

# There's a New Swimming & Diving Champion in the State!

**True Team**  
Where Every Athlete Counts



Have you ever wondered what it would be like if every athlete counted and scored points? Check out True Team Swimming & Diving on the web at: [pantherboosters.org/true](http://pantherboosters.org/true)

## Minnesota State True Team Swimming & Diving Championships

Written by Rick Ringeisen & Brian Luke



The Minnesota State High School Swim Coaches' Association has created a new way to determine the best "team" in the state in the sport of swimming & diving...

### A NEW CHAMPIONSHIP PHILOSOPHY

The traditional state meet format has generated some very interesting state meets. However, the system does not take into account the team aspect of the sport of competitive swimming & diving. As a result, many great teams have not received the recognition due them because they don't have a cast of star swimmers. Many coaches value and stress the team concept as the integral part of the high school athletic experience. Yet, each year, during the championship portion of season, we gradually reduce the number of athletes we coach until only the state qualifiers are left to complete the entire season. The really unfortunate aspect of this is that the state qualifiers deserve and need the support of their teammates at this phase of the season more than ever!

A large group of swim coaches felt that championship swimming & diving could be vastly improved by creating a team championship meet format "where every athlete counts." As a coaches' association, we spent close to a decade discussing our ideas. Three years ago, a core group of dedicated coaches created a committee to make the dream reality. Finally, this past year, we launched what our coaches' association calls "The Minnesota Swimming & Diving True Team Championships," aka: True Team.

This year (2004-2005) was the first year for this concept. Both our girl's and boy's True Team meets this past year were huge successes! The True Team format generated a large following; the press loved it because they understand and embrace team sports.

### TRUE TEAM SWIMMING & DIVING FORMAT

Here is a quick overview of how we ran the inaugural State Swimming & Diving True Team Championships.

- The True Team meet is sponsored, coordinated, and run by the Minnesota State High School Swimming & Diving Coaches Association.
- The True Team section meets are held six weeks prior to the Minnesota State High School League's State Meet.
- The True Team state meet is held five weeks prior to the Minnesota State High School League's State Meet.
- The first year we used the Minnesota State High School League's section assignments. In the future, we may consider realigning the sections to create competitive parity between the sections.
- Each team may enter up to four individuals and four relays per event.
- In True Team Swimming & Diving every athlete scores points for their team.
  - For example: In a ten team True Team Meet, individual events are scored as follows: First place is scored as 40 points and last place would be scored as 1 point. This is based upon 40 possible entries in each individual event.

- Relays are scored as double points. In a ten team True Team Meet, a first place relay would score 80 points and last place would score 2 points.

### **True Team Section Meets**

- Medals are awarded to the top eight finishers in each event at the section level.
- Plaques are awarded to the top three teams in each section.
- The first place team in each section advances to the state meet.
- In addition, two “Wild Card” teams advance to the State True Team Meet to create a ten team field at the state meet. To determine the “Wild Card” team all sections e-mail their results to the Wild Card Chairman. The Wild Card Chairman then imports the section results of the second and third place teams from each section into Hy-Tek and scores the hypothetical meet to determine the “Wild Card” teams who will advance to the State True Team Meet.
- True Team Section Meet results are posted on the Swimming & Diving True Team web page.

### **True Team State Meet**

- Medals are awarded to the top eight finishers in each event at the state meet.
- Plaques are awarded to the top three teams in Class A and Class AA.
- Each qualifying team submits a new line up for the State True Team Meet.
- The same format and scoring that was used at the True Team Section meets is used at the State True Team Meet to determine the True Team State Champion.
- Get ready for some very competitive racing from the first heat to the last!

### **TRADITIONAL STATE MEET FORMAT**

In Minnesota, as in most states, the state swimming & diving meet is run by the state’s high school sports association. In Minnesota, that association is the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). The MSHSL divides swimming and diving into two classes: Class A (small schools) and Class AA (large schools).

Each class is divided into eight competitive sections. To qualify for the MSHSL State Meet in an event, swimmers (and relays) must place in the top two in their section. A cut-off time allows additional contestants to qualify by standard if they do not finish in one of the top two places. In the diving event, the top four divers from each section qualify for the state meet (there are no standards in diving). Championship scoring is used and team champions are crowned based upon the points scored by individuals who have qualified for the state meet.

### **THE FUTURE OF CHAMPIONSHIP SWIMMING & DIVING**

True Team Swimming & Diving will never replace the MSHSL State Meet and the show that results from the best of the best facing each other tapered and shaved. However, True Team Swimming has brought a new level of excitement to championship swimming. Now, for the first time, entire teams, their parents, and their communities experience the thrill of “going to state” and competing for a State Championship.

The very first True Team State Meet filled the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center. The crowd responded by cheering extremely loud from the first event, to the last event! At the State True Team Meets the intensity was high and the times were FAST! That night, every athlete got to live the childhood dream of contributing in a championship meet.

This year the hot topic in the sport of swimming & diving in the state of Minnesota was the True Team. After each phase of this first year we have heard story after story from coaches, athletes, and parents of True Team exploits that otherwise would have been only forgotten footnotes. However, each of those stories have now been written into the lore of each school’s swimming & diving program. Based upon the success and enthusiasm for True Team Swimming & Diving in the State of Minnesota, we expect that the support and excitement for the True Team will continue to build for years to come. Maybe your state will be the next to give True Team Swimming & Diving a try?