

Stingrays Swim Team

2025-2026 Team Handbook

Serving Fredericksburg-area youth since 1979, celebrating 36 years of fast swimming





LEVEL 3
USA SWIMMING
CLUB RECOGNITION PROGRAM

VIRTUAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS
USA SWIMMING

Yards - # 119, Meters - # 145
out of 2,700+ teams



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Full-Time Coaching Staff

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Head Coach	Anthony Pedersen	703-919-5889	coachanthony@swimrays.org
Head RY Site Coach	Jimmy Rodriguez	970-829-9763	coachjimmy@swimrays.org
Head MY Site Coach	Dylan Peck	540-498-8682	coachdylan@swimrays.org
Head KGY/CY Site Coach	Connor Muncie	540-903-8867	coachconnor@swimrays.org
Head JRSSC Site Coach	Patrick Bogue	540-424-3331	coachpatrick@swimrays.org

For all other coaches, visit the RAYS website (www.swimrays.org) and click on the Coaches link under the About Us tab.

Board of Directors

Position	Name	Phone	Email
President	Joe Bertoldi	540-656-6205	president@swimrays.org
Vice President	Paul Holland	336-480-6211	vicepresident@swimrays.org
Secretary	Bobbi Parker	540-993-5569	secretary@swimrays.org
Treasurer	Rochelle Bazemore-Fountain	540-845-5103	treasurer@swimrays.org
At-Large Member	Laura Buttram	540-226-9722	socialchairperson@swimrays.org
Meet Director	Megan Struder	540-295-2087	meetdirector@swimrays.org
Head Coach	Anthony Pedersen	703-919-5889	coachanthony@swimrays.org

Key Personnel

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Executive Director	Bob Herlinger	540-207-0846	robert.herlinger@gmail.com
Bookkeeper	Debby Martinich	540-273-7051	bookkeeper@swimrays.org
Team Administrator	Tiare Peck	540-809-2452	admin@swimrays.org
Officials Chair	Bill Fairfax	540-940-5423	billf574@gmail.com



Mission Statement

The Stingrays Swim Team (“RAYS”) mission is to provide an organized, competitive swimming program for the youth of the Rappahannock area. Our program encourages and emphasizes good sportsmanship, self-discipline, and achievement of goals. We recognize that swimming is just one part of a young person’s life. Competition is a major, but not exclusive, measurement of success. All Stingrays’ swimmers should also have fun.

Achieving the RAYS mission requires commitment from all individuals involved with the team. Swimmers are expected to show their commitment by attending practices on a regular basis, by respecting and supporting their teammates and coaches on deck and in the water, and by conducting themselves in a responsible manner at all times. Parents are expected to support the team and their swimmers by contributing their time by assisting at RAYS swim meets and social events. In turn, Stingrays Swimming provides high-caliber swimming instruction in an organized, safe, and friendly environment focused on a child’s protection.



Chapter 1: Team Overview

The Stingrays are a year-round USA swim team. Each of our 4 sites: Jeff Rouse Sport and Swim Center (JRSSC), King George YMCA (KGY), Massad YMCA (MY) and Rosner YMCA (RY), offer 4 pre-competitive groups which are Month to Month, 3 consecutive months or year-round registrations. We then offer 3 Travel Team groups at the Ys and 4 groups at JRSSC which are year-round registrations. There is a natural progression through which the swimmer moves as he/she grows and matures. This structure is designed to encourage a swimmer's enthusiasm for the sport and meet the needs of swimmers with all levels of ability and interest.

Joyce O'Toole and Sue-Anne Shotwell, program directors, established the Stingrays in 1979 for the YMCA. Carl Ingerbretsen, the first coach, organized the Stingrays as an Amateur Athletic Union team (now USA Swimming) and as part of the Virginia YMCA Association. Since the team's inception, Stingrays' swimmers have held national swim records, have gone on to compete at the college level, qualifies for Olympic Trials and have become coaches themselves. Our swimmers have fun being successful.

Team Symbol and Colors

Our symbol originated as a play on the team's official name, Stingrays Swim Team or RAYS. This acronym lent itself to the choice of a stingray as the team's symbol. The team colors are black, royal blue, and white.

Speedo Team

We are a SPEEDO sponsored team. Every season, through SPEEDO, the team offers a uniform package. Although it is not required, we strongly encourage each family to buy SPEEDO. In turn, SPEEDO donates apparel to swimmers who qualify for Sectionals, NCSA Junior Nationals, USA Futures, USA Swimming Junior and Senior Nationals, and Olympic Trials.

Team Locations

Massad YMCA – 212 Butler Road, Stafford, VA: 2 6-lane 25-meter pools

Rosner YMCA – 5700 Smith Station Road, Spotsylvania, VA: 10-lane 25-yard pool

Jeff Rouse Swim & Sport Center – 1600 Mine Road, Stafford, VA: 8-lane 50-meter pool

King George YMCA – 10545 Kings Highway, King George, VA: 8-lane 25-meter pool

Caroline YMCA – 17422 Library Boulevard, Ruther Glen, VA 22546: 6-lane 25-yard pool

Curtis Memorial Park – 58 Jesse Curtis Lane, Fredericksburg, VA: 8-lane 50-meter pool
(summer usage for all sites)

Team Mailing Address

Stingrays Swim Team (RAYS)

PO BOX 866

Stafford, Virginia 22555-0866

Virginia Swimming

The teams in Virginia Swimming, Inc. (VSI) are divided into areas, regions, or districts for competition. These are based on pool availability, number of swimmers, and geographic location. The Stingrays are based in the Northern Virginia District.

Swim Season

Practice for year-round swimmers begins the 1st Monday after Labor Day through the end of July. Short Course meet season, 25-yard pools, runs from October through March. There is a two-week Spring Break at the end of the short course season. Long Course meet season, 50-meter pools, begins in April/May, lasting until early August. Summer Break will be late July/early August through early September. We also have three consecutive month swimmers and month to month swimmers and you may join at any time.

How to Become a Member

Membership is open to boys and girls ages 5-18 and college athletes. You must first email the head site coach of the site you are interested in, for your swimmer's evaluation. Once the coach decides which group is best for your swimmer, you may sign up online to join our team. After the season starts, swimmers may join the team if space is available. The number of swimmers currently on the team, the number of pool hours, and the age and ability of the swimmer determine availability of openings.

YMCA Membership

All swimmers practicing at a YMCA facility are required to be YMCA members. Register at the front desk of your Y. Inform the staff that you are joining the Stingrays and the initiation fee is waived. Swimmers are not allowed to participate in regular practice until they are YMCA members. As a YMCA member, swimmers are entitled to full use of the Y. The YMCA also offers family and student membership plans.

Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center (JRSSC)

There is no membership fee for a swimmer to practice at JRSSC. During practice, parents and other family members are invited to sit in the café or the pool stands. Membership is required to use any part of the facility.

USA Swimming Membership

USA Swimming membership entitles a swimmer to enter all USA Swimming events for which he/she qualifies. A swimmer must have a current membership to swim in a USA Swimming meet. If you are a returning member, the team will renew your membership with USA Swimming in November or December and invoice the renewal fee to your team account. If you are a new RAYS, you will be sent a link to sign up with USA Swimming to become a member. You will be required to register with USA Swimming and pay the registration fee directly to them. This registration is in addition to the Stingrays registration fee. USA Swimming Membership includes insurance, which covers the member during supervised team practice, and at USA swimming meets. Insurance is secondary to other insurance carried by the swimmer's family. Each swimmer is assigned a requisite USA Swimming membership number.

Team Shirt and Swim Cap

The RAYS registration fee includes 2 different color RAYS T-shirts and a swim cap. Shirts and caps are handed out within two weeks of the beginning of the season. If joining after the start of the season, a cap will be provided as soon as possible, and T-shirts if available. If joining after March, only a swim cap will be provided. The team swim cap must be worn when competing. During preliminary or timed final sessions swimmers must wear the royal blue cap. At final sessions, swimmers are issued and must wear a black RAYS cap. Swimmers are allowed to wear tech caps at championship meets.

Chapter 2: Coaching

Coach's Responsibilities

The head coach supervises the entire competitive swim program. The coaching staff provides a program for youngsters that demonstrates the value of striving to improve oneself. Coaches manage training and competition. They are constantly updating the swimming program. Enthusiastic swimmers and involved parents get the most out of our program.

Coaches:

- Place youngsters in practice groups according to age and ability level.
- Promote a swimmer to a more challenging practice group, as applicable.
- Develop training regimens based on scientific principles and geared to group goals.
- Determine meet attendance and event assignments for attending swimmers.
- Conduct and supervise meet warm-ups.
- Offer constructive criticism regarding a swimmer's performance following a race.
- Organize team relay placements.

Executive Director

Bob Herlinger, Executive Director, is very proud of his hometown, Baltimore, MD, where he attended Archbishop Curley HS and then graduated from Elon College, NC. Bob retired in 2021 after 46 years of coaching. He coached all levels of swimmers, ranging from developmental to Olympic Trial Qualifiers. He coached 34 individual swimmers to 108 Top 16/10 times, 124 Top 16 relays, 78 Junior National qualifiers, 15 Senior National swimmers, 1 National Team swimmer – ranked 21st in the world in the 200m Backstroke, 1 National Junior Team swimmer – ranked 25th in the world in the 100m Breaststroke, 1 National Youth Team member, and 11 Olympic Trial swimmers – with 2 swimmers placing 12th in the semi-finals. In the summer of 2005, as a team, the RAYS came in 8th at YMCA Nationals; in 2009, our boys' team came in 4th place, our best-ever finishes. Bob is married to Joni with 2 sons – Colin and Brandan.



Head Coach and Head Site Coaches

Anthony Pedersen, an ASCA Level 3 Coach, is the RAYS Head Coach and Gold I coach at JRSSC. Anthony has been involved in swimming for over 30 years. He has been with the RAYS since 2016. He became the Head Coach in 2021 and while under his leadership we now have 500+ swimmers. He swam competitively for several club teams in Northern Virginia and the University of Mary Washington. Anthony has had great success in growing and developing swimmers and has produced several LSC champions, Sectional qualifiers, Futures qualifiers, Junior National qualifiers, US Open Qualifiers, Age Group Top 10 both individual and relays, and an Olympic Trial Qualifier all during his career. Coach Anthony also coached a swimmer at the 2012 Paralympic Swimming Trials and 2014 Paralympic Pan-Pacific Games. He coached the International Paralympic Committee's top-ranked world swimmer in the 200m back in 2013. Anthony is married to Therese and has a son, Cooper.

Connor Muncie is the King George Y head site coach. Connor has now been with the RAYS for 7 years. Before the RAYS, Connor graduated from VCU with his master's degree in Health and Physical Education. Connor grew up in King George where he was a four-time varsity letterman for the Foxes. Connor is now the Head Coach of the King George High School Swim team where his teams have won 8 district titles. Connor was also the founding coach for the Hopyard Hammerheads, an RSL swim team, where he coached for 7 years. Connor also had 4 years of year-round coaching experience coaching with teams in the Richmond area. During the day, Connor is a Health and Physical Education teacher at King George High School. In his spare time, Connor enjoys coaching Football for KGHS where he is the kicking coach and doing things around KG.

Patrick Bogue is the Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center head site coach. He first began swimming in Greer, South Carolina for the Cane Break Crocodiles at the age of 10. His family then moved to Fredericksburg where he swam for the College Heights Gators for eight years, where he started his swim coaching career, having coached the Gators for six years. While attending Riverbend High School, Patrick swam all four years, became a captain his senior year, and qualified for the state championship meet. Not only has he coached several high school swim teams in the area, including Chancellor High School which he has coached for seven years, but he has also coached several RSL Summer leagues in the area for the past ten years. Patrick has been a coach for the RAYS for the past eight years and has led multiple swimmers to qualify for Age Groups, Senior Champs, and Sectionals. In his free time Patrick enjoys video games, disc golf, cats, and spending time with his wife Tess and newborn son, Theodore.

Jimmy Rodriguez is the Rosner Y head site coach. His love for swimming began as a recreational swimmer over 20 years ago in Houston, TX. He continued his competitive swimming career through high school, and at Henderson State University; where he studied Aviation, History, and Physics. From 2019-2022, Jimmy was a lead age group & Senior coach with the Fort Collins Area Swim Team. While there, he developed several new Age Group Zone, Senior Zone, Sectional, and Futures qualifiers. He also worked closely with multiple Jr National & Olympic Trials qualifiers. During this time, he also served as the head coach at Fossil Ridge High School, where his swimmers achieved several individual & relay state championships, and All-American awards. Jimmy began his coaching career in 2010 with his old summer club team, moving from assistant to the head coaching role in 2012. He also worked with his college team during the 2014-2015 school year. Jimmy then joined Coach Anthony at Sienna Plantation Aquatics, TX. While there, he was the lead age group coach & assisted with the Senior

groups. Coach Jimmy is enjoying his new adventure on the east coast with his wife & son, Libby & Oliver.

Dylan Peck is from Fredericksburg, VA and grew up swimming for the Salem Fields Sunfish and RPST. Upon graduation he swam for 4 years at George Mason University, a Division 1 program. While at Mason, he set and is still the current record holder in both the 200 IM and the 100 Breaststroke. He was also a contributing member of George Mason's first ever Atlantic 10 Conference Championship in 2020. In both 2019 and 2021 Dylan was named MVS for Mason Men's swimming team for his efforts in and out of the water. He was also elected to the VASID 2nd team during those years. He has a total of 8 Atlantic 10 conference medals to his name which includes 2 Gold, 2 Silver, and 4 Bronze. Dylan had many swim coaching jobs including Salem Fields, Little Fish swimming, Goldfish Swim School, Chancellor High School and George Mason University. In his first season with RAYS he coached AG1 at JRSSC and provided assistance with the developmental swimmers. During his tutelage, 2 swimmers qualified for Age Group Champs. When Dylan isn't coaching, he enjoys spending time with his friends and family, plus playing golf.

To learn about the entire coaching staff, visit www.swimrays.org, then About Us, then Coaches.

Chapter 3: Swim Program

Philosophy

The mission of the Stingrays is to provide an opportunity for children to learn a lifetime sport and recreational activity and also to develop each swimmer's skills to the maximum extent of his/her commitment and abilities. The Stingrays program strives to instill in swimmers an appreciation for values such as self-esteem, self-discipline, teamwork, goal-setting, and achievement. Swimmers learn that they achieve goals through discipline, training, and commitment. Each level of the RAYS program is designed to help swimmers reach their full potential.

Short-Term Goals

- Develop a program that provides the background for competitive swimming where **“Everybody swims, everybody wins.”**
- Develop a progressive skill program based on age and ability, in conjunction with USA Swimming.
- Provide a national-level training program at the senior level, in conjunction with USA Swimming.

Long-Term Goals

- Provide physical development and encourage proper conditioning, self-discipline, and healthy habits for life.
- Provide an opportunity for social, emotional, and educational development and encourage peer and family participation.
- Provide the opportunity to learn sportsmanship, teamwork, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Participation

Participation in the Stingrays Swim Team involves payment of fees on a timely basis, attending practice, listening and following the coach's instruction, and participating in team competition. As athletes committed to the sport of swimming, all swimmers and parents are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at practice, swim meets, and social events. The base of this code of conduct is **RESPECT**.

As STINGRAYS:

- We **RESPECT** our fellow swimmers' commitment to the sport and their team.
- We **RESPECT** the professional skills of our coaches and their dedication to each of us as swimmers, scholars, and individuals.
- We **RESPECT** our parents, who provide the underlying support of all our athletic, academic, social, and moral development.
- We **RESPECT** the officials, managers, and those who manage our competitive programs.
- We **RESPECT** the facilities at which we train and compete.

This concept of respect — for one another, for our coaches, for our parents, for our facilities — forms the basis of our adherence to the Swimming Code of Conduct, under About Us, on the website – www.swimrays.org. The STINGRAYS expect each swimmer and parent to adhere to this Code of Conduct. Furthermore, a breach of this concept of respect may result in warnings, suspension or dismissal from the team. The STINGRAYS will hold parents responsible for the conduct and behavior of their children as well as their own conduct and behavior.

Any staff member or volunteer that violates this public trust with non-appropriate professional relationships with any athlete will be immediately relieved of duties and terminated by the RAYS. Inappropriate behavior by a swimmer and/or parent will result in the swimmer/parent being suspended from the team and all financial obligations will still be expected and enforced. Inappropriate use of electronic communication and social media can also result in a member being criminally charged, convicted and/or facing civil action.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The concept of respect for one another also supports our anti-bullying policy. Bullying is a pattern of aggressive, intentional, and/or deliberately hostile behavior and/or hurtful acts, words, or other behavior toward another person. Bullying will not be tolerated. Bullying may include but not limited to:

- Physical bullying such as assault and battery, punching, hazing, hair pulling, and beating.
- Emotional bullying such as rejecting, shunning, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing, applying peer pressure, put downs, threatening looks, gestures, or actions, and social isolation.
- Verbal bullying such as hurtful name calling, teasing, gossip, rumors, and false accusations.
- Cyber-bullying via electronic media.
- Sexual bullying such as exhibition, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.

Each swimmer and parent is expected to adhere to this policy. Bullying may result in warnings, suspension, or dismissal from the team.

Electronic Communication Policy

USA Swimming and the RAYS recognize the prevalence of email, texting, and social media in today's world and that many of us use these as our primary method of communication. While we recognize that technology has a wealth of positive benefits, it also provides a new mechanism for inappropriate and illegal behaviors. This policy provides rules and guidelines for responsible, professional use of electronic communication and social media by coaches, parents, and athletes. This policy aligns with the USA Swimming Safe Sport Handbook.

Electronic communication and social media includes, but is not limited to, software, applications (including those running on mobile devices), email and websites, which enable users to interact, create, and exchange information online. Examples include sites such as Facebook, "X", LinkedIn, Flickr, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Wikipedia and Tik Tok.

With respect to electronic communications, electronic communications between coaches, parents, and swimmers should be **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches, parents, and athletes should be transparent. Communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches, parents, and athletes should be considered part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach, a parent and/or an athlete should be conducted professionally. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a professional communication.

If communications between coaches, parents, and athletes meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely the communication is appropriate.

Facebook, "X", Blogs, and Similar Sites

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete. The coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM method. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

"X", Snapchat, and Instagram

Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on "X", Snapchat, Instagram or on any other similar application. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, or on any other similar application. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through any of these applications.

Texting

Texting is subject to the guidelines mentioned above. Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes between 5:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. to communicate team activities. When communicating with an athlete through text, a parent **must** also be copied.

Email

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. to communicate team activities. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member **must** also be copied.

Inappropriate actions include:

- Making inappropriate online comments that lead to civil actions, such as defamation
- Disclosing confidential information about the RAYS, swimmers, parents and/or colleagues, thus breaching privacy policies

- Inciting hatred against an identifiable group or person
- Disclosing information about a minor, contrary to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*
- Using technology to harass a swimmer, colleague or others
- Encouraging drugs or alcohol use
- Engaging in sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- Using a computer to lure a child or for exchanging or forwarding compromising photos, videos or audio recordings of students leading to charges of possession or distribution of child pornography

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication. Send requests to RAYS, P.O. Box 866 Stafford, VA 22555-0866.

Procedures

Below are procedures that ensure all Stingrays benefit from their swim team membership.

Behavior – Every participant on the RAYS team has a right to be treated with respect, dignity, and fairness, and to participate in an environment that is enjoyable and safe. Harassment, abuse, and other forms of inappropriate behavior deny participants these rights and will not be tolerated. Swimmers and/or parents who are unable to meet our minimum acceptable behavior will be suspended from the team, but all financial obligations will still be expected and enforced.

Counseling - A coach will counsel a swimmer or parent who displays disrespectful behavior. If the behavior represents a serious lack of respect for another swimmer, coach, official, other adult or facility, that swimmer's participation in the practice or meet may be terminated. In such a case, the swimmer's parent(s) will be notified of the circumstances in writing. The coach will also notify the Board of Directors when such action is taken. Notification may include a warning that further manifestations of disrespectful behavior may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.

Suspension - A swimmer or parent may be required to reexamine his or her commitment to the sport and the team by being suspended temporarily from participation in swim practices, swim meets, and other activities sponsored by the team. The circumstances warranting such a suspension generally involve a serious breach of the Swimming Code of Conduct or team policies and procedures. A coach may recommend suspension to the Board of Directors who investigate and evaluate the event, reach a decision, and inform the swimmer's parent(s) verbally and in writing in a timely manner. In the event of suspension from the team, no refunds of fees paid will be made.

Dismissal - A swimmer or parent may be directed to terminate his or her affiliation with the Stingrays for the remainder of the swimming season for an exceptionally serious breach or series of breaches of the Code of Conduct or team policies and procedures. A coach may recommend the dismissal of a swimmer or parent to the Board of Directors, who investigate and evaluate the event, reach a decision, and inform the swimmer's parent(s) verbally and in writing in a timely manner.

Practice Attendance

Swimmers should do their best to attend the requested number of practices each week; however, athletics should never compromise academics. Swimmers should arrive at the pool at least 10 minutes before the start of practice, so practice may start on schedule. If practice begins with dry-land training, swimmers should be in the proper attire, sneakers, shorts and t-shirt, at the designated start time. If the practice starts in the water, swimmers should have cap, goggles, and suit on. Swimmers should bring all required equipment to the poolside before practice begins. Visit www.swimrays.org, click the Equipment button at the top of the main page, for equipment requirements.

Plan to stay for the entire practice. The last part of practice is very often the most important, as usually there are announcements made at the end of each practice. Parents should not interrupt swimmers or talk to coaches on deck during practice.

If a swimmer cannot attend the recommended number of practices for a prolonged period, please contact the swimmer's coach. The coach may be able to suggest opportunities to make up missed practices. If you are going out of town, notify your coach well in advance. Many out-of-town swimmers practice with the Stingrays when they are visiting Fredericksburg area. Most clubs reciprocate this process. If an athlete cannot practice with a team, his/her coach may provide workouts, while they are gone. The practice calendar is online at www.swimrays.org.

Practice Schedule Changes

Due to unforeseeable circumstances; inclement weather, or due to lack of pool availability, there will be times when practice schedules may be cancelled or re-scheduled for another time. The RAYS will attempt to reschedule cancelled practices; including utilizing another site if space is available. Practice schedule changes will be sent out by your head site coach or group coach in a timely manner.

Practice Behavior

Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at practice, as well as in competition. Working together, as a unit to benefit the individual and the team, is an important part of success.

Swimmers are expected to follow the verbal instructions of the coaching and facility staff. Swimmers must follow the rules of the YMCAs, JRSSC, and Curtis Park. Disrespectful attitudes or behaviors are not tolerated. Abusive language, lying, stealing, and/or vandalism will not be tolerated. These behaviors violate the Swimming Code of Conduct.

Swimmers should be on deck 10 minutes before the scheduled time with caps, goggles, and required equipment. A Stingray coach and facility lifeguard must be present for swimmers to enter the pool.

Swimmers must either be supervised or picked up no later than 10 minutes after their practice session. Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach's or parent's permission.

All swimmers, as directed by the coaching staff, must help in setting up and taking down equipment: lane lines, backstroke flags, and training equipment. Swimmers must replace any team or facility equipment he/she damages.

Only legal strokes, turns, and starts are allowed at practice. Swimmers must start and finish at the walls, using a proper push-off and finish. Swimmers must learn to read the pace-clock and push-off on time.

Interfering with a swimmer's progress during practice is not allowed. Use of the diving board at Curtis Park is always prohibited. Use of starting blocks is allowed when supervised by a coach.

Swimmers and parents are responsible for obtaining missed information and handouts when not at practice. Check emails or the website for team updates. Also, check your mailbox file in the file cabinet kept on deck for ribbons, team caps and t-shirts.

Dry-land Program

Dry-land activities are an important part of Stingray training philosophy. All sites are now using the SwimStrong dry-land program. Dry-land is almost as important as pool time; therefore, athletes should behave accordingly and dress appropriately. While dry-land is an important part of Stingrays training philosophy, it is subject to availability and offerings may differ at each practice site. **Dry-land is not guaranteed or a part of our program fees.**

Proper warm-up and cool-down exercises are important for the prevention of injuries. For this reason, warm-up/cool-down exercises should be performed before and after training. It will be the swimmer's and parent's responsibility to ensure the athlete is at practices and meets early enough so that they may complete their stretching and be ready for the start of warm-ups.

Expectations – We want dry-land training to be worthwhile, advantageous to the swimmers, and fun. Listed below are some reminders as you embark on a great dry-land season.

- **Wear comfortable clothing** – T-shirt, tennis shoes and shorts or sweat pants are required.
- **Arrive on time and plan to work the entire scheduled time** – Workouts are between 15-45 minutes. Each wasted opportunity means one less step toward achieving your goals!
- **Recovery is important to good training** – Spend recovery time stretching, getting a drink, or moving to the next station.
- **There will be no unnecessary talking between sets** – Do not spend your recovery time talking. First, there should not be enough time; secondly, you're distracting your teammate's workout!
- **Be honest and complete your training** – Do not skip sets or days! Do what is requested carefully, completely and honestly. Remember that there are only so many opportunities to create the best swimming machine you possibly can by the championship season. Don't waste any opportunities!
- **Stretching vs. Proper Warm-up** – To perform as a highly trained, competitive athlete, the muscles must be prepared for 100% effort. This involves increasing blood circulation to bring nutrients to the muscles while helping the muscles attain the most efficient length for contraction. Muscles are strongest when they contract from a lengthened position. Groups of sub-maximal contractions (i.e. contractions during warm-up) must occur before the muscles can contract to 100% without the danger of tearing muscle and tendon tissue.

In addition to muscles, joints must also warm up. Before any athletic activity, joints should be put through a gentle range of motion. A warm-up lubricates the joints, tendons, and ligaments surrounding the joint with fluid. Warming up lessens tendon and ligament injuries. All practices and meets for Stingrays' swimmers begin with a swimming warm-up that

consists of easy swimming of various strokes to accomplish the above principles. Swimmers who are late for practice or do not stretch before the practice lose the benefits of stretching and warming up properly and may run the risk of muscle tightness, soreness, or injury. Stretching exercises are not an alternative to a proper warm-up. Their purpose is to relax and lengthen the muscle and, eventually, increase flexibility. Warm-up on the other hand, serves to increase blood flow, elevate the temperature of your muscles, and lubricate the joints via joint fluids. It also increases your heart rate, respiratory rate, and oxygen uptake. It is therefore the policy of the Stingrays that most stretching should be done outside of practice and that proper warm up is the most effective way to prevent injuries.

Equipment

Parents are responsible for purchasing equipment for their swimmers. Sport Fair, our swimwear store, will sell everything your swimmers need at each site on the second or third week of practice in September. Or, go to www.swimrays.org, click About Us, then Programs which will bring up a list of required equipment for each group. You may order this equipment online via Sport Fair, under Equipment or you may buy your equipment when they come to each pool in September.

Parent Role in Stingrays Swimming

To have a successful program, there must be cooperation amongst parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your swimmer makes depends on this triangular relationship.

We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces the best results. Parents are asked to keep a positive perspective on the program. Discuss any problems you have immediately and directly with the coach and rest assured that he or she will do their best to address your concerns.

Coaches motivate and constructively criticize a swimmer's performance. Parents supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well. Always be supportive to ensure a positive experience for your child. Listed below are some questions to determine if you are a pressure parent. If you answer yes to one of more of these questions, you may be pressuring your child.

- Is winning more important to you than it is to your child?
- When your child has a poor swim, is your disappointment obvious?
- Do you feel that you must "psyche" your child up before competition?
- Do you feel that winning is the only way your child can enjoy a sport?
- Do you conduct "post mortems" immediately after competition or practice?
- Do you want to interfere during practice or competition thinking you could do better?
- Do you find yourself disliking your child's opponents?
- Are your child's goals more important to you than they are to your child?

Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children's abilities. Please do not compare the progress and development of your child with that of another child. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's progress and development in the proper perspective and help your child reach his/her full potential as an athlete.

Every individual learns at a different rate and responds to different instructional methods. The slower learner takes more time to learn. This requires more patience on the part of the parents and coaches, who must both remember that the child's ultimate swimming potential may be as great as or greater than that of a fast learner.

- When a swimmer first joins the Stingrays, there may be a brief period in which he/she appears to slow down. This is a result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual.
- Plateaus, both in competition and training, occur in every swimmer's career. Successful athletes work through these delays in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance.
- Swimmers under ten are often inconsistent in their mastery of stroke technique. This can be frustrating for parents. Be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport and develop their mastery of stroke technique.
- Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal for many children. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop a competitive spirit that is comfortable for them. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to competitive stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as youngsters prepare them for larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.
- Coaches offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. Parents supply unconditional love, recognition, and the encouragement necessary to help a young athlete to have a healthy self-image.
- If a parent can offer insight about their child that will enable that child's coach to work more effectively with the child, please be sure to contact the coach.
- If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, contact your child's coach directly. Criticizing the coach in front of youngsters undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.
- No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the coach, the team, or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coach and handled by the coach.
- Be sure that your youngster swims because he/she wants to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus for all successful swimmers.
- The etymology of the word "competition" goes back to two Latin words, "cam" and "petere" which mean "together to strive." Avoid playing your child against their competitors, thereby creating unhealthy competitive situations within the team and swimming community. Competition provides two great services for the athlete: it brings out the best in them and shows where improvement is needed.
- Communication between coach and swimmer is very important. The coaches must have a swimmer's full attention during practice. Parents are invited to watch practice from the bleachers to avoid the temptation to coach.

In swimming, as in life, no one can succeed all the time. Every youngster can gain valuable experiences from swimming, whether or not a single race is ever won. What is important is to improve and learn from mistakes. We want to produce great young people who swim.

Problems and Questions Procedure

Questions should be directed to the person who can answer or solve your problem. Follow the guidelines below to get answers and solve problems quickly. These guidelines promote open communication between parents, swimmers, and coaches.

Problems or questions regarding practice, stroke instruction, meets, team rules, and the training program should be discussed with the individuals below, in the order listed. Please refrain from discussing problems with coaches during practice times. A coach may have another practice or duty after your own child's practice. Contacting coaches by phone or email is appreciated.

- Swimmer's group coach
- Head Site Coach at the swimmer's pool
- Head Coach
- Team President
- Board of Directors at a Board meeting

Other questions should be discussed with the individuals listed below, in the order listed.

- Head Coach
- Team President
- Board of Directors at a Board meeting

Photo Release

Swimmers are sometimes photographed or videotaped while participating in RAYS activities. This is usually done by coaches or parents, but the local newspapers will occasionally take photographs as part of an article. Additionally, the RAYS, Virginia Swimming, and USA Swimming frequently take and incorporate photographs in their publications. Any photos provided to the RAYS become property of the RAYS. If you do not desire your swimmer to be photographed or videotaped during a RAYS activity, please e-mail the RAYS president.

Chapter 4: Swim Meets

Meet Schedule

The meet schedule is distributed by the 1st week of practice after each season's break; short course season, 25 yards, for September through March and long course season, 50 meters, for April through early August. Please review this schedule to determine which meets an athlete should attend. The published meet schedules are the authorized meets for our team. If you plan to attend an unauthorized meet, you must receive permission from your group coach.

Although meet attendance is not mandatory, we encourage all team members to compete once every three or four weeks. This meet frequency allows the swimmer enough time between competitions to develop new skills and master old ones. In some cases, meets are scheduled as close as two weeks or as far as five weeks apart. This happens when the meets available to us offer no other alternative. Multi-day meets provide swimmers the flexibility of only competing on specific days.

Unless during championship season, we will not permit swimmers to compete in a competition on two successive weekends. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets Stingrays' swimmers attend. Individual and relays entries are made by the coaching staff.

Meet Announcements & Entry Confirmation

Meet announcements are sent to families via e-mail, placed on the bulletin boards, and posted on the RAYS website (www.swimrays.org) as soon as they become available. If you wish to attend the meet, log into the website and go to the Swim Meet tab on the bottom of the home page.

Confirm your intention to swim by picking the meet you want to attend and which days you are available. You will need to enter each swimmer separately. When the 1st and 2nd editions of entries are published, check to see if your entry is accurate. Failure to follow this procedure may result in a swimmer not being entered in the meet. If a meet is a prelim/final meet, **you must be able to swim finals and relays, if you qualify.**

Coaches track swimmers' times using Hy-Tek's Team Manager and Team Unify software. Coaches enter swimmers in meets and choose the appropriate events. After coaches complete the entry process, team members receive an email with the "**finalized entries**" attached. This is your confirmation that you have been entered in the meet. If there is a problem with the meet entry sheet, please contact a coach immediately.

During the championship season, one meet leads into another. An email is sent out before each meet stating that a swimmer qualifies for the next champ meet, whether as a new swimmer or with additional events. If you decide not to participate in the next champ meet, send an email to Coach Anthony – coachanthony@swimrays.org, stating that your swimmer won't be able to participate.

Occasionally, and regrettably, a swimmer will not be entered in an event or meet that he/she should swim. If space is available and the meet director is willing, a late entry may be allowed. In some cases, the host club may require an additional fee.

Sign-ups must be made by the due date. Meet information, including the sign-up deadlines, will be included in e-mail correspondence and in the meet link. Late entries cause a lot of extra work for everyone involved in the meet entry process. Once entries are sent, the fees for the meet are paid and you will be charged for these fees through your team account. Also, once entries are sent, there are no refunds for a swimmer who enters a meet and then does not attend the meet.

Who Can Participate in Which Meets?

USA Meets: The determination of whether a swimmer participates in the “Mini B/C”, “BB/B/C”, “A/BB”, “A+”, or Senior is as follows:

Mini B/C Meets: All eight and younger swimmers may compete in “Mini B/C” Meets. Swimmer’s nine through 12 may participate in “Mini B/C” Meets in individual and relay events in which they do not have an “A” or “BB” time.

BB/B/C Meets: This type of meet is normally open to 9 and older Class “BB”, “B”, and “C” swimmers. In addition, Class “A” swimmers may swim in individual events and relay strokes in which they do not have “A” times.

A/BB Meets: For 12 and younger swimmers, an “A/BB” Meet will require a minimum “BB” time for each event entered (occasionally a swimmer who has a “BB” time may swim other events if stated on the meet invitation). Thirteen and older swimmers do not have to meet the qualifying times for “A/BB” meets.

A Meets: If you have one A time, you may swim any event in the meet.

A+ Meets: To swim in an “A+” Meet the swimmer must have an “A” time in each event entered unless otherwise stated on the meet invitation.

Senior Meets: Any swimmer 12 years old or older may swim in a Senior Meet if he/she has a “15-16 AA” time in each event to be entered.

Meet classifications may vary. Read the meet announcement carefully to determine eligibility.

Swim Meet Procedures

Each group has a specific warm-up time to be adhered to. Be familiar with this warm-up time before leaving home. Arrive at the pool fifteen minutes prior to your designated warm-up times. report to your coach on deck with your suit, cap, and goggles, and be ready to get in the water. Warm-ups are mandatory and necessary for maximum performance. A member of the Stingrays coaching staff always conducts warm-ups.

All Stingrays swimmers are required to wear the RAYS royal blue team cap. A black RAYS cap will be awarded if you make finals and must be worn during that session. A team suit is recommended. All other team apparel is optional; however, wearing the complete team uniform promotes team unity and greatly aids in spectator recognition. Sport Fair provides everything you will need.

Each Stingrays swimmer is responsible for knowing which events he/she is swimming and being present in the team area before and after each race. Before reporting to the blocks, a swimmer should confer with a member of the coaching staff to review race strategy, technique, and goals. After each race, a swimmer must report immediately to a coach. This gives the coaches an opportunity to discuss the race with each swimmer and add positive comments concerning splits, stroke technique, and race strategy. If there is a designated area, proceed to the warm down lanes and do the proper cool down to help you get ready for your next race.

At most meets, electronic timing is used. The official time is generally the one recorded in the computer when the swimmer touches the touch pad and appearing on the scoreboard. If a swimmer misses the touch pad or there is a mechanical failure, various backup times may be used. The timing and scorekeeping personnel analyze all times to determine the official times that are then posted as final results.

In between races, swimmers are asked to rest and stay warm. All energy is to be stored up and used in competition, for swimming or supporting teammates.

Swimmers must check-in with coaches and get permission to leave the meet, especially at a meet when relays are involved.

Hunger and dehydration can lead to poor performance. Drink and eat throughout the meet.

Swim Meet Essentials

- Team suit or race suit – depending on level of meet
- 2 STINGRAYS caps
- 2 pairs of goggles
- 2 towels
- Old blanket or sleeping bag
- Quiet games or books
- Music to relax before races
- Water bottle and healthy snacks
- Foldable chair if the deck has room

Check-in Events

The coaching staff is responsible for checking any swimmer in for their events. Usually all distance Freestyle/IM events will be check in events. The meet host will have a set time when all swimmers must be checked in if they are going to swim. If they are not checked in, they will not be permitted to swim. Once checked in, if a swimmer misses the event, he/she will be automatically scratched from his/her next individual event.

Relays

Relays are a TEAM effort. Every Stingrays swimmer should expect to swim a relay if called upon.

It is extremely important for swimmers to be on time to the meet, as relays are sometimes swum at the beginning of a session. Due to the length of most meets, planned relay events are often cut from the meet. Therefore, every swimmer should take advantage of the opportunity to experience relay competition in a meet atmosphere. Participation in relay events is a team effort and mandatory. The coaching staff will have the final say on relay team members.

Before you leave the pool, check with the coaching staff to make sure you aren't in any relays. **If you miss a relay you are in you will be pulled from your next event.**

Finals Events

Before you leave the pool after prelims, double check the results to see if you made finals. If you are an alternate, someone ahead of you may scratch. If you are swimming in finals make sure you know when warm-ups begin before you leave. Failure to show up for a finals event, results in an athlete being scratched from the rest of the meet. You must be available to swim finals if you qualify – **team first**.

Time Trials

Some meets offer time trials, either at the end of the meet or the end of a session. Time trials are swum for an official time only; there are no places or awards given. The decision as to whether a swimmer will participate in a time trial rests solely with the Stingrays' staff.

Behavior at Meets

Whenever and wherever a Stingrays swimmer wears any item of the team uniform, the individual should remember that his/her actions and words reflect on the team. Let your actions reflect the pride you have in the Stingrays.

It is against USA Swimming Inc. rules for parents to be on deck during a meet. Only swimmers, coaches, and parents registered with USA Swimming Inc. and serving in a meet capacity, are allowed on deck. Any other person on deck will not be covered under the insurance policy umbrella provided by USA Swimming.

As a matter of courtesy, all questions swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff only. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through proper channels.

At the end of each swim session, help clean up the Stingrays team area.

Team members are never to add or scratch events without first consulting a team coach.

For all championship or travel meets, all swimmers, whether swimming or not, must come back to finals to warm-up and cheer for their team – **team first**.

Championship Swim Meets

The meet schedule includes the following championship meets: Virginia Swimming Age Group and Senior Championships, USA Swimming Age Group Zone and Sectional Meets, NCSA Junior Nationals, Futures and USA Swimming Junior and Senior Nationals, and Olympic Trials. These meets are open to swimmers who qualify, swimmers must attend 70% practice attendance to be able to attend AG Champ and above level meets.

Age Groups

Swimmers compete in age group categories: 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18. These age groups may vary from meet to meet. For example, instead of having separate categories for 8 and under and 10 and under, they may be combined as “10 and under.” Similarly, 15-16, and 17-18 may be grouped as 15-18. Some events are open and include all swimmers with minimum qualifying times and may include swimmers older than 18.

Classification

Swimmers are classified according to the time they swim in a specific event. Time criteria are set up by USA Swimming and are subject to change each October. Time standards are established for both **SHORT COURSE** (times swum in a 25-yard pool) and **LONG COURSE** (times swum in a 50-meter pool). Time standards are posted on our website.

Chapter 5: Swimmer Recognition

Award Bars

When a swimmer receives an “A” time he/she receives an **AWARD BAR** for that stroke which may be worn on the team warm -up jacket. Bars are awarded for each stroke, not each event. For instance, if a swimmer achieves an “A” time in the 50 and 100 Freestyle, he/she will receive only one freestyle bar.

“AAA” and “AAAA” Awards

Special “AAA” and “AAAA” patches are given out by the RAYS for those who achieve a time, once only, in these categories.

Awards Picnic

The Awards Picnic is held in the spring of each year. During the program, recognition and participation awards are presented to the swimmers. Trophies or plaques are also awarded to the appropriate swimmers chosen by the coaches.

Senior Banquet

This is typically held in the month of April. This annual tradition began in 2023. It is a celebration of our graduating seniors and their families. We recognize each graduating senior with a Jefferson Cup and also award all of our scholarship recipients. We also award trophies to the appropriate swimmers chosen by the coaches.

State-Wide Awards

The prestigious Virginia Swimming’s Competitive Spirit Award Plaques are awarded to four swimmers, chosen by our coaches, from each Virginia swimming team. These awards are presented at the Annual Virginia Swimmers Banquet in September.

Swimmers who achieve progressively more demanding time standards will be invited to represent Virginia Swimming and/or the STINGRAYS at certain meets outside the State of Virginia (Zones, US Open, Junior and Senior Nationals and Olympic Trials). These swimmers are recognized throughout the year. The top male and female swimmers of the year for the State of Virginia are also recognized.

Chapter 6: Communications

The dissemination of information to all members and families on the team and the feedback of data are of paramount importance to the Board of Directors. Over the years, several methods have been used to “get the word out.” It is the family’s responsibility to supply and update email addresses.

Coaches

Call or email the coaches, or talk to them at the appropriate time after practices. Check the website, www.swimrays.org, under “About Us”, then under Coaches for each coach’s email.

Handbook

The Stingrays handbook, located on the team website, www.swimrays.org, under “About Us”, is a combination of general information necessary for new team members and useful for older members.

Files

Each family has a file folder at their home pool – Massad Y, Rosner Y, the Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center, and King George Y. All members are urged to be careful to take information from the correct slot. These folders are mostly used for distribution of meet ribbons, medals and team apparel.

Website

Our web page address is www.swimrays.org. This site has team records, meet information (meet announcements, meet entries, warm-up information, meet results, meet directions), handbook, daily/monthly practice schedules, your team account and Safe Sport material. You will also sign up for meets and volunteer on the site. In the event of inclement weather, each site coach will email information concerning cancellations.

Bulletin Board

The Stingrays have bulletin boards, at all practice facilities, to provide general information: MY – inside the pool area, RY – outside the pool area, JRSSC – inside the main pool entrance, and KGY – inside the pool area.

Team Phone Numbers

Team information may be obtained from Head Coach Anthony at 703-919-5889 as well as from Executive Director Bob Herlinger, 540-207-0846.

Email

Each head site coach is responsible for distributing team information to the membership. In general, e-mails are sent concerning meet sign-ups, meet results, schedule changes, and team account fees information.

Chapter 7: Parent Responsibilities

The Stingrays expect parents to contribute their time and assist the team in swimming activities. Parents are expected to provide the physical equipment (suits, fins, etc.), transportation to practices and meets, proper food and rest, and unconditional encouragement and interest in the child's swimming activities. Parents must also meet their financial obligations to the team.

RAYS VOLUNTEERING POLICY – UPDATED 2024

Hosting Swim Meets

We host meets to give our swimmers the opportunity to swim close to home and keep costs down (about \$300 a year per swimmer). Since RAYS is a volunteer, non-profit, parent-run organization, parental involvement is vital to the success of the team. If you won't be attending a meet, we do request help with hospitality donations or volunteer positions when able, but is not required. Working as an official during a session of the meet qualifies for the meet obligation of that session.

RAYS Hosted Meets

Should more shifts be required due to the size of the meet, then shifts will need to be added or if less are needed, they will be removed.

Sat/Sunday Meets – Mandatory 1 shift per meet or fine assessed at 100.00 total per shift

- GPS - Great Pumpkin Splash – October
- JR - Jeff Rouse Invite – January
- HW - Helen Wang Sunflower Classic– April

* Swimmer is entered for 1 session- obligation is still 1 shift

Fri/Sat/Sunday Meets – Mandatory 2 shifts or 150.00 dollar fine per shift (max 300.00)

- Region 13 and Over (Champ meet) – February/March
- Summer Awards (Champ meet) – July
- 12 and Under District Champs

* Swimmer is entered for only day - 1 shift is mandatory

Nutcracker Classic – 3.5-day meet – Mandatory 2 shifts or 200.00 fine per shift (max 400.00)

Championship Meets- 1 Mandatory Shift- 100.00 per shift

- 1. Senior Champs**
- 2. Age Group Champs**

*******Multi-swimmer families – 2 or more swimmers**

- Sat/Sun meets (GPS, JR, HW) - multi-swimmer families - 2 shifts total (fine amount applies)
- Nutcracker, 13 and Over and Summer Awards - 3 shifts total (fine amount applies)

* Swimmer is entered for only day - 1 shift is mandatory (per swimmer)

Exclusion - If a swimmer is not swimming in the meet, volunteering is not required.

Should more shifts be required due to the size of the meet, then shifts will need to be added.

Communication requirement

- Communication with the volunteer coordinator (volunteering@swimrays.org) is required. If there are any known conflicts, please communicate those conflicts 72 hours ahead of time so arrangements can be made for future meets to meet volunteering requirements.
- Emergencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis
- Non-communication or communication after the meet has begun may result in a fine for a session missed.

Working at Meets

Parents are **required** to work at all home swim meets if your child is swimming and asked to help at away meets when your child is competing. Parents do not need certification to time, place-judge, write ribbons, or be a runner. Parents are encouraged to obtain required certification for positions of safety marshals, stroke and turn, scorekeeper, clerk of the course, CTS operator, starter and referee. The Meet Director/Officials Chairperson publishes a list of workers before each swim meet.

RAYS Hosted Meet Hotel Accommodations Reimbursement Policy

The RAYS will reimburse reasonable and customary actual cost for hotel expenses for officials, Meet Director and Hospitality Coordinator in accordance with VSI procedures.

Hotel expenses will only be considered for RAYS hosted meets. Host teams may offer this benefit to officials/volunteers.

Officials, Meet Director, Hospitality Coordinator, and/or Concession Coordinator who live more than an hour away from the RAYS hosted venue may receive hotel accommodations at the Meet Director discretion.

- Swimmers entered in the meet are not permitted to stay in the accommodations provided by the RAYS.
- Rooms are assigned based upon double occupancy. Rooms will be shared by co-habiting officials, followed by same gender. In cases where a single occupancy room is the only option, priority is Meet Referee, Meet Director, Data Entry Operators, and Meet Administration.
- Those receiving overnight accommodations must work all sessions the following day, unless extenuating circumstances exist and has been waived prior to the meet by the Meet Director.
- No hotel accommodations will be provided after the conclusion of the meet; unless waived by both the Meet Director and RAYS President and/or RAYS Treasurer.
- Hotel accommodations may be offered the night before the beginning of the meet, if the reasonable departure time to arrive on time at the venue is prior to 6am based upon their official capacity and home location.
- The Meet Director, at his/her discretion, may request for variances of this policy to the board to host a successful meet. Approved variances do not set a precedent for future RAYS hosted meets.

Chapter 8: Team Structure

The Stingrays Swim Team consists of a seven or eight-tiered group structure, depending on the site. This provides a natural progression through which the swimmer moves as he/she grows and matures. This structure encourages a swimmer's enthusiasm for the sport and meets the needs of children at all levels of ability and interest. When a swimmer is ready to move up to the next practice group, a coach will contact the swimmer and parent. Sometimes, there is a transition period where the swimmer attends one practice a week with the new group, while continuing to practice with their current practice group to see how the swimmer adapts to the advanced workout. Swimmers are advanced only after a successful trial period. No additional charges are incurred during the transition period. Dues are prorated and invoiced at the higher practice group amount upon permanent assignment to the higher-level practice group.

Pre-Competitive – Month to Month, 3 Consecutive Months or Full-Year Contracts

For all equipment needs for each group and site, click [Equipment on the main page of the website](#). Sport Fair will visit each site in mid-September for you to buy what you need.

Manta White Group (9 & under) - 2 days per week for 45 minutes

The White Group is designed for swimmers age 5-9 who are interested in improving their technique in Free and Back and ready to learn Breast and Fly and one day advance into the competitive program in the future. The group is offered 2 days a week for 45 minutes, the schedule will vary depending on the location. There is no attendance requirement. In order to be eligible to join the White Group, a swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards of freestyle (with side breathing) and 25 yards of backstroke. Before you can register, your swimmer must be evaluated by a RAYS Coach.

Manta Red Group (9-11 Years Old) - 3 days per week for 45 minutes

The Red group is designed for swimmers age 9-11 who are interested in swimming for fitness or fun, look to improve their technique and maybe look to advance to the competitive program in the future. In the Red group the swimmers will learn the 4 competitive strokes, through the use of drills and equipment. The class is offered 3 days a week for 45 minutes, the schedule will vary depending on the location. There is no attendance requirement. In order to be eligible for the Red Group, a swimmer must be able to swim 50 yards of freestyle and 25 yards of backstroke. Before you can register your swimmer must be evaluated by a RAYS Coach.

Manta Blue Group (9-12 Years Old) - 4 days per week for 1 hour

The Blue group is designed for swimmers 9-12 Years old who are interested in swimming for fitness or fun, to improve their technique and maybe look to advance to the competitive program in the future. The class is offered 4 days a week for 1 hour, the schedule will vary depending on the location. There is no attendance requirement. In order to be eligible for the Blue Group, a swimmer must be able to swim 100 yards of freestyle and 50 yards of backstroke and at least working knowledge of breast or fly. Before you can register your swimmer must be evaluated by a RAYS Coach.

High School Performance (13 & Older) - 5 days per week for 90 minutes

The HS Performance group is designed for swimmers 13 & Older who are interested in swimming for fitness or fun, to improve their technique and maybe look to advance to the competitive program in the future. The class is offered 5 days a week for 90 minutes, the schedule will vary depending on the location. There is no attendance requirement. In order to be eligible for the HS Performance Group, a swimmer must be able to swim 200 yards of freestyle and able to demonstrate knowledge of the 4 competitive strokes. Before you can register your swimmer must be evaluated by a RAYS Coach.

Full-Year Contracts

Bronze Group

The Bronze group is the entry level into the RAYS competitive swim structure for swimmers' age 12 & under. This group serves as a transition from our developmental program (White, Red or Blue) or from Summer League to our more experienced competitive swim groups. As a Bronze swimmer they will be taught fundamental techniques for all four strokes, starts and turns. With more practice you will see noticeable improvement in many aspects of your child's swimming: their "feel for the water", their stroke technique, their general comfort with teammates, and their overall physical conditioning. We will introduce them to competitive swimming situations in practice and help prepare them for meets and competitions. Our ultimate goal is to develop lifelong swimmers while also making sure they have as much fun as possible.

Practice

Bronze group workouts are offered 5 days a week for 1.5 hour per practice. For best results we recommend swimmers attend at least 3 practices per week in order to maintain "feel for the water" and continued development of technique.

Swim Meets

Swim meets are a great way to track your swimmers progress and for swimmers to see how their work is paying off. The meet schedule is posted on the RAYS website under the "Meets" Tab and are typically twice a month, with one at the JRSSC and one being an away meet. Though it is not required we strongly recommend that swimmers compete in every meet possible.

Group Expectations

To enter the Bronze Group, you must...

- Be able to do freestyle and backstroke and understand the fundamentals of both breaststroke or butterfly.
- Be approved by an age group coach for admission into the group after a swim evaluation.

Competition Apparel – Required

- Racing Suit
- RAYS Swim Cap
- RAYS T-shirt

Bronze Practice Schedule:

Will vary based on location

Silver Group

The Silver group is the second progressive step in our age group program after Bronze or transitioning from Manta Blue or HS Performance for swimmers ages 11-14 years old. The goal of this group is to continue their development as a year-round competitive swimmer. The primary focus will be on continuing development of proper and fundamental stroke technique. To assist the swimmer's competitive growth, we will also add a more advanced aerobic training element. We hope to increase swimmer IQ in this group as we teach them interval training, basic energy systems (aerobic/anaerobic work), reading a pace clock, and understanding the purpose of drills and practice sets. This group will also begin to utilize dryland training as part of their regular practice training. Dry-land will be mostly core strength and flexibility through stretching focused.

Practice

For the Silver Group workouts are offered 6 days a week. Workouts are 1 hour and 45 minutes in length and will include dry-land activities in addition to those practices to help build strength and flexibility. For best results we recommend swimmers attend at least 4 practices per week with the hope of making 5 or more practices per week.

Swim Meets

Swim meets are a great way to track your swimmers progress and for swimmers to see how their work is paying off. The meet schedule is posted on the RAYS website under the "Meets" Tab and are typically twice a month with one at home and one away. Though it is not required we recommend that swimmers compete in every meet possible.

Group Expectations

To enter the Silver Program, you must...

- Be at least 11 years old, but no older than 14 to enter the group
- Attain coach approval from an age group coach after an evaluation or observation through bronze practices or developmental practices
- Show a commitment to training through regular and stable practice attendance

Competition Apparel - Required

- Racing Suit
- RAYS Swim Cap
- RAYS T-shirt

Silver Practice Schedule:

Will vary by location

Gold Group

The Gold group is the introduction into our senior group programming. This group will consist of our top 14 & Overs on the team. The goal of this group is to maximize their competitive potential both short term and long term. We will do this by mastering proper stroke techniques for all four strokes and adding advanced techniques to improve speed. This group utilizes a progressive aerobic training plan (focused on technique) coupled with anaerobic and sprint lactate training. This group also does regular dry-land training. Dry-land is based around a high cardio, core strength development and flexibility program. Gold swimmers will also become more goal-oriented. At the start of each season and intermittently throughout each season swimmers and coaches will meet to discuss, plan and set up individual goals. Short term (next meet), mid-term (mid-season or end of session, short course or long course championship meet) and long term (yearly) goals will be addressed and tracked.

Practice

For the Gold group workouts are offered 8-9 times a week, including AM practices, for the Gold Group. In water workouts range from 1.5 hours to 2 hours a session. In addition to the weekday practice we will also add additional times for dry-land training. For best results we recommend swimmers attend at least 6 practices a week.

Swim Meets

Swim meets are a great way to track your swimmers progress and for swimmers to see how their work is paying off. The meet schedule is posted on the RAYS website under the “Meets” Tab and are typically twice a month. Though it is not required we recommend that swimmers compete in every meet possible. As a Gold swimmer it is vital to communicate with your coach about meets before you commit in order to stay on track with your goals and swim in appropriate level meets.

Group Expectations

To enter the Gold Program, you must...

- Be at least 14 years old
- Be legal in all 4 strokes as determined through either competition and/or coach observation at practice
- Receive coach approval from an age group coach through evaluation and/or practice observation
- Show a commitment to training through regular and stable practice attendance.
- Practice schedule will vary based on locations

Competition Apparel - Required

- Racing Suit
- RAYS Swim Cap
- RAYS T-shirt

RAYS Gold 1 Group

The RAYS Gold 1 Group, only at the JRSSC, is the highest level of progression for all swimmers on RAYS age 15 and over. The purpose of this group is to develop a cohesive training group that will allow swimmers to reach their highest level of swimming. The swimmers in this group have a focus of being competitive at the LSC, State, Zone, Sectional, and National levels. They are also expected to display leadership qualities and characteristics that will properly represent RAYS at all times. Training will consist of increased volume/yardage, however, not at the expense of proper technique and mechanics. Along with the in-water training there will also be a dry-land training program focusing on core strength, flexibility and explosive power. Gold 1 Group swimmers will also become more goal-oriented with a focus on working towards swimming at the next level (National Level or College). We will continually meet throughout the season to discuss, plan and set up individual goals. Short term, mid-term and long term (yearly/future) goals will be addressed and tracked.

Practice

For the Gold 1 Group workouts are offered 6 days a week with 9 training sessions offered each week. Weekday workouts vary from 1.5-2.5 hours and 2 hours on Saturdays. During these times there will be scheduled dry-land training. Each swimmer is expected to maintain a practice attendance of at least 85%.

Swim Meets

Swim meets are a great way to track your swimmers progress and for swimmers to see how their work is paying off. The meet schedule is posted on the RAYS website under the “Meets” Tab and are typically twice a month. Each Gold 1 swimmer will be expected to attend the highest level championship meet for which they qualify along with additional meets as the coach and swimmer deem important to achieving their goals.

Group Expectations

To enter the Gold 1 Group you must...

- Be at least 15 years old
- Have 1 sectional time standard and/or have Head Coach Approval/Recommendation
- Maintained 85% practice attendance while in Gold or Silver

Competition Apparel – Required

- Racing Suit
- RAYS Swim Cap
- RAYS T-shirt.

RAYS Gold 1 Group Practice Schedule:

Will be posted

College – MY, RY, JRSSC, KGY, CY

The collegiate swimmer program is for experienced USA Swimming athletes who are currently swimming for their college or university team.

Chapter 9: Organization

Board of Directors

The general management of the Stingrays' team is the responsibility of a Board of Directors, consisting of team members' parents, who volunteer to serve in the capacities of President, Vice- President, Secretary, Treasurer, Team Manager, and Meet Director. Members of the Board of Directors serve two-year terms. Elections are held prior to the Awards Picnic in the spring. You will be asked to vote by email, one per family.

President: Responsible for the overall activities of the team: runs the Board of Directors; negotiates with coaches' contracts in collaboration with Treasurer, Head Coach and Executive Director; signs contracts; works to fill open positions for the Board; and acts as liaison with the Head Coach and Executive Director.

Vice President: Fills President's role if he/she is unavailable; acts as liaison to all committees and special projects; he/she becomes the President Elect for the following year; holds Parent Meetings when parents have specific issues; and coordinates Scholarship programs.

Secretary: Maintains all correspondence, minutes, and files, performs team clerical duties; completes Monthly update on Team Unify for Board actions; work with Head Coach to update Team Handbook.

Treasurer: Attend monthly board meetings, provide budget updates monthly to the Board, approve bookkeepers time sheet, review/approve receipts for hospitality and special events, review/approve requests for contract relief, and create a budget for each fiscal year utilizing the Executive Director and Head Coach's approved coaches' salaries, pool rental fees and travel budget figures.

Meet Director: Responsible for RAYS hosted meets (facilities, officials and equipment); and keeps track of RAYS officials.

At Large Member: Plan/coordinate and execute team wide social activities and outings (ex: trips to KD, pumpkin patch, team movie day, team skating, team trip to sky zone) with input on scheduling by the Executive Director and the Board. Periodically communicate with all of the site social reps to give/receive ideas. Assist with planning site social events when needed (ex: holiday parties- Halloween, Christmas, champ season, spring etc.). Assist the president with planning the annual picnic. Planning/executing the annual 4th of July biathlon (assign and coordinate breakfast; provide and display decorations festively). Make and/or coordinate the making of championship (AG, senior champs) goody bags for qualifying team members going to the meets.

Head Coach: Responsible for all wet side decisions and leads the team in the proper direction. Casts a tie-breaking vote on the Board of Directors.

Executive Director: Serves on the Board of Directors in a non-voting capacity and does the backend paperwork to keep the club running smoothly.

Team Meetings

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors usually meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM with additional meetings scheduled as necessary. Parents are invited to attend the first part of the meeting. If there is an issue you would like to discuss at the meeting, contact a board member with the topic, so it can be added to the agenda. Meeting minutes are available by request from the Board Secretary.

Committees

Standing committees are appointed by the President as required. The Board of Directors form special committees as the need arises. Our committees serve an indispensable need in the management and administration of our team and ensure current and future fiscal well-being. The hard work and creative talents of our parents insure our team's survival. Please get involved; your efforts will benefit your child and the team.

Parent Meeting

Meetings are held at each facility, one for each practice group, to discuss what to expect for the season. They usually are scheduled after the first two weeks of fall practice.

Annual Meeting

There will be an annual business meeting of the organization in the spring in conjunction with the Spring Awards Picnic.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the organization may be called during the calendar year by the President or designate of the Board of Directors as needed, with 10 calendar days prior notification.

Chapter 10: Expenses

Policy for Charitable Funding

The Stingrays shall consider providing charitable funding upon request provided all the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The request must be presented to the Stingrays Board from a Stingrays member in good standing.
2. The charitable funding must be directed and utilized for a project that is community oriented and will enhance the community.
3. The Stingrays member cannot enjoy any monetary or other gain from the charitable donation or from the charitable project.
4. The charitable project cannot create a conflict of interest to the Stingrays organization, any of its members, officers or staff as determined by the Stingrays Board of Directors.
5. The maximum charitable contribution limit shall be \$200.00 per donation per charity.
6. The maximum annual charitable contribution limit for all charitable contributions shall not exceed \$1,400.00.

YMCA Membership

All swimmers practicing at a YMCA facility are required to be YMCA members. Register at the front desk of your Y. Inform the staff that you are joining the Stingrays and the initiation fee is waived. There is a \$25 fee/month/child to join the Y. Check with the Y about family rates.

Team Dues

As we begin each swim year, the Board of Directors relies upon the online signed contracts to make budgetary decisions, because they represent the number of swimmers and fee income for the year. The Stingrays' membership fee structure is included in the annual contract. The coaching staff will select swimmers for the appropriate practice group based on age, maturity, ability level, space availability and site. The coaching staff will also determine when a swimmer is ready to move to a more advanced practice group. Dues will increase as swimmers move into advanced practice groups.

The Stingrays offer two payment plans for **full time members**: 1) Payment in Full, and 2) Monthly. **The Stingrays also offer a family discount plan.** These plans cover full membership for one swim season, beginning September 1 and ending July 31. If you choose to pay for the year in full, you will receive a 5% discount from the monthly payment plan (amounts will be specified in the contract). Full payment is required by September 10. The monthly payment plan is for 11 months with the first dues payment made in September and the last dues payment made in July.

We will be offering Manta programs with a Flex registration fee of \$30. Manta programs will include a **Monthly option** with a 30 day notice to cancel. Also, a **3 consecutive month option** with an auto renewal, also with a 30 day notice to cancel.

You will be able to sign up for 2 meets.

Monthly Invoices

All accounts must have a credit card or ACH on file for automatic billing and will be automatically charged on the 3rd of each month. If the account becomes delinquent, the RAYS reserve the right to charge the balance to the card or ACH on file. Monthly invoices are generated and emailed on the 1st of every month, showing your final invoice amount owed on your team account. Each family is responsible for paying the final invoice amount by the 10th of each month. If full payment is not received by the 10th of each month, it will be considered late and your team account will be charged a \$40 late fee. The first monthly invoice will be generated and emailed on September 1. Monthly dues are invoiced September through July and all other fees are invoiced from October through August. Should any check be declined and returned by your financial institution you will be responsible for all fees incurred by the team, in addition to a \$50 returned check fee. Automatic monthly payments are available for convenience.

A past due payment more than 30 days may result in the swimmer not being permitted to enter meets. Payments more than 60 days past due may result in the swimmer not being permitted to attend practice until payment arrangements are made. Should collections actions on your account become necessary, you will be responsible for all costs associated with collections actions, to include court costs and/or legal fees.

Family Discount Plan

The family discount plan is as follows: multi-swimmer discount is 6%, 12%, 20%, and 25% for 2 through 5 family members. This discount is calculated based on the total per swimmer of the program dues. Discounts or coupons cannot be used for the Collegiate program.

RAYs plus USA and VA Swimming Registration Fees

The RAYS registration fee for each swimmer will be \$150, which is separate from your dues payment. This registration fee includes our team registration fee, 2 team t-shirts, and a latex team swim cap. The USA and VA Swimming athlete registration fee, for insurance purposes, will be \$88. Both fees are non-refundable.

Athletes registered as Premium Athletes during the 2024-25 swim season, regardless of club affiliation, and returning for the 2025-26 season will have their memberships renewed by the team in the Fall and will be invoiced \$88 in their team account once registered.

Athletes who have never registered with USA Swimming or who are returning but did not register for the 2024-25 season will have to set up a USA Swimming account and pay the \$88 registration fee on their own. In early September, a registration link and instructions will be sent to each family with athlete(s) who fall into this category. Athletes must be registered with USA Swimming prior to practicing with the team the first time or participating in any other RAYS activities. Once this is done, you are formally a RAY!

Additional Family Credit (AFC)

AFC is not mandatory and is strictly voluntary. AFC is earned via credit through purchases of Scrip (gift cards from www.scripzone.com), securing team sponsorship sales, or participating in other AFC events. Additionally, AFC can be earned by officiating at RAYS hosted meets of \$25 per session. Plus, if you are a Safety Marshall, you will earn \$12.50 per half session. AFC credit/rebate will be posted to a family's account as it is earned monthly through July 20th, of the current year. More information regarding gift card purchases can be found on the team's website under the tab AFC.

Every family is limited to earnings up to \$500 in AFC credit/rebate. Excess credit/rebate over \$500 will revert back to the RAYS, as a donation to the RAYS scholarship fund. Excess credit to a family's team account may not result in a refund of monies previously paid and a family may not delay a payment due in anticipation of future AFC credit/rebate. When a family leaves the team any excess funds in the family's team account, gained via AFC, will revert to the RAYS.

Outreach Program

If your family qualifies for Food Stamps, Free Lunch or Reduced/Waived YMCA membership fees contact the RAYS Bookkeeper at bookkeeper@swimrays.org to apply for this program. All swimmers who qualify for the Virginia Swimming Outreach Program may be eligible to have their registration fee reduced by \$83 and all VSI individual meet entry fees reimbursed by Virginia Swimming. All reimbursements received on your behalf from Virginia Swimming will be 100% applied to your account.

Upon acceptance into the Outreach program, swimmers in Bronze/Silver/Gold/Gold 1 or those signed up for the 11-month commitment in a MANTA program will receive a onetime program dues reduction as follows: MANTA White \$65; MANTA Red \$105; MANTA Blue \$135; HS Performance \$185; Bronze \$185; Silver \$250; Gold \$295; Gold 1 \$320.

Swimmer Meet Travel Fees

Event and relay fees vary by meet. Each meet host also charges a swimmer or facility surcharge. Meet fees are included in the monthly invoice. RAYS swimmers entered in any meet will be charged a \$1.00 travel surcharge fee per meet entered. This fee helps with the cost of providing team subsidized championship apparel and/or sending swimmers to nationally ranked meets.

Meet Travel Reimbursement Policy

To be eligible for national meet reimbursement/assistance you must be in good financial standing and have been a RAY for one year. For new RAYS, reimbursement/assistance will be 50% of a returning RAYS swimmer. The maximum reimbursement/assistance is the highest-level meet obtained per swimmer per season. For example, a swimmer attends JR Nationals and NCSA JN for Short Course, the total reimbursement/assistance is \$50. Amount will be credited to their family RAYS account.

- NCSA JN & Futures Meets \$25
- Junior Nationals \$50
- Senior/Open Nationals \$75
- Olympic Trials/World Champs \$150

Additionally, the fund will be utilized to obtain the following for all qualifying attending swimmers, both returning and new swimmers, including relay only swimmers:

- National Team embroidery on jackets/pants/bags/backpacks will be paid by team
- Championship T-Shirt one per attendee (either SC or LC not both).
- Championship Apparel Express Shipping and Handling Charges up to \$100 per year
- Championship Jacket Supplement of \$15 to assist with the cost of the Championship Jacket of AG, SR, and Sectional's attendees one per year

For team unity all swimmers are expected to wear their RAYS provided apparel. During Championship meets all swimmers attending the first full day session (typically Friday) are encouraged to wear their RAYS T-shirt provided to them in the fall: on the following day (typically Saturday) their RAYS Championship T-shirt, and on the following days of the meet (typically Sunday) a RAYS T-shirt of their choice unless otherwise directed by the Coaches. Exception for Senior Champs (SC and LC) will be for graduating high school seniors can wear their college t-shirt they will be attending on the day of Graduating Senior Recognition (typically Saturday).

For national meets the swimmers will be notified prior to the meet the T-shirt uniform schedule by the coaches.

Sponsor and Ad Sales

The Stingrays Swim Team would like to encourage our members to seek out sponsors and solicit ads for the meet programs when we host meets. Contact the team's president or treasurer, if you are interested in obtaining a sponsor.

MEDICAL LEAVE: Please see "RAYS Contract" under About Us on Website.

CONTRACT RELEASES: Please see "RAYS Contract" under About Us on Website.

Chapter 11: Scholarships and Awards

The RAYS offer four award opportunities to recognize eligible RAYS swimmers, specifically: The RAYS Family Merit Scholarship, The Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Grant Program, RAYS Graduating Senior Scholarship, and The Helen Wang Memorial Scholarship.

RAYS Family Merit Scholarship - This scholarship award is available to any RAYS athlete who is a member of USA Swimming and in good standing within their RAYS Bronze, Silver, Gold, Gold 1, or High School Performance program group. This scholarship is to recognize and reward the educational, athletic, and RAYS commitment of the recipient.

Michael & Jennie M. Clesner Grant Program -This grant is available to any RAYS athlete who is in good standing within their RAYS Bronze, Silver, Gold, Gold 1, or High School Performance program group. The Clesner family has always made it a priority to ensure children are able to participate in swimming, no matter what their financial situation. This program is to provide financial assistance to swimmers who consistently demonstrate a sincere commitment in maximizing their swimming potential.

RAYS Graduating Senior Scholarship -This scholarship award is available to any eligible RAYS athlete who is graduating from high school in 2026 (or home school equivalent) and accepted to attend an accredited college/university program as a first-year full-time student in the Fall of 2026. This scholarship award is to go towards the college expenses of the recipient.

The Helen Wang Memorial Scholarship -This scholarship award is available to any eligible RAYS athlete who is graduating from high school in 2026 (or home school equivalent) and accepted to attend an accredited college/university program as a first-year full-time student in the Fall of 2026. This scholarship was named after Helen Wang, who was an amazing role model, student, and champion to so many of us and was taken from us too soon. Helen was a friend to everyone she met and left a piece of herself in everyone's heart. The scholarship fund was established to not just honor Helen but to continue her dream to make a difference in the lives of others.

All awards will be announced at the Awards Picnic or Seniors Banquet in the spring of 2026. Further descriptions, and application requirements, can be found on the 'Scholarship' page on the RAYS team website in the 'Resources' drop-down menu.

Chapter 12: RAYS Adaptive Provisions

RAYS Adaptive Provisions:

The Stingrays Swim Team, Inc. (RAYS), in association with Virginia Swimming and USA Swimming, is committed to provide an environment for disabled swimmers to participate with the RAYS and to compete in meets

Inclusion Guidelines

1. USA Swimming Standards
 - a. In compliance with USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, RAYS desires to accommodate disabled swimmers. A disability is defined as a permanent physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities.
2. RAYS Special Administrative Standards
 - a. RAYS welcomes all swimmers with a disability and will make common-sense adjustments
 - b. Disabilities encompass the following major areas:
 - i. Hearing impairment
 - ii. Visual impairment
 - iii. Cognitive disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, severe learning disabilities, or autism
 - iv. Physical disabilities such as amputations, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, spinal injury, or other mobility impairments
3. Accommodations during practices should be up to the discretion of the site coach. Examples of such accommodations are:
 - a. Allowing volunteer helpers as needed for the disabled swimmer.
 - b. Including the disabled swimmer in practices by the swimmer's ability rather than age.
 - c. The coach of the practice group should have the same expectations of the swimmer with a disability as the other swimmers in that group with respect to effort, behavior, attendance, and other aspects of work ethic.
 - d. The same principles of training/conditioning, biomechanics, and sport psychology apply to the swimmers with a disability as the other athletes. Most coaches are expert at modifying practices to accommodate individual needs such as with shoulder injuries.
 - e. Places and awards for disabled swimmers can only be earned in the swimmer's actual event and/or age group. At the discretion of the meet host special awards may be given to disabled swimmers
 - f. The athlete's coach is responsible for notifying the session referee of any disability prior to the competition.
 - g. In championship level meets, disabled swimmers may enter with the permission of the Meet Director and Senior or Age Group Chairman. Accommodations as described above (or others, as recommended by the Adapted Swimming Committee based upon the specific disability) may be made by the Meet Referee

- h. Places and awards for disabled swimmers can only be earned in the swimmer's actual event and/or age group. At the discretion of the meet host special awards may be given to disabled swimmers.
- i. The athlete's coach is responsible for notifying the session referee of any disability prior to the competition.

Chapter 13: Safe Sport

Protecting Athletes:

We believe that the experience of children and young athletes in all organized sports should be guided by what is best for the safe and healthy development of the young person. Young athletes who participate in organized sports activities have a unique opportunity for learning. In working with each child, it is essential that we are mindful of their physical, emotional, and developmental needs. We must also be particularly diligent in recognizing the unique vulnerabilities that are an inherent part of childhood. It is the responsibility of all adults to not only recognize these vulnerabilities, but to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create and maintain a safe and child-centered sports environment.

We recognize the important role that USA Swimming plays in providing leadership and creating an organizational culture that is focused on the safety and wellbeing of young people. The protection of children requires that all adults work together to support young athletes. As the child's first and enduring resource for safety, parents and guardians play a critical role in athlete protection. When parents participate, they are able to help educate other adults about the needs of the child, and help prepare the child to participate in sports programs in a way that promotes safety, enjoyment, and learning.

Adults, including coaches, officials, staff, facility workers, volunteers, chaperones, and others who interact with children, are in also positions of great trust and influence. The ability to use this position of trust to support the well-being of children is critical. The overwhelming majority of these adults fulfill their roles in a positive and responsible manner. Nonetheless, we must also understand that a few adults may seek to use the trust and authority that comes with their access and status to take advantage of a child.

USA Swimming strives to continually improve the programs and services it offers to its members and among these some of the most important relate to the safeguards for protecting young athletes. Because we aspire to foster safe and positive environments within all our member clubs, we believe it is especially important to provide our member adult leaders with policies and best practice guidelines that help define elements of appropriate behavior and conduct.

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy just added educational FAQ's.

USA Swimming Member clubs were required to implement the USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) in full by June 23rd, 2019. MAAPP contains five sections: one-one-one interactions, travel, social media and electronic communications, locker rooms and changing areas and massage, rubdowns and athletic training modalities. Please read below for the Policy and other education materials.

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

- Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention - Full Policy
- Travel

Athlete Protection Education:

USA Swimming is committed to raising awareness about prevention of abuse in sport. USA Swimming is proud to partner with Praesidium, an industry expert in abuse prevention, to bring the swimming community customized and comprehensive training tools for coaches, volunteers and parents. Customized training for athletes is available now.

Their training tools will help you:

- Understand the scope and effects of abuse in sport
- Recognize the signs of grooming behavior and boundary violations
- Understand how to establish boundaries and protect against false allegations
- Know how to react and report when you suspect abuse

Free Training for Parents:

The USA Swimming Safe Sport Program is proud to offer free athlete protection training to the parents of their member athletes. Parents are a critical component to USA Swimming's overall goal to protecting children from sexual abuse. The comprehensive online programming includes information about how offenders operate; how to recognize and respond to boundary violations, myths and facts about child sexual abuse and USA Swimming's Athlete Protection Policies and Procedures. FYI, our LSC is Virginia, our Club Code is RAYS.

Free Training for Athletes:

USA Swimming has developed a free education program for athlete ages 12-18.

Click the link below to learn about:

- Inappropriate contact
- Physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries
- What to do if your boundaries are violated
- Who to tell
- How USA Swimming can be a resource for you

By learning how to protect yourselves, you also learn how to protect your peers; and together we can make the sport safer for everyone. FYI, our LSC is Virginia, our Club Code is RAYS.

Safe Sport Athlete Fellowship:

To: High School Age Athletes

The Safe Sport Athlete Fellowship is accepting applications through 10/28. The Fellowship is a year-long leadership development program for 4 selected high school-aged athletes who wish to gain leadership skills, be more involved in the Safe Sport movement, and become a liaison between USA Swimming national headquarters and local swim clubs. During the year, athletes are tasked with creating and launching a project to spread the message of Safe Sport (positive team cultures, anti-bullying, active bystander) within their swim club, as well as other clubs in their LSC. This year's fellows have done a variety of things, including a video campaign, a themed relay meet, a reward program, and an athlete committee.

There is a travel component to the Fellowship. By the end of the year, fellows will have worked through a leadership development curriculum, independently launched a project, and been embedded in USA Swimming in a unique way. Fellows will have a deep understanding of Safe Sport and be active advocates of the program in their home clubs and LSCs.

Glossary of Swimming Terms

AGE GROUP – Division of swimmers according to age. The USA Swimming divisions are 8&U, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and senior.

AGING UP – When an athlete changes age groups.

ALTERNATE – In a prelim/final meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers are designated as alternates - the faster of the two being first alternate and the next being the second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on a moment's notice. If an athlete is an alternate, but cannot make it back for finals, they should scratch from their alternate position.

AMERICAN SWIM COACHES ASSOCIATION (ASCA) – A professional organization throughout the nation, certifying coaches and offering many services for coaches' education and career advancement.

CHLORINE – The chemical used by most pools to kill the bacteria in water and keep it safe to swim.

CIRCLE SEEDING – This is a method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three prelim heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes.

CONSOLATION – A term used in a prelim/final meet for the second fastest eight swimmers.

COURSE – Designated distances (length of pool) for swimming competition – Short Course - 25 Yards or Meters; Long Course - 50 Meters.

DECK ENTRY – Accepting entries into swimming events during a meet.

DISQUALIFIED – A swimmer's performance is not counted because of a rule infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with open hand above their head. Its abbreviation, DQ, will appear next to the swimmer's name in the results.

DUAL MEET – A type of meet where two teams compete against each other.

DRYLAND – Running, body weight exercises, and various strengthening programs swimmers do out of the water.

ENTRY LIMIT – **1.** The number of events an athlete may swim during a specific session. For most meets, this is four. For prelims/finals meets it is often three. **2.** Each meet usually has a limit on the total number of swimmers that can be accepted. Once this limit has been reached, the meet will be closed to all other swimmers and teams.

MEET DIRECTOR – The official in charge of meet administration.

MILE – Slang reference for the 1650-yard and 1500-meter freestyle events.

SENIOR NATIONALS – The best swimmers from the United States and around the world compete at this meet. There are no age limitations and the time cuts are extremely difficult. Every four years this meet becomes the Olympic Trials.

NATATORIUM – A building constructed to house a swimming pool and related equipment. This is usually a quality building used for big meets with ample seating.

NT – This is short for "No Time." This abbreviation is used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has never swam the event before.

PADDLES – Colored plastic devices worn on swimmers' hands during swim practice. Paddles help to create feel for the proper pulling patterns in each stroke as well as developing strength.

POSITIVE CHECK-IN – The procedure required before a swimmer swims a deck seeded event. The swimmer must mark their name on a list posted on deck at the meet. By doing so they have indicated that they will swim, thus eliminating no-shows and assuring full heats. Positive check-ins are often done for distance events.

PRELIMS/FINALS – A meet run with two sessions. The preliminary heats are held in the morning with the top 8 to 24 qualifiers returning to compete in the finals at night. This format is typically used for championship meets.

PRE-SEEDED – A meet in which the swimmer knows which heat and lane they are in by looking at the heat sheets. Most meets in Virginia are pre-seeded.

PROOF OF TIME – Swimmers or coaches must supply proof of time with some entries or meets, where it is required when a swimmer misses a meet cut-off time. Official meet results can be used as proof of time.

PSYCH SHEET – This sheet lists swimmers from fastest to slowest by event. Usually this is a prelude to seeding a meet.

PULL BUOY – A flotation device used to keep the legs afloat during pulling sets.

REFEREE – The USA official in charge of all decisions made on deck regarding the administration and running of the meet.

SCRATCH – When you withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, that if not followed results in a penalty to the swimmer.

SECTIONALS – This is an upper-level meet below Junior National standard. There are no age groups and time standards are difficult to achieve. This meet will be held in a South-Eastern location.

SEEDING – Creating heats for each event by determining each swimmer's heat and lane.

SHAVE – The process of removing all arm, leg and exposed torso hair, to decrease the drag or resistance of the body moving through the water. Used in conjunction with the taper process.

SPLIT – A portion of a race that is timed to help in pacing.

STAR – All Championship USA Swimming meets will be sent to the National office, where upon a US Open, Senior National or Olympic Trial standard will be set.

STARTER – The USA official in charge of starting each race and ensuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP – A meet held twice a year for both Age Group and Senior swimmers, sponsored by the LSC.

STROKE JUDGE – The USA Swimming official positioned at the sides and end of the pool that judges strokes.

TAPER – The resting phase at the end of a season, before a championship meet. Tapering allows a swimmer's muscles to fully recover before racing.

TIMED FINALS – Competition in which there is only one session per age group and final places are determined by the times swum in heats.

TIME STANDARD – A time set by a meet or LSC that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition. This also ensures that all competitors are of the same ability level at the same meet.

TIMERS – The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks or finish end of the pool. They are responsible for getting watch times on each heat and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.

TIME TRIAL – Some meets will offer time trials, either at the end of the meet or the end of a session. Time trials are swum for an official time only, there are no places or awards given.

TOP 10 – The top 10 times nationally in each event for 11 and above swimmers, by a single age, as compiled by USA Swimming

TOUCH PAD – The removable pad at the finish end of the pool that is connected to the electronic timing system. The swimmer must properly touch the pad to register a time.

TRANSFER – When a swimmer leaves one club and goes to another. One hundred and twenty days of unattached competition is required before a swimmer can represent another club.

UNATTACHED – A swimmer who competes but does not represent a team. Unattached swimmers may not swim relays and do not score team points.

ZONES – Eastern Zone All-Star Championship Meet contested twice a year at the end of each season. In Short Course, the LSC teams consists of the top two swimmers in each event/age group. In Long Course, swimmers must meet qualifying times (usually 3 AAA).