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Welcome!

Welcome to the 1999 Fox Mill Woods Swim Team! We're delighted to have so many returning families and are thrilled to welcome new swimmers and parents. For those of you who are new to our swim team, we'd like to welcome you to the team, called the Fintastics, and our team mascot, 'Finnie, the Fantastic.' Our team colors are red and black.

Our swim team goals are simple:

- To become the best swimmers possible by teaching the strokes used in competitive swimming and to develop endurance.
- To develop a love of swimming.
- To demonstrate good sportsmanship and team spirit.
- To have a fun summer.

Purpose of the Parent Handbook

Every swimmer's parent has experienced that first day of swim practice or first swim meet where they find themselves wondering "why am I here and what's going on?" The Parent Handbook is designed to enlighten new parents in understanding the world of summer swimming. Although the handbook is written for use by Fintastics parents, the fundamentals are true for any NVSL swim team.

Please remember that the only worthless question is the one that is unasked. Your Team Reps, coaches, and fellow swim parents all want you to understand and enjoy our summer swim program.

Introducing the Coaches and Team Reps

Our Head Coach is a career competitive swimmer with an in-depth knowledge of stroke technique. Each one of our coaches offers considerable professional coaching experience. Many qualities are considered in coach selection including professional qualifications, competency, experience, personality, desire to work with children, and dedication to ensuring that the swim team is fun.

Head Coach – Shelley Gesker

Shelley Gesker returns to the Fintastics in her seventh season as Head Coach. Shelley recently completed her fourth year as a fourth grade Fairfax County teacher at Poplar Tree Elementary School and has her MA in Education/Counseling. During the school year, she is also an USA Swimming coach for York Swim Club and an assistant coach for the Paul VI High School swim team. She is a former NVSL, USA Swimming, High School, and College NCAA swimmer. She swam for the Fox Mill Woods swim team for five years before becoming our Head Coach. Shelley holds two Fox Mill Woods Team records for the 13-14 and 15-18 50-Meter butterfly records.

Coaching Assistant – Paul Hickman

Paul Hickman joins the Fintastics for his first season as a Coaching Assistant ending thirteen seasons as a Fox Mill Woods swimmer. Paul just completed his freshman year at University of Wisconsin at Madison where he is majoring in Exercise Science and Motor Behavior (Kinesiology) with the goal of becoming an Athlete Trainer. Along with a rich history of the Fox Mill Woods swim team, Paul brings to the team a wealth of coaching experience gained as a Hockey Coach. His team records for doughnuts and hamburgers consumed during a meet have yet to be broken.

Team Rep – Karen Stierman

Karen Stierman is a fifth year Fintastics Swim Team Parent who spent last year as the Assistant Team Rep and will serve as Team Rep this summer. Her husband, Bob Cohen, is active in coordinating the officials for the meets and offers his assistance with a variety of swim team activities. Her 12-year old daughter, Hannah Cohen, has been swimming with the team since she was an 8 years old.

Assistant Team Rep – Pam Reed

Pam Reed is a third year Fintastics Swim Team Parent who spent last year on the deck as a Stroke and Turn Judge. Pam will graduate at the end of this season to become Team Rep next year. She and her husband Aaron, have three children on the swim team: Alexandra (better known as Sascha) 10 years old and Edward 8 years old, are both returning for their third season on the team. Abby, 5 years old, joined the team last year as the youngest swimmer on the team.

Swim Team Board Liaison – Mark Hubal

Mark Hubal is a fifth year Fintastics Swim Team Parent who, when not a swim meet official, spends his time coordinating and communicating swim team information to the Fox Mill Woods Swim and Tennis Club Board of Directors. He is married to Amy Hubal and has two children, Amanda 12 years old and Scott 10 years old.

Changes from 1998

As for NVSL information, the Fintastics remain in Division 9 this year along with one of our fellow Division 9 teams, Fairfax. We had a strong team last year and are looking forward to another great year. There are no major rules changes from 1998.

On the fun side, we are keeping some of the same social activities but adding some new twists. This year, we are adding a mentoring program in which children from different age groups will form mentoring teams. Each child will be a part of the FMW swim team and also belong to a smaller group of children to assist with during meets, cheer for, etc. This will ease the transition for children who are new to the swim team and offer the older children an opportunity to mentor younger children.

The Parent Handbook has been rewritten this year to address common areas of confusion for new and returning parents. Thanks to the Greenbriar Swim Team for offering their two Parent Handbooks for our use and providing us with an invaluable source of information for our new Parent Handbook.

The naming convention used for the meets has changed in the Parent Handbook and the newsletter. We now refer to A-Meets as Saturday Meets and B-Meets as Monday Night Meets.

For volunteer registration, we will use a new method for assigning parent volunteers to jobs taking into consideration the parents' job preferences and meet availability. The methodology is borrowed from the Hollin Meadows Swim Team who we thank for sharing their vast experience with us.

Chapter 1: About The Swim Team

Our Philosophy

The philosophy of the Fox Mill Woods Fantastics swim team is that **having fun is the most important thing that we can do**. Most of the kids are unconcerned about whether the team is in a top division or a bottom division. We would all like to be the division champions, which typically means going undefeated, but only one team out of our division can claim this honor.

Personal development is what is most important and for a swimmer that means improving his/her times. Our swim team believes that by establishing a healthy environment that encourages the kids to do their best, recognizes their contributions, and is fun for the entire family, we will have met our goals.

We have all taken our kids to soccer or other sports events and probably stood by as two or three parents ran the team. However, swimming is different. We cannot run a swim program without parental help. In fact, it takes 43 parents to time, officiate, and score a typical swim meet, and that does not include pool set up and tear down, running concessions, or non-swimming team activities.

Expectations

Although swimming is considered an individual sport, our summer league is structured with an emphasis on the team. Any team is only as good as the people on it. In keeping with our philosophy articulated above, our expectations for the parents and swimmers are simple:

1. The Fox Mill Woods Swim Team is not a swim lesson program. A swimmer must be able to swim a length of the pool in less than one minute to join the team. The coaches will help your swimmer become a better swimmer, but in fairness to the other 115+ swimmers on the team, we must insist that all swimmers be able to swim. Your child will feel better about being on the team if he/she is competitive with most of the other kids of the same age.
2. Keep your commitments. We expect each family to assist with a minimum of six activities during the season. Parents identify their volunteer areas of interest and time availability on two forms. From this information, the Team Rep completes a volunteer schedule that is distributed before Time Trials. If you have a scheduling conflict, please find a substitute and notify the Team Rep, in writing, of the change. Similarly, at the beginning of the season, swimmers indicate their availability for meets on the Meet Availability Record form; if a change occurs, please notify the coaches in writing immediately or at least three days in advance of a meet.
3. Pay attention to the coaches. With over 115 swimmers, disruptions aren't fair to the other swimmers.
4. Do your best—it's a lot more important than being the best.
5. Have fun!

Chapter 2: Important Basic Information

Communication

The Fox Mill Woods swim program cannot run successfully without effective communication among all participants. In an attempt to implement effective communications, we ask you to adhere to the following methods of communication.

- While written communications is one key to communicating effectively, making sure that the intended recipient receives the note is even more important. A “**mailbox**” has been assigned on a one per family basis for the distribution of written communications. The mailbox bin is open at the daily practices and is kept in the pool office so that it is available whenever the pool is open. Use the mailbox for written notes to the coaches and Team Reps and to pick up your weekly newsletter.
- The *Fox Mill Woods Gazette* is our weekly newsletter that provides articles of interest and details on upcoming events for the swim team. The *Fox Mill Woods Gazette* is distributed on Wednesdays via the mailboxes.
- The Swim Team **hotline** contains time-sensitive information and can be reached at 860-0628. Check the hotline to determine whether an activity has been cancelled due to inclement weather. Please do not leave messages on the hotline as they will not be answered.
- The NVSL **web site** can be found at <http://nvsl.nvpools.com/hamilton/index>. Of particular interest are the meet results and Top 25 times for each event swum at a Saturday meet.

Our goal is to make this an enjoyable summer for everyone. We can help make this happen by avoiding any unnecessary misunderstandings due to miscommunication.

Safety

Safety is of paramount importance. Observe all pool safety rules at our pool and at the pools we visit. Swimmers who ride a bicycle to practice are required to wear a bike helmet. Please emphasize to your swimmer the importance of not riding the bike with a towel around his/her neck.

Insurance

Since our pool insurance coverage specifically excludes the practice for and conduct of athletic competition, the swim team carries Liability and Medical Insurance through NVSL that covers meets and practices for meets. This insurance covers only what your personal medical insurance does not cover. It does not cover transportation to and from meets or practices and has other exclusions and limitations. If you have questions or a potential claim, see the Team Rep.

Chapter 3: Very Important Swim Team Information

Practice Attendance

Our summer swim season is nine weeks long from the first practice through Divisionals. During the practices, the coaches work with the swimmers to develop strokes, strength, endurance, and racing philosophy. A swimmer can only improve their techniques through practice and hard work. Practices also allow the swimmer to develop a sense of belonging to the swim team. Therefore, attendance by every swimmer at every possible practice is essential. Although attendance at all practices is strongly encouraged, it is not mandatory. We realize that there are numerous end-of-school-year activities being held, spring sports are still ongoing, and summer camps happen, but it is important that you attend practice whenever possible.

We encourage swim team families to schedule summer trips, if possible, after the swim team season. However, if you must be gone during the season, please notify the coaches or Team Rep, **in writing**, of your practice absences and place the note in the mailbox. A Meet Availability Record form must be completed for each swimmer and returned no later than Time Trials.

Meet Attendance

For Saturday meets (also known as A-Meets or Dual Meets), we finalize the list of swimmers for each event by Wednesday night so we can exchange meet sheet with the other team on Thursday. After this occurs, our team can only replace missing swimmers with a swimmer who has recorded a slower time in the event where the seeded swimmer is missing. We cannot swap swimmers among events to optimize our swim selections once the meet sheets have been exchanged.

We determine the availability of swimmers for the Saturday meet based on the information received from the Meet Availability Record. If your information changes and you can or can not be available for any Saturday meet, please communicate this to the Team Rep or coaches **in writing** no later than the Wednesday before that meet. With a team of our size, missing swimmers can make the difference between a win and a loss at the Saturday meet.

The coaches post the meet sheet for the Saturday meet on the swim team bulletin board after practice on Thursday. Parents, please check the meet sheet to determine whether your child is swimming that weekend and immediately notify the Team Rep or coaches if there is a change in the swimmer's availability!

Since we select events for Monday Night meets (also known as B-Meets or Development Meets) at practice on Monday mornings, if you cannot attend practice on Monday and want to swim Monday night, it is imperative that you communicate with the coaches or Team Reps **in writing**.

Practice Times

Swimmers should come to practice regularly and be prepared to do their best. Our swimmers join the team at different ability and fitness levels. Therefore, the coaches tailor the practices to allow the higher-level swimmer to participate, but also encourage those swimmers who are not yet at that level. The ultimate goal is to make swimming fun for all the swimmers on the team. Swimmers must practice with their age group unless prior arrangements have been made with the coaches and Team Rep.

Parents are **not allowed** on deck during morning practices. During afternoon practices, the pool is open to the membership, but please do not distract the swimmers or interfere with the coaches.

Practice times weekdays June 1 through June 23 are as follows:

10 and Unders	5:00–6:00 PM
11 and Overs	6:00–7:00 PM

Practice times for weekdays June 24 through July 27 are:

13 and Overs	7:30–8:30 AM
9-12 Year Olds	8:30–9:30 AM
8 and Unders	9:30–10:30 AM

Make-up practices are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 to 6:00 starting June 29. These practices are intended for swimmers who miss practice due to summer school, camp, or work commitments.

Practice Decorum

Swim practice is much like school, a matter between the coaches and the swimmers. If you desire to observe the practices, please observe from the grassy area near the play equipment. Let the coaches do their jobs and do not interrupt the practice unless requested by a coach or if there is a health or safety matter.

If you have a question or a concern about something that occurs at practice, either bring it to the attention of the Team Rep or wait until after practice to discuss it with the coach.

Swim Suits and Other Clothing Items

This year, we have a new great looking suit from Speedo called Fanfare. You can order a suit at registration, during the first week of practice, or from Aardvark (14101 Sullyfield Circle, Chantilly) and ask for the Fox Mill Woods Team Suit. You can go anywhere that sells Speedo swimsuits and ask for this swimsuit, but you'll get the best price during registration or at Aardvark.

A new Fox Mill Woods T-shirt and swim cap will be distributed at Time Trials.

Swimmer Apparel

Swimmers should wear a swimsuit that is comfortable for racing. The Fintastics, like every other swim team, has a team suit. The wearing of the team suit is optional. There might be somewhat of a culture shock for some boys to the coverage of the racing suit. Usually, when they realize that this type of suit is good for racing and everyone else is wearing one, their resistance breaks down.

You should also consider buying at least one practice suit for your swimmer. Aardvark in Chantilly and other area swimsuit retailers frequently sell suits discontinued by manufacturers at a reduced price as practice suits. The team suit will be used for two years and therefore we recommend that it only be worn at meets.

Accessories for the Well Dressed Swimmer

Every swimmer needs a towel, the bigger and thicker the better. Other accessories you should consider are goggles, a sweatsuit (for cool days), a swim cap (especially for girls with long hair), a hat or other sun protection, and a bag to carry everything. You should also have liquid refreshment (Gatorade, All Sport, or a water bottle) and a light snack for during the meet such as fruit, granola bars, or other healthy foods. Save the sweets at the concession stand as a reward for swimming a great swim *after your child's last event!*

Chapter 4: Organizational Stuff

A few organizational items, just to make sure we're in sync.

Fox Mill Woods Pool

The Fox Mill Woods Swim and Tennis Club, of which we are all members, owns the facility that we use. Although each member of the swim team pays a fee in order to belong on the team, the Club funds a significant portion of the cost of the team. The Club is governed by a seven member Board of Directors, of which one member is designated to oversee the swim program. To be a member of the swim team, you must be a *bonafide* member of the pool.

Team Reps and Coaches

The people you will most frequently encounter in your swim team dealings are the Team Reps and the coaches. The Team Reps are volunteer parents who were new to swimming at one time just like you are today. The Team Reps are responsible to the Board of Directors for running every aspect of the swim team and are the representatives of the Fox Mill Woods team to other swim teams and the NVSL. The Team Reps' job is impossible to do successfully without help from a great many parents. The Team Reps hire the coaches (with the approval of the Board of Directors), who are responsible to the Team Reps for the swimming portion of the swim team program. Typically, the Team Rep position is a two-year commitment. The first year of the Team Rep's tenure is as an Assistant Team Rep, learning the responsibilities of the position. The following year, the Assistant Team Rep becomes the Team Rep.

Issue Resolution Policy

The Team Rep is the liaison between the parents, the team, and the coaches. If a parent has an issue, problem, or concern about any aspect of the team, including coaching or the coaching staff, the Team Rep is the person to speak with first. The Team Rep addresses the issue and provides resolution immediately, if possible.

If the issue requires attention beyond the Team Rep, contact the Swim Team Board Liaison. The Swim Team Board Liaison investigates the matter and makes a determination. If the member is not satisfied with the determination, a formal complaint can be filed and submitted to the Swim Team Board of Review. Any issue is resolved as soon as possible and all resolutions are final.

Parent Volunteers

Although the actual running of the swim team is the responsibility of the Team Rep, volunteers serve a critical role in managing the various activities on the deck.

The swim team Volunteer Policy requires that each family will support the team during the season in at least six (6) slots for any of the following volunteer activities. Parents indicate availability and areas of volunteer interest on two forms. The Team Rep then develops a working schedule that is distributed the second week of June. It is the parent's responsibility to perform the duty or arrange for a substitute. Each family must also provide at registration, as a reimbursable deposit, a \$50 check to ensure your volunteer commitment is met. Upon completion of all six activities, your check will be returned.

Volunteers make the swim team and the swim meets run. Please participate by volunteering as much as you can beyond the six mandatory times. Also realize that volunteers performing their duties deserve courtesy and respect.

Volunteer Activities

Volunteers participate in the following activities:

- **Set Up/Tear Down**—Prior to and after each home meet, volunteers prepare the pool (remove/replace ladders, hang/take down backstroke flags, etc.), and arrange the deck (move tables and chairs).
- **Parking**—Volunteers direct parking at home swim meets by arriving 1¼ hours before the meet starts to ensure parking in the Fox Mill Woods lot is maximized; vehicles are directed to park on the street when parking is full.
- **Concessions**—Concession volunteers purchase, set-up, man, and tear down the concessions table at all home meets. The profits from the concessions assist the club in supporting the swim team.
- **Timing**—Timers are essential for Saturday and Monday Night meets as well as Time Trials. Three timers are responsible for each lane. Fox Mill Woods supplies half the required timers at the Saturday and Monday Night meets and all the timers for Time Trials. No special training is required and an overview is provided before the meet.
- **Marshals**—Each team provides one Marshal to ensure the safety of the meet warm-up procedures and maintain order among competitors, spectators, officials, and coaches.
- **Clerk of Course**—Clerk of Course volunteers ensure the swimmers are lined up in the appropriate lanes at each swim meet. They also oversee the area where the swimmers wait immediately prior to their event.
- **Meet Officials**—The Stroke and Turn Judges, Referees, and Starters attend training at a free NVSL clinic before officiating at meets and generally ‘practice’ at Monday night meets for a season before ‘moving up’ to Saturday meets. Swim meet officiating opportunities are described in more detail in Chapter 7.
- **Tables**—Table workers record swimmers' official times and write ribbons at the meets. They keep the score of the meet and inform the Announcer of the winners of each event. They also perform any other necessary swim meet paperwork.
- **Socials**—Friday evening pep rallies and other special activities are planned and executed with the assistance of the Social volunteers. Social events are a fun part of the team and serve to bond the team.
- **Newsletter**—The Newsletter Editor produces the weekly newsletter, the *Fox Mill Woods Gazette*. The Newsletter is a key component in keeping everyone well informed. Contributing reporters are encouraged to supply information for the newsletter, especially meet summaries. Word processing and writing skills are useful for this position.
- **Publicity**—The Public Relations person is responsible for promoting the swim team by contacting local newspapers when important meets or events are to occur. The volunteer faxes or e-mails information to the local papers or invites reporters to attend the meet. Writing skills are useful in this area.

Parent coordinators for some of the volunteer areas are listed on page 31 and can be contacted if you have questions.

Northern Virginia Swimming League (NVSL)

In 1956, eight Northern Virginia pools founded the NVSL. Today, the NVSL has over 10,000 swimmers on 117 teams and is the largest summer swim league in the United States. The NVSL is the governing body of the swim teams within the league. The NVSL sets the procedures and rules for the Saturday meets, determines the teams within each division, supplies the required forms, and runs the All-Star Relay and Individual All-Star events. The Team Rep from each team can voice their concerns regarding rules, procedures, and other matters to the NVSL leadership. The Team Rep also votes on any rule change proposals at a meeting held in March.

During the off-season, the NVSL ranks each team from 1 to 117 based primarily on swimmers' times, and then competitively divides the teams, based on these rankings, into 18 divisions or groups of five or six teams. The teams in Division 1 are expected to be the strongest teams in the NVSL.

In 1999, Fox Mill Woods is in Division 9. The other four teams in our division are Holmes Run Acres, Langley Club, Great Falls, and Fairfax. Our fifth meet is against a team from Division 10, Riverside Gardens (also a five-team division) but the results of this meet will not be used to calculate our standings within the division.

Time Trials

A week before our first Saturday meet, the team holds Time Trials at the pool. Time Trials are executed like a regular meet, however there is no opposing team. Time Trials are an ideal opportunity for the swimmers, officials, and volunteers to experience the running of a meet. More importantly, the coaches get baseline times for the swimmers in each event and use these times to create the first meet sheet.

The schedule of events for Time Trials is as follows:

1. Team t-shirts and swim caps are distributed. Please wear your team suit to Time Trials.
2. Team pictures are taken. To order pictures, complete the order form distributed in your mailbox and return the envelope at Time Trials. The pictures are distributed mid-July.
3. Warm-ups begin. Time Trials start promptly at 9:00 AM and only individual events are swum. (See pages 16 and 17 for a list of the events.)

If you can not attend Time Trials on Saturday, make-up Time Trials are held on the following Monday at 5:30 PM during practice time. If you swam all your events at Time Trials, do not attend practice on the Monday following Time Trials!

Saturday Morning Meets (also known as A-Meets or Dual Meets)

When our pool is in a division with six teams, the six teams in each division swim the other five teams, one at a time on five consecutive Saturdays, in a series of Dual Meets, so called because there are two teams competing. Based upon the results of these five meets, a division champion is named.

Divisionals

The sixth week, each division holds a Division Individual Championship meet, commonly referred to as "Divisionals," where all the teams within the division swim against each other. Each team is allowed to enter two swimmers in each event and a swimmer can enter no more than two events. If a team does not have two swimmers for an event, the other teams can bid in swimmers to fill the empty lanes. Only individual events are swum. The Individual Medley and the 8 and Under Butterfly events are added to the usual Saturday meet individual events.

The order of events is determined each year by the NVSL using a rotating schedule. The order of events for 1999 will be Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Individual Medley.

All-Stars

After Divisionals, the 18 Division Coordinators meet to select swimmers for the All-Stars Meet the following week. The swimmers that swim the 18 fastest times at the NVSL Divisionals are selected for the Individual All-Star meet. The Saturday meet sheet lists the slowest Individual All-Star qualifying times from 1998 directly below each event. The times listed on the meet sheet give an approximate idea of the times that qualified at Individual All-Stars in 1998; each year's times varies, either faster or slower.

All-Stars can be overwhelming for a first time swimmer as approximately 600 swimmers plus parents, coaches, and officials converge on a pool for a meet that takes about six hours. If your swimmer is fast enough to be named an All Star, it is a thrill they will never forget.

Relay Carnival

Another NVSL event is the Division Relay Carnival, which takes place about three weeks into the season when all the teams in each division converge on one pool for an evening of relay races. The Divisional Relay Carnival is a scored meet. Each team in the division enters only one freestyle relay and one medley relay for each age group; the 8 and Under age group swims a modified medley relay (Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle, Freestyle). Each swimmer must swim in their correct age group (no 'aging up'). The coaches determine the relay entries based on the fastest combination of swimmers using the available times for each swimmer. Again, the 18 Division Coordinators meet and the relay teams with the eighteen fastest times in all of NVSL in each event then race at the All-Star Relay Carnival the following week.

In Relay Carnivals, teams are not seeded. Each team's lane assignment for the first event is based upon luck of the draw and the teams then rotate one lane to the left after each event. The meet sheet lists only the team swimming in each lane in each event.

Northwest Fairfax Developmental League

The Fox Mill Woods, Herndon, Pinecrest, Fox Mill Estates, Hiddenbrook, and Oakton pools have joined together for the conduct of unscored swim meets on Monday nights. Swimmers who have taken a second or third place in any Saturday meet cannot "officially" swim the stroke that they ribboned in and a swimmer who took first place cannot "officially" swim any stroke except for the IM or if the swimmer is 8 and Under. The idea is to get ribbons to as many kids as possible. For more information on Monday Night meet eligibility criteria, see page 18.

Patsy Graham Mid-Summer Splashabout

Since 1989, the Greenbriar Pool has sponsored the annual Patsy Graham Mid-Summer Splashabout in early July. This meet is an invitational relay carnival, meaning that the participants are invited to attend. For the past few years the participants have been Greenbriar, Poplar Tree, Brookfield, and Fox Mill Woods teams from the NVSL, Franklin Farm from the Colonial League, and International Country Club from the Dominion League. The meet features traditional Relay Carnival events plus a few offbeat events including parent relays. If you are a parent and are interested in swimming 25-Meters in the Freestyle or Medley relays, please contact the Team Rep.

Patsy Graham was a Greenbriar resident, Greenbriar Swim Team member, coach, and lifeguard who died of cancer in 1988 at the age of 20. Largely through T-shirt and concession sales, this event endows a scholarship at James Madison University, where Patsy was a student at the time of her death.

Developmental Relay Carnival

In its second year, the Developmental Relay Carnival is sponsored by the Northwest Fairfax Developmental League, and offers swimmers who have not swum in a relay event in an Saturday meet the opportunity to participate in a Relay Carnival and score points for our team. This meet features traditional Relay Carnival events, a parent relay, and 6 and Under kickboard relay. If you are a parent and interested in swimming 25-Meters in the Freestyle relay, please contact the Team Rep.

Age Group Information and 'Aging Up'

A swimmer's age group is determined by the age of the swimmer on the day of the meet. If a swimmer's birthday is the day before the meet, the swimmer must swim in the new age group or older. The exception to this rule occurs in Individual All-Stars and All-Star Relay Carnival. The age group of the swimmer is determined by the age they compete at Divisionals or Divisional Relay Carnival.

To 'age up' implies swimming in an age group older than the swimmer's normal age group. The coaches might ask a swimmer to 'age up' if they determine that it gives the team a better chance to score points or to fill an otherwise open lane. No swimmer can age up for Relay Carnival, All-Star Relays, Divisionals, or All-Stars. The decision to 'age up' a swimmer is at the discretion of the coaches.

USA Swimming/ Potomac Valley Swimming

USA Swimming is the governing body for the sport of swimming in the United States. USA Swimming establishes rules for the different strokes and for the conduct of competition. The swimming rules that we use in NVSL are USA Swimming rules with minor changes to accommodate the physical facilities and skill levels found in our league; the major difference between the two rules is that starting blocks are not used in the NVSL. (For more information on the rule differences, see the NVSL Handbook.)

Potomac Valley Swimming (PVS) is the local "branch" of USA Swimming. It consists of year round swim clubs in the Washington Metropolitan area. PVS conducts "Short Course" competitions (25-Yard pools) from October to March and "Long Course" competitions (Olympic sized 50-Meter pools) from May through July. If your swimmer enjoys swimming, we encourage you to look into these clubs during the year. Most swimmers who are USA swimmers tend to be the top-level swimmers during the summer since they practice and compete all year-round rather than just in the summer.

Chapter 5: My Kid Says He's Supposed to Swim Like a Butterfly

If you are not a former swimmer, the competitive swim strokes and their rules can be a cause of bewilderment. While the stroke rules are simple enough for a six-year-old to understand, most people do not have a copy of the USA Swimming Rules, so we'll describe the strokes below. The rules below are the USA Swimming rules as modified for use in the NVSL. Teams in other leagues may have slightly different rules.

If your child is having difficulty mastering the strokes during the regular practice times, you might consider contacting the coaches for private lessons.

Freestyle

The freestyle stroke is defined as any means of swimming across the pool. Any stroke and kick are acceptable.

Freestyle rules:

- **Start** – Forward start must be used. The head must break the surface of the water by the 15-Meter mark.
- **Stroke** – Use of any swimming style (and we emphasize any).
- **Turns** – Upon completing each length, the swimmer must touch the solid wall or pad at the end of the course with some part of the body. If the swimmer misses the wall, he/she may swim back and touch the wall to avoid a disqualification.
- **Finish** – When any part of the swimmer touches the wall or pad at the end of the pool.

Common freestyle violations:

- Failure to touch at the turn (as noted above, the swimmer may reach back or swim back to touch).
- Finishing in a different lane than started in (not really so common).
- Walking on, or springing from the bottom of the pool. It is legal, however, to stand on the bottom and then continue swimming if the swimmer does not spring from the bottom.
- Getting artificial assistance (e.g., grasping and pulling on the lane lines, pushing off sidewalls).

Backstroke

Like the freestyle, almost anything goes on the backstroke as long as you stay on your back. Watching swimmers learn the backstroke is a perverse sense of fun as they bounce off lane lines and wonder where they are. Eventually, they learn to guide off the lane lines, use the overhead backstroke flags and the lane line markings to know where they're at in the pool, and count strokes from the flags to the wall.

Backstroke starts are different from all others because the swimmer is in the water feet planted against the wall, and hanging on to either another swimmer's legs or the lip on the pool awaiting the Starter's signal. "Legs" must be grabbed below the knee. Persons serving in an official capacity (such as timers or coaches) can not serve as legs.

If your swimmer is a backstroker, he or she will eventually learn the backstroke flip turn. This is the one exception to staying on your back and can be used only as part of a turn (not a finish) at the pool wall.

Backstroke rules:

- **Start** – Swimmer lines up in the water facing the starting end with at least the heels in contact with water. The swimmer may secure a handhold below the knees of the legs of another person to prepare for the start. Swimmer must push off on back, and the head must break the surface of the water by the 15-Meter mark.
- **Stroke** – Use of any swimming style, but shoulders must be past vertical toward back throughout the race except at the turn.
- **Turns** – Some part of the swimmer's body must touch the wall. Upon leaving the wall, the swimmer must be on the back. The swimmer may turn past vertical toward the breast to perform a flip turn. If the swimmer turns past vertical, a continuous single arm pull, or a simultaneous double arm pull, must be used to initiate the turn. There shall be no kick or arm pull that is independent of the continuous turning action. If a flip turn is not performed, the swimmer must remain on the back until touching the wall, and be on the back when leaving the wall.
- **Finish** – When any part of the swimmer touches the wall or pad at the end of the pool.

Common backstroke violations:

- Failure to touch wall at turn.
- Getting artificial assistance by pulling on lane lines.
- Turning shoulders past vertical to turn, and after completing pull forward with arm, then either gliding some more or taking additional kicks/pulls to bring the swimmer closer to the wall before initiating the somersaulting action.
- Failure to be on back when leaving wall after turn.
- Turning shoulders past vertical at the finish.

Breaststroke

The breaststroke has two components, the kick and the arm pull. The pull and its recovery must both be under the breast and cannot extend further back than the waist area. The kick is a "frog" kick and the toes must be pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick. The arm pull and kick must be in an alternating sequence and the elbows must stay below the water except for tagging the wall at the finish. Breaststroke turns and finishes require a simultaneous two-hand touch.

Breaststroke rules:

- **Start** – Forward start must be used.
- **Stroke** – From the beginning of the first arm stroke after start and turn, the body must be on the breast. Arms must move simultaneously and in the same horizontal plane. Arms must be pushed forward from breast on, under, or over the water and must be brought back on or under the water. Elbows shall be kept under water except for last stroke at finish. Hands shall not be brought back beyond the hipline except during the first stroke after the start and turn. Some part of head shall break water at least once during each complete cycle of one stroke and one kick (except during first cycle after start and turn). During the first cycle after the start and turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs and one leg kick while wholly submerged.

- **Kick** – All vertical and lateral leg movements must be simultaneous. Feet must be turned outward during the propulsive part of the kick. Scissors, flutter, or downward butterfly kick is not permitted.
- **Turns** – Simultaneous touch must be made with both hands at, above, or below the water surface. Shoulders must be past vertical toward the breast upon leaving the wall.

Common breaststroke violations:

- Failure to perform simultaneous two-hand touch at turn or finish.
- Illegal (scissors, dolphin, or flutter) kick.
- Stroking past hipline.
- Failure to perform stroke-kick cycle. This is the only stroke where a cycle is required.

Butterfly

A well-executed butterfly (or fly) is the most beautiful exhibition of power you'll ever see in a swimming pool. Quite frankly, the fly is the hardest stroke for most swimmers to perfect and while they are learning it, many look like they are drowning. There are two components of the fly: the arm pull and the kick. The arm pull must be an over the water recovery (elbows breaking the surface of the water) with the arms moving simultaneously. The kick is a dolphin style kick with both legs moving simultaneously. Unlike the breaststroke, there is no requirement to alternate the kick and pull. Turns and finishes require a simultaneous two-hand touch at the wall.

Butterfly rules:

- **Start** – Forward start must be used. After the start and each turn, the swimmer must remain on the breast. One or more leg kicks are permitted but only one arm pull underwater, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. The head must break the surface of the water by the 15-Meter mark.
- **Stroke** – Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously.
- **Kick** – All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs and feet need not be on the same level but they must not alternate in relation to each other. The feet may move vertically, provided that they move together. They may actually be crossed, or one may be higher than the other, provided no alternating action is introduced. As long as any change is caused by a 'drifting' of the legs rather than by a propulsive action, no infraction should be called. Therefore, the important criterion warranting disqualification is a propulsive action of an alternating nature.
- **Turns** – The body shall be on the breast. The touch must be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface (no need for hands to be on the same level). Once the touch is made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the prescribed form must be attained from the beginning of the first arm stroke. Shoulders must be past vertical toward the breast upon leaving the wall.

Common butterfly violations:

- Failure to perform simultaneous two-hand touch at turn or finish.
- Arm recovery not over the water, particularly near end of race (tired swimmer) or after pull on the turn or finish (usually characterized by short underwater pull and an underwater stabbing touch).
- Alternating kicking motion, such as flutter kicks.
- Breaststroke or scissors kicking movement.

Individual Medley

The individual medley (or IM) is when an individual swims each of the four strokes in the sequence Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. In our pool, we swim a 100-Meter IM, which means that 25-Meters, or one pool length, of each stroke is swum. In a 100-Meter IM, every turn is a stroke change and stroke finish rules apply. This means no Backstroke Flip Turns.

Relays

There are two kinds of relays, the freestyle relay and the medley relay. Both involve a team of four swimmers, each swimming one-quarter of the total distance. In the freestyle relay, each swimmer swims the freestyle. In the medley relay, the sequence is Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle. At the NVSL Relay Carnival, swimmers 8 and Under swim a modified medley relay where the fly leg of the relay is replaced with a freestyle leg.

In all relays, each swimmer must wait until the previous swimmer touches the wall prior to leaving the deck. Running starts or pushes from teammates are not allowed.

Chapter 6: Swim Meets

There are two basic meets you will encounter as a parent: Saturday Meets (or A-Meets), that are scored dual meets and Monday Night Meets (or B-Meets), that are unscored dual meets.

Saturday Meets (also known as A-Meets or Dual Meets)

Saturday meets consist of 38 individual events and 12 relays. The events swum for each stroke and age group are shown below. Remember, each pool length is 25-Meters or in a few NVSL pools, 25-Yards.

Age Group	Freestyle	Backstroke	Breaststroke	Butterfly	Freestyle Relay	Medley Relay
8 & Under Boys	25 M	25 M	25 M		100M	
8 & Under Girls	25 M	25 M	25 M		100M	
9-10 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	25 M		100 M
9-10 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	25 M		100 M
11-12 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M		100 M
11-12 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M		100 M
13-14 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M		200 M
13-14 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M		200 M
15-18 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M		200 M
15-18 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M		200 M
Mixed Age Boys					200 M	
Mixed Age Girls					200 M	

NOTES:

1. In Saturday dual meets, the youngest age category for the Butterfly is 10 and Under. There is a 25-Meter Butterfly for 8 and Unders at Divisionals and All-Stars.
2. The order of events is to go down each column starting on the left side except that the mixed age relays are the last two events. To make it easier to understand, buy a meet sheet.
3. The Mixed Age Relays are swum by, in order, an 11-12 year old, a 9-10 year old, a 13-14 year old, and a 15-18 year old.

Who Swims at the Saturday Meets?

The purpose of the Saturday meets is to see which team can score the most points, so the fastest swimmers get to swim. The coaches select the three fastest swimmers in each event for all Saturday meets using the fastest times swum in the event at any Saturday meet, Monday Night meet, or Time Trials. Three swimmers can be entered in each individual event and no swimmer can swim more than two individual events. Since swimmers take vacations or attend camp and a swimmer can swim in only two events (plus relays) in any meet, you do not always have to be one of the three fastest swimmers to swim in a Saturday meet. Who swims in an event might seem a mystery. However, after the first meet, each team in the Division shares their swimmers' current times and the coaches can better position our swimmers in events to optimize our points and win.

If necessary, a swimmer might be 'aged up' if the coaches feel that the swimmer has a better chance to help the team score more points or if there are open lanes to fill. Relay selection is based on all available times to give the fastest combination of swimmers possible.

The coaches use the Meet Availability Record forms distributed at registration to determine whether a swimmer is available for a meet. When an absence is recorded on the form, the coaches do not place that swimmer in an event. If the coaches do not know of an absence, the coaches will place a swimmer in an event if that swimmer has one of the three fastest times in that event. If your child is scheduled to participate in a Saturday meet and is unable to swim due to an emergency, please contact the Team Rep or the coaches as soon as possible so that a substitution can be made. A meet sheet listing swimmers for each event is posted on the team bulletin board at the end of all practices on Thursday. Please check the bulletin board!

Disqualifications (DQs) and False Starts

A swimmer is disqualified (or DQ'd) if he/she does not follow the rules of the stroke or false starts. DQs are covered in more detail in Chapter 5.

Seeding

In Saturday meets, the home team has lanes 1, 3, and 5 while the visiting team has lanes 2, 4, and 6. The fastest swimmers swim in lanes 3 and 4, the next fastest in lanes 1 and 2, and the next fastest in lanes 5 and 6. Swimmers are seeded based upon their fastest times attained in prior competition. Lane 1 is always on the right side as you stand facing the pool at the starting end.

Meet Sheets

While all NVSL meets have an Announcer, the best way to follow the Saturday meet is with a meet sheet that lists all the events, swimmers, and seed times. Meet sheets are usually found in the concession area and sell for \$1.00.

Scoring

In the individual events, a first place finish earns 5 points for the team, a second place 3 points and a third place finish 1 point. Relays are scored as 5 points for the winner and 0 points for the loser. There are a maximum of 402 points available in a Saturday meet. Unless there is one or more places not awarded in an event due to DQs or lack of swimmers, you need 202 points to win.

In the event of a tie, the points for the places involved are equally split among the swimmers. For example, a two way tie for second place, each swimmer earns 2 points (3 points for second plus 1 point for third equals 4 points, half for each swimmer). No third place would be awarded because the next swimmer is fourth.

The points awarded in the Relay Carnival and All-Star Relay Carnival are different and are discussed in the NVSL Handbook.

Monday Night Meets (also known as B-Meets or Developmental Meets)

The Monday Night meets provide all swimmers the opportunity to participate in competition and improve their times. Swimmers select the individual events at practice on the day of the meet. Monday Night meets are basically the same as Saturday meets except as follows:

- There is a 6 and Under competition in the Freestyle, Backstroke, and Breaststroke.
- There is an 8 and Under competition in the Butterfly.
- IM events are added for 10 and Unders, 11-12s, 13-14s, and 15-18s.

- There are usually multiple heats of each event for younger swimmers.

A swimmer can enter two events in Monday Night meets plus the Individual Medley, if allowed by the rules. The following rules apply:

1. A swimmer who takes a first place in a Saturday meet can only enter the following:
 - (a) The Individual Medley.
 - (b) If 8 and Under, the swimmer can not swim in an event in which they placed first, but might be eligible for other events.
 - (c) Any one event on an unofficial basis (see 6 below) as deemed appropriate by the coaches and Team Rep.
2. Any swimmer who places second or third in a Saturday meet is ineligible to enter that event in a Monday Night meet.
3. A swimmer achieving a first through third place finish in a Saturday meet due to a “fluke” situation might be treated as finishing as if the fluke situation had not occurred. The coaches and Team Rep will determine the instances when the 'Fluke Rule' applies.
4. All swimmers are eligible to enter the Individual Medley event.
5. If you 'age up' during the season, you start all over with a clean slate and can enter any event until you take a place in a Saturday meet as described in 1 or 2 above.
6. Swimmers not eligible to compete in an event can swim for an unofficial time. Any swimmer competing for an unofficial time is ineligible for ribbons. The Coaches and Team Reps determine when an unofficial time is necessary, for example, when a coach needs a swimmer's time to determine placement in a Saturday meet.

Meet Terminology

Deck	The deck is the concrete area, approximately three (3) feet from the pool's edge. The only people, other than the swimmers for the current event, allowed on the deck during a swim meet are timers, officials, table workers, and Team Reps. If you are not working during the meet, you must stay off the deck until the meet is over.
Disqualification (also known as 'DQ')	This is the term used for disqualification. A swimmer can be disqualified by performing a stroke in an improper manner, by false starting, or by swimming in an incorrect event. If the swimmer is disqualified, they receive no place in the event and therefore, do not receive a ribbon. It is the coach's decision whether to use disqualification times to determine swimmers for Saturday meets.
False start	If a swimmer enters the water or a backstroker leaves the starting area before the starter sounds, a false start may be called. The Referee and the Starter must agree to charge a swimmer with a false start. In a Saturday meet, if a swimmer is charged with a false start, they are disqualified and not allowed to swim in that event. In a Monday Night meet, a swimmer must be charged with two (2) false starts before they are disqualified. In relays, a swimmer must wait for the prior swimmer to touch the wall before leaving the starting area.

Scratches/ Substitutions	A swimmer is scratched from an event when another swimmer replaces them. A substitute is only allowed if a swimmer is unable to swim. A swimmer who has a faster time can not substitute for a slower swimmer. If a swimmer is scratched and substituted for in an event, the scratched swimmer is not allowed to swim in any events later in the same meet.
Team area	The team area is the area designated for the swimmers and coaches when the swimmers are not in the Clerk of Course area awaiting an event; parents should avoid sitting in the team area. The coaches stay in the team area to cheer for the swimmers, to talk to the swimmers as they finish, and to give last minute tips to the swimmers before they swim their events. It is important that the swimmers are in the team area before their events so the coaches can find them for last minute instructions and to ensure they are not late for their event. The swimmers can also collectively cheer for their teammates from the team area.

Meet Procedures

What Swimmers Should Bring To Meets

- Sunscreen
- Two (2) pairs of goggles
- Swim cap
- Swim team T-shirt
- Clothes to wear over suit during meet
- Clothes to keep warm or dry, if necessary due to the weather
- Towels (one to sit on, one to dry off with)
- Water bottle filled with water or Gatorade-type drink in non-glass container
- Light **HEALTHY** snacks (fruit, crackers, pretzels, etc.)
- Something quiet to keep busy (card, books, Walkman, etc.)
- Dry clothes to change into after the meet (include shoes)

Note to Parents: PUT YOUR CHILD'S NAME ON EVERYTHING!

What Parents Should Bring To Meets

- Your swimmer(s)—on time for warm ups
- Lots of encouragement for all swimmers
- A loud voice for team cheering
- Positive attitude—be a positive role model!
- Willingness to help—timers (or other officials) might need relief by the end of a hot day's meet. Volunteering in excess of six times is encouraged. The swim team cannot function without volunteering by **all** parents.

Before the Meet

- Bring your swimmer to the pool at least 10 minutes before warm-up time to put their things down, get their caps on, and prepare for warm ups to begin.
- The host team warms up before the visiting team.
- The coaches make any substitutions necessary during warm ups. If your swimmer is late, the coaches might think they are absent and substitute another swimmer in their place. Please call the coaches or Team Rep if you are running late for a meet!

- During warm ups, the finishing touches are made to the pool so that the meet begins promptly. The starting system is prepared, officials and timers are briefed.
- Meet begins at 9:00 AM for Saturday and 6:00 PM for Monday Night meets. National Anthem is played.

During the Race

After the Referee blows the whistle to signal the start of the race, all spectators, parents, swimmers, coaches, Team Reps, and officials (other than the Starter) must be quiet until the horn sounds to start the race.

After the Meet

- Pool is returned to usual condition.
- Check to make sure your swimmer has all their belongings.
- Anyone interested goes out for lunch or dinner after the meet. This is an informal gathering and not mandatory. Each swimmer or family pays for themselves and is responsible for arranging their own transportation.

Recognition

Swimmers receive recognition for fast swims and hard work through ribbons, swimmer of the week caps, and trophies.

Ribbons

Ribbons are awarded for 1st through 6th place finishes in all meets. Ribbons are not awarded to the second place team in the relay events or to swimmers who disqualify in their event. In Monday Night meets, ribbons are also awarded to the 8 and Unders for winning a heat. Ribbons are awarded during the season every time a Personal Best time is swum in any event. The back of each ribbon shows the event, the date, and the time swum.

'Swimmer of the Week' Caps

The coaches determine who is awarded the 'swimmer of the week' caps. They are given for a variety of reasons: significant improvement, team spirit, team dedication, meet performance, etc. The goal is to have as many swimmers as possible receive these caps during the season. Only one cap per season is awarded to a swimmer.

Team Awards

Every member of the Fox Mill Woods Swim Team receives a trophy at the end-of-season Team Banquet. Three different types of trophies are awarded:

1. **20 Point Trophy**—Given to any swimmer who accumulates at least 20 points for individual events in Saturday meets for the season (5 points for 1st place, 3 points for 2nd place, 1 point for 3rd place).
2. **Coach's Awards**—Trophies given to swimmers the coaches feel deserve special recognition.
3. **Participant Trophy**—Given to all remaining team members.

Team Records

The Fox Mill Woods Swim Team's policy on team records offers any swimmers with a 'recognized' chance to break a team record the opportunity to beat the record. In these cases, the coaches create an opportunity for the swimmer to 'go for' the record if the swimmer has a legitimate chance of beating the record and the swimmer has not had the opportunity to swim the event because of swimmer selection at a meet, significant untimely illness, or other compelling reasons.

Special record opportunities are an exception rather than the norm, and are granted solely at the discretion of the coaches and the Team Rep. Any special record opportunities must be conducted within the recognized requirements of the NVSL (e.g., number of timers, conditions, etc.).

Chapter 7: Who Are All These People Dressed in White?

Your first swim meet can be a bewildering experience as you encounter a vast horde of adults dressed in white. USA Swimming rules specify white as the color to be worn by all officials given that white is also practical attire to wear on a hot humid summer morning!

Swim Meet Officials

Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming that ensure the competition is fair and equitable. The NVSL rules primarily follow the USA Swimming rules and are listed in the NVSL Handbook. The NVSL Handbook also lists the requirements for clinic attendance and certification procedures. All parents are encouraged to volunteer for some form of officiating.

All swim meet officials are neutral and dress in white. They are not allowed to cheer for either team. An official's guiding principle is to be fair and consistent, giving the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer. Officials are the only people, other than the swimmers, who are allowed on the pool deck during the meet.

The meet officials include the Referee, Announcer, Starter, Stroke and Turn Judges, Relay Take-off Judges, Marshals, Clerk of Course, Timers, and Table Administration workers. There are an equal number of Stroke and Turn Judges, Relay Take-off Judges, Marshals, and Timers from each team. The Referee and Starter are from the host team.

Referee

The Referee is the 'head' official for each swim meet. The Referee is responsible for the conduct of the meets and is the final authority on the interpretation and enforcement of all swimming rules. He/she ensures that fair and equitable conditions exist at all times for all swimmers. The Referee is responsible for making sure the pool is set up according to the rules, that all officials are in the correct position for the meet, and for resolving any disputes that might arise.

Prior to the start of each race, the Referee ensures that all deck officials are ready, the course is clear, and the race can begin. The Referee signals the start of the race to the Starter by blowing his/her whistle. The Referee reviews all disqualification slips to ensure what the Stroke and Turn Judge saw was in fact illegal. If the Referee personally observes an infraction, he/she can disqualify a swimmer even if no Stroke and Turn Judge observed the infraction. After reviewing the disqualification slips, he/she signs them, and gives them to the appropriate Team Rep. The Referee can prohibit the use of various noisemakers during the meet. In Saturday meets, the Referee verifies the final score of the meet.

Announcer

The Announcer is responsible for announcing events, results, and scores throughout the meet. Before the start of each event, he/she announces the event by number, sex, age, distance, and stroke and requests silence from the crowd when necessary. If the meet has more than one heat in an event, he/she announces the heat number. Before each heat in the Saturday meets, the Announcer identifies each swimmer by lane assignment, name and team, and announces any known scratches.

Before the meet, the Announcer obtains and previews the program, learns and practices the proper pronunciation of any unfamiliar names, checks the sound system to ensure it is in good working order, and prepares the National Anthem for play. The Announcer plays an extremely important role in meet management and control. Through close coordination with the Referee and the Starter, the Announcer controls the tempo of the meet.

Starter

The Starter is responsible for beginning the race and ensuring that all swimmers are given a fair and equitable start. After the Referee blows the whistle to signal that the race can begin, the Starter assumes full control of the swimmers until a fair start is achieved. The Starter notifies the swimmers to "step up" or "step in" (backstroke), announces the distance and event, directs the swimmers to "take your mark," and when all swimmers are motionless, gives the starting signal (generally a beep) from the Colorado System. (The Colorado System is built by Colorado Timing System and consists of a public address system, a horn, and a strobe light.) Special procedures are involved if a disabled or hearing-impaired swimmer is competing.

Occasionally, if a race hasn't been started correctly, the Starter will recall the swimmers using a recall signal (multiple beeping of the starting horn) on the Colorado System (you'll know it when you hear it). The recall can occur because a swimmer never was ready (and the Starter should not have started the race) or a "false start" has occurred. Any time that a swimmer moves after taking his/her mark but before the starting signal, the swimmer has false started and the Starter recalls the race if any swimmer has entered the water. The swimmer who false started is then disqualified from the race due to the false start. Sounds simple. Remember where the Referee has absolute authority? The Referee can unilaterally disqualify a swimmer for a false start. However, in summer league meets, the Referee and Starter usually will caucus and disqualify the swimmer only if they agree that a particular swimmer has false started. Mitigating factors can be considered such as crowd noise or a swimmer being drawn into a start due to another swimmer's movement.

The Starter is second in command and takes over in the event that the Referee is unable to finish the meet.

Stroke and Turn Judges

Once the race has started, the Stroke and Turn Judges are responsible for observing the swimmers performing their strokes and turns to ensure that all swimmers obey all the rules for the stroke that they are swimming. These people are always at the ends of the pool for starts and finishes and walk the sides of the pool as best they can within the physical constraints of the pool. If a Stroke and Turn Judge observes a violation of the rules, the official raises his/her hand to signify that an infraction has occurred and that the swimmer is disqualified. A disqualification is recorded on a DQ slip stating what he/she saw that was illegal, which the Referee reviews and approves and forwards copies to the Table Workers and the Team Rep. The Team Rep gives the DQ slips to the coaches to review with the swimmers during practice to try to correct the problem.

Relay Take-off Judges

During relays, you will see Relay Take-off Judges at each end of the pool. Their job is to ensure that each swimmer touches the wall prior to the next swimmer in the relay leaving the deck. Infractions are noted as described above for Stroke and Turn Judges.

Marshals

The Marshals ensure the safety of the warm-up procedures during meets and maintain order among competitors, spectators, officials, and coaches.

Clerk of Course

The Clerk of Course and Assistant Clerk of Course are the "gatekeepers" for all swimmers in our meets and play an important role in ensuring a well-run meet. You can't run a race without swimmers and the Clerk of the Course assembles the swimmers in accordance with the order of events and gets the swimmers to the right lanes for the correct race.

Timers

The timers are the most important people to every swimmer as they are the people who determine each swimmer's official time for each race. Being a timer is a good entry-level position for new parents. Some parents have been timers for years and wouldn't want to see a swim meet from any other viewpoint. If you can start and stop a stopwatch, you can be a timer. We even provide the stopwatch!

Timers start their watches on the strobe light from the Colorado System and stop their watches when the swimmer touches the wall. There are three timers per lane and all three times are recorded. If two or three of the times are identical (to the 1/100th of a second), that is the official time. If none are identical, the middle time is considered the official time.

The Chief Timer is responsible for instructing the timers properly before the meet starts about how to time a race, how to determine the official times, and when to reset their watches. The Chief Timer also designates a Head Lane Timer for each lane. The Chief Timer must be in position to see the finish touch, and if necessary, serve as an alternate timer for any lane. The Chief Timer assigns official lane timers to their respective lanes, collects the time cards from the timers, reviews them for accuracy and completeness, and is responsible for delivery, to the Time Recorder, of all the official times, including the times of disqualified swimmers.

Timers are officials on the deck and therefore are considered to be neutral. As such, timers must refrain from cheering for swimmers during the meet.

Table Administration or Table Workers

The Table Administration officials 'work the table.' They include the Time Recorder(s), the Scorer(s), and the Awards Clerk(s). The Time Recorder receives the cards from the timers and any DQ slips from the Referee. The Time Recorder determines the placement of swimmers (order of finish), inscribes the finish place on the time cards, and records disqualifications on the cards.

Scorers receive, from the Time Recorder, the time cards that contain the official order of finish for each event. The Scorers record the times and places of all swimmers, keep the official score of the meet, and prepare the official copies of the meet sheet. Several people from each team perform these functions to ensure that errors are caught before the results are announced.

The Award Clerk then receives the time cards that are annotated with the order of finish and the official times for individuals who have earned an award. The Award Clerk selects the appropriate ribbons/plaques/medals and records the swimmer's name, time, and club on the award.

Team Rep

The Team Rep is the Meet Manager. He or she is the designated recipient of all DQ slips for his/her team and is the only person with any official standing to challenge any decisions made by the Referee. It sounds easy, but remember, most of the Team Rep's job is done before the meet starts.

Coaches

During the meet, the coaches primary responsibility is to encourage and praise the swimmers and to make sure that they get to the Clerk of Course in time to swim.

Other Very Important People

It would be impossible to host a swim meet without a number of people in Other Very Important Positions. These people make reminder phone calls, edit newsletters, set up the pool, and sell concessions. They also run social activities and do other jobs that must be performed. The swim team depends on the help of every family to have a successful swim season.

Chapter 8: What Do You Mean, My Kid DQ'd!?

In swimming, the rules must be followed in total or a disqualification, or DQ, is committed. This can be traumatic the first time a swimmer is DQ'd for just one mistake, but it isn't fair to other swimmers who swim the entire race per the rules to do otherwise.

What is a DQ?

A DQ is any violation of the rules observed by any appropriate official. Some of the more common reasons for disqualification are discussed in Chapter 5.

How do I know a DQ occurred?

Unlike football, the officials do not blow a whistle and announce to the world that a rules violation occurred. When a Stroke and Turn Judge observes a violation within his/her jurisdiction, the Referee, Stroke and Turn, or Relay Take-Off Judge immediately raises one hand overhead with an open palm. If the official fails to raise a hand at the time of the violation, there is no DQ, regardless of whatever violation might have taken place. Conversely, the officials might 'pocket' a DQ (after raising the hand) if they are uncertain that a violation occurred. Another clue that a DQ has occurred is when you see a Stroke and Turn Judge writing on their notepad or a longer than normal pause between events.

What happens when a DQ occurs at a meet?

Disqualification slips are prepared in duplicate by the official and given to the Referee. The Referee verifies that a rule has been broken and can question the Stroke and Turn Judge to ensure that he was able to see the violation that was cited. The Referee then gives one copy of the DQ slip to the Team Rep and another copy to the Table Workers. A copy of the disqualification slip is stapled to the time card of the swimmer and that swimmer's time is not used for scoring nor is a ribbon prepared.

After the meet, the Team Rep gives the disqualification slips to the coaches. The coaches review the slips and gear that week's practice towards correcting the problems. The coaches might also review specific infractions with the swimmer in an attempt to eliminate the problem in time for the next meet.

How do I know if My Kid DQ'd

Your kid will probably know before you do since the Team Rep tells the coach, who tells the swimmer. You will probably find out if you saw your swimmer finish with one of the top three times but he is not announced later in the top three places. Similarly, someone else disqualified if your swimmer finished in 4th, 5th or 6th, yet is announced as one of the top three finishers.

Another way to find out is by reading the official Meet Results, which are posted at the pool by 4 PM the day of the meet.

A Word About Officials and DQs

The dominant principle of officiating in the NVSL is *fairness to all competitors, giving the benefit of the doubt, in every instance, to the swimmer*. Although the difference between legal and ugly vs. illegal is sometimes close to call, any violation called by an official is an "I saw" not an "I think I saw."

Protesting Disqualifications

The Team Rep is the only person who can officially question a disqualification or any other call by an official. If something happens involving your swimmer which you do not think is right, talk to the coach or the Team Rep. The Team Rep will initiate action in accordance with NVSL rules if thought to be appropriate.

For further information concerning swim rules, you can read the NVSL Handbook or the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations book.

Chapter 9: We'd Rather Have Fun Than Be in Division One

If you get to know the parents of swimmers in Division 1 teams, some of them will tell you that swimming isn't always fun. At the pinnacle of NVSL are the six best teams and they all want to be #1. At Fox Mill Woods, we like to win, but it isn't our reason for being. Some of the things we do to have fun are listed below.

Mentoring Program

Swimming is unique in that there's a place on the team for anyone 18 or younger who can swim across the pool without assistance. How many other sports have kids 5 years old to 18 years old and their parents on the same team participating in the same competition?

To capitalize on this multi-age experience and offer every swimmer membership in a group, the Fox Mill Woods Swim Team is implementing a mentoring program whereby children from different age groups form teams. The team members can meet at the pool to play or work on stroke technique, cheer for one another at meets, etc. The teams offer each child membership in a group and allow older children an opportunity to mentor younger children.

Pep Rallies

A Pep Rally is held every Friday night at the pool. The time, theme, and cost (if any) are covered in the *Fox Mill Woods Gazette*.

Movie Time

The worst thing for your swimmer to do before a Monday Night meet is to spend an afternoon at the pool in the sun, swimming or sunning. That's why the team often attends the matinee on Monday afternoons at an area theater. The movie, location, time, and price are posted in the *Fox Mill Woods Gazette* in advance.

Team Pictures

We take a team picture every year and we'd like your swimmer to be in it. You are not obligated to purchase a picture.

Other Social Events

Over the course of the season we might have a Skate Party, Ice Cream social, a Pancake Breakfast, a trip to SplashDown, and other events as announced in the *Fox Mill Woods Gazette*.

Swim Banquet

We cap off the season with a Swim Banquet, which is a PotLuck Dinner held at the pool the evening of Divisionals. Every swimmer gets a trophy.

What's Mandatory?

While we hope you will participate in all the social activities, they are optional. What is mandatory is that you honor your commitments and ***have fun!***

Chapter 10: Hints to Help Your Swimmer be More Successful

Nutrition Tips

Proper Nutrition is a key ingredient of successful athletic performance. In swimming, just as in any other sport, “you are what you eat.” Here are some simple Do’s and Don’ts for Fantastic swimmers to keep in mind.

- DO “carb-up” for swim meets. Carbohydrate rich foods such as pasta help build the nutrition reserves you’ll need while swimming. The best time to carb-up is at least a day ahead. Make Wednesdays and Thursdays pasta nights in your house for Saturday meets. Spaghetti, Lasagna, Macaroni and Cheese, and Pizza are all excellent foods to “carb-up” on.
- DO eat a light but healthy meal before meets. Fruit and cereals are excellent but avoid sugar coated cereals.
- DO bring a healthy snack to swim meets. Fruit or dry cereals (like Cheerios) are excellent.
- DO bring something to drink to swim meets. Swimming will dehydrate you, but because you’re in the water you never notice that you’re sweating. Gatorade, All-Sports or, best of all, water, is great.
- DO get a good night’s rest before a Saturday meet.
- DON’T spend an active afternoon in the sun before an evening meet.
- DON’T bring sweet juices and carbonated beverages to drink at a swim meet.
- DON’T eat high sugar foods before, during, or just after a meet.

A Unique Triangle

A unique way of looking at the parent-swimmer-coach relationship is as a triangle, with the parent(s) and coach at the bottom on either side of the base, and the swimmer at the top. Both parent(s) and coaches work together in a partnership to help the swimmer rise to his/her highest potential. Each member of this triangle has specific responsibilities. The coach is the professional, with the knowledge and training to guide the swimmer in the sport. The coach is also an important source of motivation for the swimmer.

The parent(s) are the swimmer’s emotional base from whom the swimmer relies on for a sense of well being and security. This can be provided best through support and encouragement no matter how the swimmer performs, and by guiding them through the emotional ups and downs that will inevitably come in their swimming (as well as other sports) careers.

Finally, the swimmer’s responsibility is to listen to the coach, attempt to do what the coach asks of him/her, and to develop with the coach a positive, working relationship that will allow the two to work as effectively as possible.

If you, as a parent, have any questions or concerns about a coach’s decisions, please feel free to contact them. The best time to do this is after a practice. If possible, write a note asking to speak with the coach, and briefly describe what you would like to discuss. The coach will get back to you as soon as possible.

Guidelines for Swimming Parents

1. **Be supportive in all circumstances.** There is only one question to ask your child, “Did you have fun?” If meets and practices are not fun, do not force your child to participate.

2. **Acknowledge your child's fears.** A first swim meet or the first time swimming a specific event can be stressful for a child; it is appropriate for your child to be scared. Reassure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event if he/she were not ready for it.
3. **Remember that swimming is your child's activity.** Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other children. The nice thing about swimming is that every child can strive to do his/her personal best. Be aware of perceived pressure.
4. **Leave the coaching to the coaches.** Do not undermine the coaches by trying to coach your child or offer advice on technique or race strategy. As a parent, your job is to support and love your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job.
5. **Only say positive things at a swim meet.** Cheer and applaud but never criticize your child.
6. **Be a positive role model.** If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official or in a key position, don't criticize those who are doing the best they can. Avoid criticism of the coach in front of your swimmer – proper time and place, please.
7. **Encourage your child to have goals other than winning.** Giving an honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning.
8. **Appreciate the many 'intangible' benefits that swimming rewards your child:** self-discipline, sportsmanship, self-esteem, fitness, friendships, and much more. Swimming builds good people, just look at our coaches; be happy your child wants to participate!

Chapter 11: Who's Who and When Does It Happen?

A listing of Swim Team Positions and the individuals responsible is provided below. Feel free to contact any of the swim team committee chairs for more information on topics in this handbook.

1999 Swim Team Committee Chairmen

Swim Team Rep	Karen Stierman	kstierman@aol.com	476-0110
Asst. Team Rep	Pam Reed	ps39p@nih.gov	620-4645
Swim Team Board Liaison	Mark Hubal	mhubal@erols.com	689-4915
Announcer Saturday Meets	Creg Howland	jchowland@aol.com	620-9119
Announcer Monday Meets	Peter Kendrick	pkendrick@idsonline.com	715-0377
Banquet	Amy Hubal		689-4915
Chief Timer Saturday Meets	Maggie Howland		620-9119
Chief Timer Monday Meets	Mary Jo Huycke	mary_jo_huycke@hmco.com	264-1018
Clerk of Course	Amber Milne	--	715-8544
	Frankie Chuday	gracieroc@aol.com	391-0857
Coaches	Shelley Gesker	shelthink@aol.com	803-8855
	Paul Hickman	--	264-0325
Computer Rep	Jan Coffinberger	jffc2254@netscape.net	465-9449
Head Table Worker Saturday Meets	Mary Margaret Wallace		620-5516
Head Table Worker Monday Meets	Mary Wade		620-1603
Newsletter Editor	-OPEN-		
Officials Chairman	Bob Cohen	tuckerdag@aol.com	476-0110
Pep Rally	Carol Byrne	ckbyrne@aol.com	860-3134
Pool Set-Up	Don Huycke		264-1018
Publicity	-OPEN-		
Socials	-OPEN-		
Suits/Shirts	Lynn Happ	lynn.happ@lmco.com	715-1106
Trophies	Andrea Hallock	ahallock@teleglobe.com	391-9027
Volunteer Coordinator	Marian Kendrick	pkendrick@idsonline.com	715-0377
Swim Team Hotline			860-0628 option 4

1999 Swim Team Schedule

May	16	Registration and Swim Suit Sizing	10:00 AM-3:00 PM
	27	New Referee Clinic at Truro	7:30 PM
June	1	PRACTICE STARTS	
		10 and Unders	5:00-6:00 PM
		11 and Overs	6:00-7:00 PM
	5	Referee and Starter Clinics at Annandale	8:00 AM
	12	Stroke and Turn Clinic at Truro	8:00 AM
		Chief Timer, Table Administration, Clerk of Course Clinics at Annandale	8:00 AM
	17	New Referee Clinic at Truro	7:30 PM
	19	Time Trials and Team Pictures at Fox Mill Woods	8:00 AM
	20	Last Chance Clinics - Referee, Starter, Stroke & Turn at Mantua	9:30 AM
	21	Make-up Time Trials/NO PRACTICE	5:30 PM
	24	MORNING PRACTICE BEGINS	
		13 and Overs	7:30-8:30 AM
		9-12 Year Olds	8:30-9:30 AM
		8 and Unders	9:30-10:30 AM
	25	Pep Rally	6:00 PM
	26	Meet Fox Mill Woods at Holmes Run Acres	9:00 AM
	28	Meet Fox Mill Woods at Pinecrest	6:00 PM
	29	EVENING MAKE-UP PRACTICE SESSIONS BEGIN	
		Tuesdays and Thursdays	5:00-6:00 PM
July	2	Pep Rally	6:00 PM
	3	Meet Langley Club at Fox Mill Woods	9:00 AM
	5	Meet Hiddenbrook at Fox Mill Woods	6:00 PM
	6	Developmental Relay Carnival at Oakton	6:00 PM
	7	Patsy Graham Meet at Greenbriar	6:30 PM
	9	Pep Rally	6:00 PM
	10	Meet Fox Mill Woods at Fairfax	9:00 AM
	12	Meet Fox Mill Woods at Oakton	6:00 PM
	14	Divisional Relay Carnival at Fairfax	6:30 PM
	16	Pep Rally	6:00 PM
	17	Meet Riverside Gardens at Fox Mill Woods	9:00 AM
	19	Meet Fox Mill Woods at Herndon	6:00 PM
	21	All-Stars Relay Carnival at Greenbriar	4:00 PM
	23	Pep Rally	6:00 PM
	24	Meet Great Falls at Fox Mill Woods	9:00 AM
	26	Meet Fox Mill Estates at Fox Mill Woods	6:00 PM
	27	Last Practice for Swimmers Not Competing in Divisionals	
	28	Divisional Practice	
		11 and Overs	7:30-8:30 AM
		10 and Unders	8:30-9:30 AM
	31	Divisionals at Great Falls	9:00 AM
	31	Team Banquet	5:30 PM
Aug	7	All-Stars	9:00 AM