruction.

Summer Registration Fees

	TDST Summer Team Dues	Oregon Swimming Summer Registration
1 swimmer per family	\$85	\$29
2 swimmers per family	\$155	\$58
3 swimmers per family	\$210	\$87
4 swimmers per family	\$250	\$116
5 swimmers per family	\$290	\$145

An individual or family season pool pass will also need to be purchased from Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation District, 1505 West 1st St, 296-9533, to participate in TDST summer swim program. Swimmers will not be able to begin practices until they have a pool pass.

Swimmers that swam on this year’s Spring Swim Team do not need to pay for Oregon Swimming Summer Registration; they have an annual registration that was paid for at Spring Swim Team Registration.

Team Suits for 2008

Girl’s suits will be *TYR* Titan Splice Black & Blue (093) with the price about \$44.95 and for the boy’s jammers will be *TYR* Titan Splice Black & Blue (093) priced about \$24.95. Our team suits are available at Shortt Supply Co. in Hood River this year. We encourage you to stop by soon and purchase your suits or have them ordered so that there is time for them to arrive before the season starts.

Swim Meets

It is important that swimmers be placed in competitions where they have the opportunity to succeed and achieve positive results. For this reason, USA Swimming has established guidelines for varying levels of competition throughout the nation. Each competitive swim meet is assigned a level or levels, indicating which time standards are required to swim in the meet, either faster or slower (check oregonswimming.org for current time standards). USA Swimming uses age groups and time standards associated with letters to help identify the type of meet and who may compete.

Age Groups

Meets are usually divided by gender in the following age groups, allowing swimmers to compete with athletes their own age: 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15 & over. There are a few variations, but these are the most common.

Meet Classifications

Dual Meet	Between two teams
A Meet	Open to swimmers who have equaled or bettered the listed “A” time standard
A/B Meet	Open to swimmers who have equaled or bettered the listed “A” or “A/B” time standard
B/C Meet	Open to all swimmers who have not achieved “A” time standards
A/B/C Meet	Open to all swimmers

Invitational Meet	Only certain teams are invited
Open Meet	Any team may enter
Timed Finals	Swimmers swim once, places determined by time in heats
Prelim/Finals	A meet with preliminary heats to determine who swims in finals (usually contested later that day)
Long Course (LC)	50 meter pool
Short Course Yards (SCY)	25 yard pool
Short Course Meters (SCM)	25 meter pool

TDST 2008 Meet Schedule

June 19	Splash-n-Dash (The Dalles)
June 21	Goldendale
June 30	Dual Meet w/ Hood River (The Dalles)
July 11-13	Ted Walker Memorial (The Dalles)
July 12-13	OSI 10 & Under Championships (Albany)
July 18-20	Pendleton
July 24-27	OSI 11 & Over Championships (Eugene)
August 2-3	Hood River
August 8-10	Oregon Trail Invitational (The Dalles)

Meet Entry Fees

\$10 one day
 \$20 weekend
 \$5/day if only swimming one event in a day

Meet Fee Due Dates

<u>Swim Meet</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Dual meet	June 25
Ted Walker	July 2
OSI 10 & Under Champ.	July 2
Pendleton	July 9
OSI 11 & Over Champ.	July 16

Hood River

July 23

Oregon Trail Invitational

July 30

Entering a Swim Meet

To enter a meet, fill out the “Meet Attendance Form” (at the May registration meeting, or from the Family File, or at www.tdswimteam.org) for swimmers attending. Make sure you circle which day(s) you will be swimming! Also, a new requirement this year is for a parent to sign up to time at the meet for every family attending. Don't forget to circle your time/day preference.

Turning in entries:

Give completed form and check or money order to our new administrative assistant, who will be on-deck at all morning practices, from 7-11 am. At that time, she will register you for the meet, and allow you to select your event preferences. Do not give entries to the coaches!

Late registration:

For away meets, TDST turns in the list of swimmers at least 1 week ahead of time, often more than that. Most teams do not accept late registrations. Late registration will be at the discretion of the administrative assistant and the Board.

Posting of Meet Entries

Meet entries are due on Wednesdays. The next day, on Thursday, the list of swimmers and events will be posted on the bulletin board at the pool. **Swimmers (or parents) are responsible for checking that they have been correctly entered in a meet, and notifying the administrative assistant of any errors immediately on Thursday!** Final entries will be sent to hosting team on Fridays.

Swimmer cancellation

If you have signed up for a meet, and have to cancel, you must notify the administrative assistant immediately. This gives the coaches time to replace you in any relays in which you have been placed. If meet entries have already been sent in, you will not get a refund of your entry fee. Coaches must have this information prior to the meet, so that they can “scratch” you from the entries.

Before the Meet

Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated, keeping muscles stretched. Stay away from sugary and fatty food, and carbonated drinks. Eat nutritious food, high in protein and carbohydrates.

At the Swim Meet

Weather Be prepared for any kind of weather during the weekend. Warm clothing, sweatshirts, sweatpants, and even a sleeping bag or blankets are good to have.

Items to Bring Team suit and extra suit, swim cap, competition goggles and extra pair, two or three towels, sunscreen, cards/games/books, lawn chairs, blanket to lie on, skin lotion, water bottle, highlighter, sharpie marker, pen/pencil.

Heat Sheet Be sure to buy this at the meet as soon as they're available. This will be your guide for the weekend. In it are all the swimmers' entries into their events, including heat and lane, and a lot of great info about each meet. You will want a highlighter to mark the swimmers' events, a pen to write down their times, and a sharpie to write their event, heat and lane on their arm. This allows referees or officials to quickly check and make sure the swimmer is in the right place.

Warmups and Events It is the responsibility of each swimmer to be on time for warm ups and their events. If possible, write down the day's events on the back of the swimmers hand or forearm **prior** to warmups. Otherwise, you have to wait and get their skin completely dry before writing on it. Swimmers should also check with their coach to see if they're in a Relay. If you can't make it for your event for any reason, let your coach know ASAP.

Timers At each swim meet, our team will be expected to provide parent *timers*. Each family needs to provide one parent timer at each meet in which they have a swimmer entered. The administrative assistant will coordinate parent time slots. With all the parent volunteers, time slots will be much shorter. Please pay attention to time, and show up for your time slot on time!

Eating Concession stands are available at most meets. However, it is advisable to bring a cooler with nutritious snacks and plenty to drink, especially water. Suggested foods:

breakfast: bagel with cream cheese, non sugary cereal, fruit, juice, hard boiled egg, waffles or pancakes, eggs, toast.

lunch: peanut butter and jelly sandwich, crackers and cheese, fruit, sub sandwiches with deli meats, pasta, bread, and vegetables.

dinner: baked chicken or fish, or lean red meat, fruit salads, lettuce or veggie salad, whole grain bread, and mashed potatoes.

snacks: fruit, veggie sticks, crackers, raisins, granola bars, trail mix, fruit roll ups, and fortified sports drinks.

Stay away from soda pop, milk products, greasy foods, and candy.

Swim Meet Descriptions

Meet information is posted on the bulletin board several weeks in advance of the swim meet, including warmup times and meet start times.

Ted Walker and Oregon Trail These will be our local meets this year, hosted at the Ted Walker Memorial Pool, and information will be given to swimmers and parents as the meets get closer.

Pendleton The Pendleton Family Aquatic Center uses an outside 50 meter pool, 1800 NW Carden Ave. 541-276-0104. Take I-84 east of The Dalles about 120 miles, take exit 207. Cross freeway on US-30/Old Pendleton River Road, travel 1.8 miles, past prison. Take a left on OR-37/Northgate Dr. (signs for Blue Mountain Community College), then an immediate right on NW Carden. Go past baseball park, take a left at the High School entrance. There is tent camping with very little shade, and a large lot for self-contained trailers and RVs. Multiple motels/hotels are available. Check pricing and location on www.travelocity.com.

Hood River This is an indoor/outdoor 25 meter pool, Hood River Aquatic Center, 17th & May Ave. 541-386-1303. Take I-84 west to Hood River, take City Center exit. Cross freeway, take a right on Oak St. to stoplight. Turn left on 13th, go up the hill. Take a right on May Ave., past park, pool is on the left. Tent camping is sometimes available, limited RV parking.

State meets Unlike other sports, swimmers qualify for state meets based on times alone, rather than qualifying at meets. Only swimmers swimming "A" times are qualified for State, although swimmers may be included on a state-bound relay who are not swimming individual "A" times. Information will be posted on the bulletin board as to the locations of the state meets. If your swimmer is qualified for a state meet, the coaches will check with you as to interest levels. 10 & Under swimmers will have a chance to qualify for the state meet at the June 30th dual meet with Hood River. 11 & Over swimmers will have 2 chances to qualify, at the Ted Walker and Pendleton meets.

Awards

Meet medals/ribbons will be placed in your Family File or distributed by the coach during practices.

Year end Awards and Dessert Banquet is held at the conclusion of the season. The date will be announced during the summer.

Swimmers Responsibilities

Swimming on The Dalles Swim Team can be fun and exciting. In order for our team to be successful, we must all share in the following responsibilities:

- All swimmers will exercise a positive attitude toward parents, fellow team mates and the coaches
- All swimmers will practice good sportsmanship. Team support will be given to those who have not yet competed
- Practices will be attended on a regular basis. Arrive at practices at the specified times.
- All swimmers are encouraged to enter as many meets as possible. If your family can't attend a meet that you want to go to, talk to your coach and see if arrangements can be made to tag along with another family. If at all possible, try to enter the Ted Walker Swim meet.
- Team suits should be worn at all meets. Team suits are not required, but for uniformity and team spirit, they are encouraged. Practice suits can be worn during practice.
- It is the responsibility of each swimmer to be on time for their events at swim meets
- Swimmers should not leave a meet without checking with the coach to find out if they are in a relay
- Swimmers need to keep their area clean during meets, and pick up and dispose of any garbage upon leaving the meet.
- Swimmers shall not attend any swim meet without specified adult supervision.
- Swimmers should establish goals and actively train to achieve these goals.
- Swimmers should help in recruiting new members
- Possession of, or being under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco is grounds for immediate termination from the swim team.
- No swimmer shall intentionally touch another swimmer without permission.

Parents Responsibilities

- Be positive. Help your child look beyond today and toward their goals.
- Be patient. Swimmers develop at different paces, but all swimmers need time. No matter how your child seems to be doing in comparison to other swimmers, don't push. When they are ready, the big improvement will come.
- Never "bug" your swimmer about his or her swimming. It will only irritate your child. Please make sure that your swimmer arrives to all workouts, and

meets on time. If your child is late, he or she will not benefit from a proper warm-up and/or perhaps not receive an important message from the coaches.

- Encourage your child to do *their* best and reach *their* goals. Your swimmer will perform as well as he or she wants to, not as either you or, the coaches, want. Although swimming has a strong individual element, your child is, most of all, part of a team. We encourage families to stay until the meet is over to show team spirit and pride (and help clean up!).
- The single most important thing that you can do for your child is to help him develop a strong sense of sportsmanship and a positive self-image with your help, this will be swimming best benefit to your child.
- **Don't try to talk to the coaches while they are conducting a workout.** Consider the pool deck a classroom. Would you interrupt a classroom teacher while he/she was in the middle of a lecture? If a coach is not talking to the swimmers, he is thinking, watching and analyzing. If you need to ask questions about meet entries, fund raisers, etc., please contact one of the board members who will be happy to help you with most any of these needs.
- The Coach is the Coach. We want your child to relate to his/her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming competition, technique and training. This relationship and bonding between coach and swimmer produces the best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the child should swim it causes considerable confusion as to who the swimmer should listen to.
- Watching Workouts is okay. If you choose to watch the teaching and training sessions, you may do so from a distance. Parents are asked to keep your distance from the swimmers. Never talk, signal, wave or admonish your child while he is in workouts. If you notice a problem, talk to the coach about it by phone or appointment. Never time your child during workouts. The repeat times are something for his/her coach and the child to discuss. If your swimmer has a poor workout offer encouragement for him/her to swim better the next time. Note: NO SMOKING on pool properties!
- Anything worthwhile usually means sacrifice and hard work. Never complain about the number of hours of practice your child logs each week. Make your swimmer realize that you will support him in every way possible. Above all; communicate. If you question any aspect of the swim program, please make an appointment and discuss it with the coach.

Swimmers Health

SWIMMING AND EAR CARE

From The Doctors Book of Home Remedies. Panel of Advisors: Dan Drew, M.D., Brian Hands, M.D., John House, M.D., Donald Kamerer, M.D.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES If you could reduce yourself to the size of a flea and crawl into a swimmer's ear, you'd likely see an ear canal that's angry and red. It would look itchy; and you'd notice there's very little earwax. It would feel moist and smell clammy from bacteria burrowing and tunneling into the skin. What you'd be seeing inside the swimmer's ear is a classic case of otitis externa, an infection better known - not surprisingly - as swimmer's ear. All it takes to come down with a stubborn bout of swimmer's ear is a set of ears and unrelenting moisture. "It's like keeping your hands in dishwater. The skin gets macerated and leathery," says Brian W. Hands, M.D., an ear, nose and throat specialist in private practice in Toronto. "The ears are constantly bathed in water - swimming, showering, shampooing. Then people try to dry the ear with a cotton-tipped swab. That takes the top layer of skin off, along with protective bacteria. Then the bad bacteria win." Swimmer's ear begins as an itchy ear. Left untreated, it can turn into a full-blown infection. The pain can be excruciating. Once infection sets in, you'll need a doctor's help and a round of antibiotics to squelch it. But there are plenty of things you can do to keep the pain from getting worse, and even more to stop it before it starts.

BLOW-DRY YOUR EARS Eliminate the moisture in your ears, says Dr. Hands, every time you get them wet, whether or not you suspect an infection. Pull the flap of your ear up and out to straighten the ear canal and aim your hair dryer into your ear from 18 to 20 inches away. Use either a warm or cool setting, but let the blow dryer blow for 30 seconds. That will dry the ear, eliminating the moist condition bacteria and fungi find most attractive for growth.

TRY AN OVER-THE-COUNTER REMEDY Most drugstores carry eardrops that combat bacteria. If ear itchiness is still your only symptom, one of these preparations might snatch it back from the brink of infection, says Dan Drew, an avid swimmer and family physician in Jasper, Indiana. Use it each time your ears get wet.

PLUG UP THE PROBLEM Telling an avid swimmer that he can't go in the water is almost like telling someone to quit breathing, says John House, M.D., an associate professor of clinical otolaryngology at the University of Southern California, School of Medicine and an audiologist for USA Swimming, which selects Olympic competitors. Go ahead and swim, he says, but wear earplugs to keep the water out. Wax or silicone plugs that can be softened and shaped to fit your ear are available at most drugstores. And don't forget to wear those earplugs while shampooing or showering, says Dr. House. Keeping the ears dry is especially important for people who are prone to ear infection.

SWIM ON THE SURFACE Even when you are battling swimmer's ear, you can keep on swimming, says Dr. Drew. Swim on the surface of the water. It allows less water in the ear than when you break the surface.

USE A PAINKILLER AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE If your ear hurts (indicating an infection), an over-the-counter painkiller such as aspirin or acetaminophen will tide you over until you can see the doctor, says Dr. Kamerer, M.D., chief of the Division of Otolaryngology at the Ear and Eye Institute in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

SOOTHE AWAY PAIN WITH HEAT Warmth - a towel fresh from the dryer, a covered hot-water bottle, a heating pad set on low - also will help ease the pain.

LEAVE YOUR EARWAX ALONE Earwax serves several purposes, including harboring friendly bacteria, say Dr. Kamerer and Dr. House. Cooperate with your natural defenses by not swabbing the wax out. Wax coats the ear canal, protecting it from moisture.

KEEP IT DRY Since the irritation of swimmer's ear wears away earwax, you can manufacture your own version using petroleum jelly. Moisten a cotton ball with the jelly, says Dr. Hands and tuck it gently, like a plug, just in the edge of your ear. It will absorb any moisture, keeping your ear warm and dry.

TAKE A DROP Several fluids are great for killing germs and drying your ears at the same time. If you're susceptible to swimmer's ear or if you spend a lot of time in the water, you should use a drying agent every time you get your head wet. Any of the following homemade solutions works well. A squirt of rubbing alcohol first put your head down, with the affected ear up. Pull the ear upward and backward (to help straighten the ear canal) and squeeze a dropper full of alcohol into the ear canal. Wiggle your ear to get the alcohol to the bottom of the canal. Then tilt your head to the other side and let the alcohol drain out. Eardrops of white vinegar or equal parts of alcohol and white vinegar will kill fungus and bacteria, says Dr. House. Use it the same way you would alcohol. Mineral oil, baby oil, or lanolin. These can be preventative solutions before swimming. Apply as you would the alcohol.

SWIMMING AND EYE CARE

RISKS Some sports present more risks for our eyes than others. The dangers of eye injury from sports that involve a thrown or hit ball, a bat or stick, or body contact is obvious. Swimming is a low-risk sport when these factors are considered. But swimming does involve other risks to the eye, which are not as obvious. By necessity, public pools contain high concentrations of chemicals. The drying effect these chemicals have on the skin and hair is experienced by most swimmers. Eye irritation and/or burning after swimming are also common symptoms.

PREVENTION Taking a shower to rinse your skin, hair and eyes is important after each workout. If your eyes do sting or burn, a lubricating eye drop, such as Hypotears or Tears Naturele, can help. But the most important preventative measure you can take is to always wear well-fitting goggles every time you swim to minimize water contact with your eyes.

CONDITIONS In addition to preventing chemical contact, the goggles also give the added benefit of reducing ultraviolet (UV) light exposure. Sunlight damage to the eye can include the long-term risk of cataracts and possibly retinal disease. UV exposure may also cause pingueculas and pterygiums, fleshy growths on the white of the eye that become easily red and irritated, and may eventually extend into the cornea. Short-term, excessive exposure can produce a burn on the surface called photokeratitis. It's painful, like sunburn on the skin, and the effects may last a few days, depending on the severity.

The sun risk to eyes is higher around water or pavement, both of which reflect UV radiation. Sunlight is particularly damaging during the summer months and during midday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Just the conditions and hours for most swim meets! Children are especially vulnerable to the sun's damaging effects. They're exposed to more UV radiation because they spend more time outdoors and young eyes allow more UV rays inside (due to a larger average pupil size).

PROTECTION So how can swimmers protect their eyes? It takes a little planning. Goggles for in the water, definitely, but what about all that time between events at meets? A wide-brimmed hat will keep about 50 percent of UV radiation from reaching our eyes. That's a good start. But everyone should complete the protection with adequate sunglasses. Look for a label that says "Blocks 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B." When you pack for that next swim meet, be sure to include the goggles for eye-protection in the water and sunscreen to protect your skin, and throw in a hat and sunglasses for in between events. Remember that no one is immune to sun-related eye damage.