

WESTMINSTER RIDING CLUB SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK SUMMER 2010

This handbook provides:

- An overview of the goals of the Westminster Riding Club Swim Team.
- The practice schedule for the summer, as well as guidelines and expectations for practice.
- A schedule of swim meets and other team events.

The first step in becoming a member of the Westminster Riding Club Swim Team is signing up. The swim team fee is \$70 per swimmer, with a \$10 per family donation for the swim meet concession stand. (The \$10 concession stand fee provides start up funds for the concession stand for each of the swim meets held at the Riding Club. You will not be asked to donate food.) All members of the swim team must be members of the Westminster Riding Club and must be able to swim the length of the pool. At the time of registration, a parent must be present to sign the AAU insurance form. If you are unable to attend registration, please contact Barb Norman, the Club Manager.

GOALS

The primary goals of the Westminster Riding Club Swim Team are:

- Each member of the swim team will become a better swimmer through practice and direction from the coaching staff.
- Members of the swim team will work cooperatively as a team and have a good time, both at practice and at swim team events.
- Swimmers will make new friendships and develop self-confidence as a swimmer and competitor.
- Swimmers and their families will treat fellow swimmers and guests, as well as their coaches, with respect.

PRACTICE

Practice is essential to becoming a good swimmer. All members of the swim team are expected to attend practice. Of course, swimmers may need to miss practice to attend camp or when they are on vacation. However, the single most important determinant of a swimmer's success is the amount of time they spend at practice.

Practice will be held rain or shine. In the event of cold weather or rain, more time may be devoted to dry land exercises and less time may be spent in the pool. Thunderstorms or very hard rain may result in practice being cancelled. Please check the website to see if practice has been cancelled (www.wrclub.org). Every effort will be made to e-mail families should be cancel practice.

In order to participate in dual or championship meets, swimmers must demonstrate a pattern of regular attendance at practice. To be entered in a meet, swimmers must have attended at least two practices during the preceding week. In the event that the swimmer has an academic, athletic, or family commitment, the swimmer and his/her parents should discuss the absence with the coaching staff. Those swimmers who have not attended at least two practices during the week preceding a meet will not be entered unless:

- the coaching staff was notified in advance of the absence and
- the swimmer has demonstrated regular attendance at practice in preceding weeks.

This policy is not meant to be punitive. Swimmers who miss practice one week will regain eligibility for meet participation upon resumption of regular practice attendance. For the purposes of this policy, attendance is practice is defined as attending the regularly scheduled WRC practice for a given age group. While swimmers may benefit from practicing on their own or with another team, it does not constitute attendance at WRC practice.

Illustrative examples:

Sally will be on vacation for the week and will return Friday evening. Prior to the week that her family goes on vacation, Sally has only attended one practice. Sally is not eligible to participate in the Saturday swim meet.

Billy will be on vacation for the week and will return Friday evening. Prior to the week that his family goes on vacation, Billy has attended every practice and he has made the coaches aware of his vacation. Billy is eligible to participate in the Saturday swim meet.

Frieda has basketball camp and will miss all of this week's practices. Prior to this week, she has regularly attended practice. Assuming that Frieda discusses this with the coaches in advance, Frieda may participate in the meet on Saturday.

George is attending summer enrichment this week and will miss practice. He was unable to attend practice for the last two weeks because of a lacrosse camp. George is not eligible to swim in this Saturday's meet, but can restore eligibility for next week's meet by attending practice next week.

There will be three practice groups. Breaking the team into smaller practice groups will result in a safer practice and less crowding in the lanes. Swimmers are expected to swim with their age group. Swimmers will be grouped according to their age on May 31st. (This is the date that the swim league uses to determine a swimmer's age.) Practice will begin the week of June 7th.

Monday/Wednesday/Friday
6 -7 p.m. for 13 and older

Tuesday/Thursday
6:00-6:30 p.m. 8 & under
6:30-7 p.m. 9-12 years

Beginning on Monday, June 14, swimmers will be able to practice Mondays through Thursdays, following the schedule below. Friday practice will be at 10 a.m. for all swimmers.

9:30-10:45 a.m. 13 and older

10:30-11:30 a.m. 9-12 age group

11:15-12 noon 8 & under

We will be offering two evening practice on Monday and Tuesday evenings from 6-8 p.m. The first practice will be for ages 12 and under and will run from 6:00 – 6:45 p.m.. The second practice will be ages 13 and up and run from 6:45-8:00 pm. Please understand that these practices have to be approved by a coach as we have limited spots. We only have two lanes and this practices should be only be used for families that are unable to be available for the morning practices.

Swimmers should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the start of practice and should be on the pool deck, ready to swim, at the time that practice begins. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that their swimmer is on the pool deck and ready to swim. Once in the pool, the coaching staff assumes responsibility for supervising the practice. Parents are not required to stay during practices, but must be available by phone in the event of injury or discipline issues. Swimmers should be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of their practice time.

In order that each member of the swim team be able to develop to his/her fullest potential, the coaching staff must spend practice time directing and motivating swimmers, and not disciplining unruly members of the team. If your child becomes a distraction during practice, he/she will be asked to leave the pool area. Swimmers who have been asked to leave a practice may not return to the next practice without their parent or guardian. We believe that this discipline policy will result in the best use of practice time for all swimmers.

The coaching staff will make every effort possible to help swimmers develop proper stroke techniques, as well as starts and turns. However, with many swimmers at practice at one time, it may not always be possible to give individual attention to every swimmer. If you feel that your child needs more help, please discuss your concerns with the coaching staff. *You may also wish to consider either group or private lessons offered through the Riding Club.*

COMMUNICATION

Communication can be one of the most difficult issues on the swim team. There are a number of ways that information will be communicated to swimmers and their families. Each swim family will have a mailbox (folder). The box holding these mailboxes will usually be sitting near the gate during practice times. Swimmers or their parents should check the mailbox each day for important information. Most information will be communicated through e-mail.

Please make sure we have a current e-mail address for parents.

Parents can communicate their concerns to Coach Dave either prior to or after practices. Coach Dave can be reached by e-mail at wrcswimcoach@comcast.net. Messages can be left for the coaches at (410) 848-2918. Please do not interrupt the coaches during practice. This takes a way time from not only your child, but everyone else who is participating. If there is an issue that cannot be resolved with the coaches, you may contact Rob Mondor or the club manager (Barb Norman) in person, via phone, or through email at wrcclub@comcast.net. Likewise, the coaching staff may use these same channels to communicate concerns about your child.

The swim team also has information on the Westminster Riding Club website (www.wrcclub.org). We will post directions to all of the away meets on the website as well as other important announcements. The best communication comes through parental involvement. Parents who volunteer before, during, and after swim meets, as well as with Fun Fridays and other swim team activities tend to be much more informed.

SWIM MEETS

The swim team will participate in five dual meets during the summer, as well as a number of special swim meets. It is expected that all members of the team will participate in swim meets. If your child is unable to attend a meet because of vacation or family commitments, it is essential that you 'scratch' your child from the meet as early as possible, but no later than the Wednesday prior to the meet. Scratch sheets will be posted on the swim team bulletin board. (This is very important!)

Several days before a dual meet, the coaches will work with the swimmers to determine which events they will swim. The coaching staff will make every effort to accommodate swimmer's requests; however, **the final decision will be the coaches'.**

Swimmers should arrive at the swim meet in time for warm-ups. Warm-ups usually start one hour before the meet for home meets and 1/2 hour before the meet for away meets. Upon arrival at the swim meet, swimmers should check in with the coaches. It is very important that swimmers check in at least 45 minutes prior to the start of a meet. Lineup changes must be made by that time. Swimmers are expected to wear their Westminster Riding Club team suit to all swim meets, including all dual and invitational meets. If swimmers choose to wear a cap, they should wear either a plain black cap or a WRC cap.

Dual meets, where the WRC swim team swims against on other team, usually last 3-4 hours. Each swimmer can swim in three events. Before the meet begins, parents and swimmers should determine the events in which the swimmer has been entered. Swimmers may leave before the end of the swim meet only after checking with the head coach. Ribbons are awarded for the top eight swimmers in each event. Ribbons will be distributed on the Monday following the swim meet.

There are several "special" meets during the season:

- Time Trials is an opportunity for swimmers to "get a time" for each stroke and to gain experience with how a swim meet is run.
- The Carroll County Invitational is held at the South Carroll Swim Club. Swimmers from all of the Carroll County pools compete at this event. Swimmers will receive information about this meet in their mailbox as soon as it becomes available.
- The Straehle Meet is open to swimmers who meet certain qualifying times. Qualifying times will be posted as soon as they are available from the CMSL (Central Maryland Swim League). Swimmers from all 50 teams in the League attend this event. Participation must be confirmed by returning the registration form to WRC on or before the date indicated on the schedule.
- The Novice Meet is held at the Riding Club and is open to all swimmers who did not qualify for the Straehle meet in an individual event. You must complete a registration form on or before the date indicated on the schedule.
- The Divisional Championships will be held on July 25, 2009. All six teams from our division will be there. The swimmers with the top 3 times in each event will represent the Riding Club. The coaching staff will select swimmers for participation. Participation must be confirmed by returning the registration form to WRC on or before the date indicated on the schedule.

SWIM TEAM APPAREL

Westminster Riding Club swimsuits and other apparel will be available for order during registration. It is very important that swimsuits be ordered during this week, in order that the suits arrive prior to the first meet.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

To a very large extent, the WRC swim team is a volunteer effort. We need the participation of every parent. At the time of registration, parents will be asked to commit to at least 4 slots of the volunteer activities listed below. Parents who do not sign-up for will be assigned volunteer slots.

Fun Friday Volunteers - Get together with a group of friends and organize one of the five Fun Fridays. Typically, Fun Friday involves an activity/craft and food. The Riding Club has some supplies (markers, fabric paint, etc). We will also reimburse you for expenses up to \$45. If you choose to spend beyond this amount, it will be the responsibility of the organizing group.

Entry Card Preparation – This is a job that must be completed on the day before the swim meet. It involves transferring stickers to cards and placing the entry cards in order and usually takes around an hour. Stickers and cards will be picked up from the club office Friday afternoon after 1 p.m. and should be returned to Leslie later in the day.

Ribbon Preparation – In advance of all home meets, stickers must be affixed to ribbons. This job can be completed well in advance of the actual date of the meet.

Concession Stand Workers - We need volunteers to work the concession stand during Time Trials, our 3 home meets, and the Novice Meet. This is a great opportunity for high school and middle school students who are not on the swim team to earn service hours.

Clerk of Course – This is one of the most important volunteer activities. At home meets, the Clerk of Course will perform two functions: (1) handing out cards to our swimmers for their events and (2) lining up swimmers by heat and lane for their events. At away meets, the clerk of course will only need to hand out cards (although other teams may appreciate help lining up swimmers).

Relay Coordinator – This person will assist in helping the Clerk of Course get the relay teams together and ready to compete. This is particularly important with the younger age groups. They will be responsible for letting the kids know which order in the relay they will swim **per the coaches' instructions**.

Table Workers - Work at the scorer's table during the swim meet. It's a lot of fun to learn how meets are scored. We need table workers for all 5 dual meets, the Novice Meet, and the divisional championships.

Runners – At all home meets, swimmers will line up with the clerk of course and will be given a card showing their name, heat, lane, and team. On this card, their time for the day will be recorded. Runners (1) collect cards from swimmers swimming 25 meter events and deliver them to timers at the opposite end of the

pool and (2) collect completed cards from the timers and deliver them to the scorer's table for all events.

Heat Winner Ribbons – At all home meets, ribbons are given to the winner of each heat. Volunteers are needed to hand out ribbons to these heat winners.

Timers - We must provide 10 timers for the duration of all dual meets. Timers are responsible for operating a stop watch and recording the swimmer's time. It is a great way to get close to the action.

Stroke and Turn Judges – At each meet, we must provide one or more stroke and turn judges. To become a stroke and turn judge, you must have some familiarity with proper stroke technique and attend a training session on the first Sunday in June at Padonia Park Swim Club. If you are interested, you can call the club for more information. We desperately need new stroke and turn judges!

If you have other talents that you would like to share with the team, please call. We need everyone's help to make the season a success.

Ways to Help your swimmer

The role of the swim team parent

To have a successful swim program, there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coaches. The progress swimmers make and the feelings they have about themselves and their overall swimming experience depend to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section carefully as we begin the season.

The following are excerpts from Parent, Coach and Athlete by John Leonard. Chapter 9 "Do's and Don'ts for swimming parents":

Do applaud everyone's good swim -from your team and others

Do make sure that the physical needs of your athlete are taken care of (fed, warm, dry, supervised).

Do promote the same philosophy for each meet that the coach does.

Do let them know that you love them.

Don't talk exclusively to your own child. This is a friendly sport.

Don't compare one swimmer's performance to another. Especially siblings.

Don't either praise or reprimand your child extravagantly at a meet.

Don't ever say, "you didn't try," even if sometimes it is true.