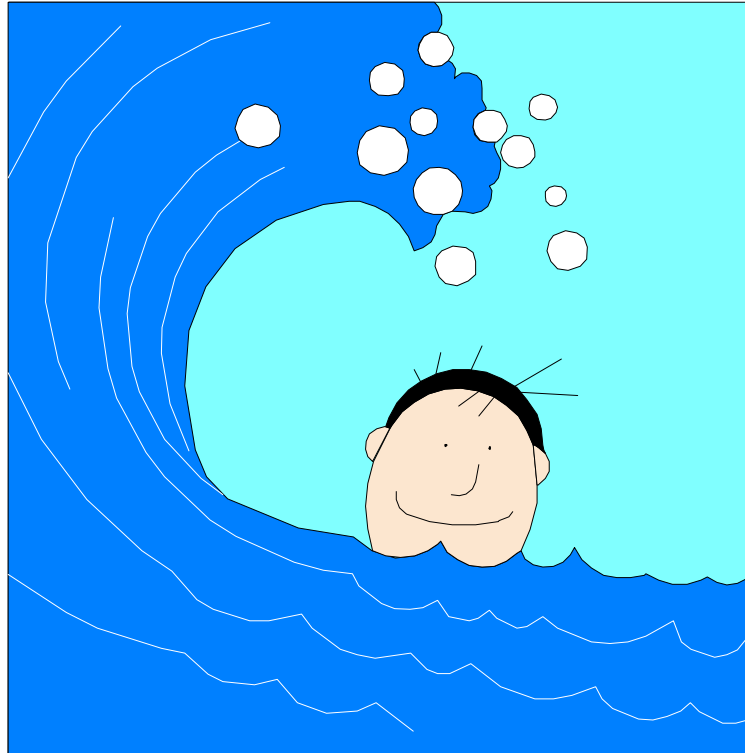


**MY KID WANTS TO JOIN THE SWIM TEAM
AND I HAVE NO IDEA
AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON**



A Guide for the bewildered parents
of prospective new members
of the
Langley WildThings Swim Team

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

Coaches and Committee contacts are listed on Langley Pool website and in the pool phone directory.

Langley Pool Phone: (703) 821-9316

Langley Pool Web Site: www.langleyclub.org

NVSL Web Site: <http://nvsl.nvblu.com/plasma/core/site/nvsl>

INTRODUCTION

Every swimmer's parent has experienced that first day of swim practice or that first swim meet where they wonder, “why am I here and what's going on?” We've all been there before and we'll be glad to enlighten you in your quest to understand the world of Summer Swimming.

Although this pamphlet is explicitly written for use by parents of new Langley swimmers, the fundamentals are true for any area swim team. It will (hopefully) provide information that will help you understand what is happening while your child swims.

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

Welcome to the WildThings!



We're glad to have you with us!

Chapter 1: About The Swim Team

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophy of the Langley WildThings swim team is that **having fun is the most important thing we can do**. Most of the kids don't care if we're in a top division or a bottom division. We'd all like to be division champions, which usually means going undefeated, but only one team out of six can usually claim this honor. Personal development is what is most important and for a swimmer that means improving your times. We believe that by establishing a healthy environment that encourages the kids to do their best, recognizes their contributions, and is fun for the entire family will have met our goals.

We've all taken our kids to McLean Youth sports activities and probably stood by as two or three parents ran the team. Swimming isn't like that. You can't run a swim program without parental help. In fact, it takes over 40 parents to time, officiate and score a typical swim meet, and that doesn't include pool set up and tear down or running the snack bar or non-swimming team activities.

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

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 are simple:

EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR SWIMMERS

1. You must be able to swim: The Langley Swim Team is not a swim lesson program. A swimmer should be able to swim a **length** of the pool to join the team. We don't care how fast or how ugly or how legal the stroke is or how long it takes to swim that length. We'll help your swimmer become a better swimmer, but in fairness to the other 100 plus swimmers on the team, we must insist that all swimmers be able to swim. Your child will feel better about his/her being on the team if he/she is competitive with most of the other kids of the same age. Those who can swim the **width** of the pool can join the **Junior Swim Team**. Junior Swim Team begins at a later date than the regular swim team (see Langley pool phone directory). As junior swimmers' skill progress, coaches may move them to join the regular swim team and/or they may get to participate in end of the session 'B' meet(s). Group lessons are available to those who cannot swim the width of the pool.

2. Keep your commitments: We're planning on you being available for all swim meets unless you tell us you're not available, at least one week advance of scheduled competition.

3. Pay attention to the coaches: With over 100 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!

EXPECTATIONS FOR FAMILIES

1. **Parent Volunteers:** Did you know that except for the coaches, the Langley Swim Team is a completely volunteer-run organization? It takes over 30 parent volunteers to time, officiate, score, and feed swimmers and spectators for a typical meet! Langley is extremely lucky to have excellent support from the Club and our lifeguards, but without parent volunteers the swim season simply would not happen – and your children would not enjoy the time of their lives each and every season.

The commitment required from each swim team family varies, depending on the number of swimmers in your family and their level of involvement:

Number of Swimmers	Swimmer Involvement	Volunteer Commitment	
		Overall	as Timer/Official
1	Practice & B Meets	6	2
1	Practice, A & B Meets	8	4
2 or more	Practice & B Meets	8	3
2 or more	Practice, A & B Meets	8+	4
1 or more	Junior Swim Team	2	N/A

You should sign up for the majority of your volunteer slots during registration. Volunteer positions are listed in **Chapter 9**. If you are new to the team and unsure about what a job requires, in addition to the information provided in Chapter 9, please ask our volunteer coordinators and/or our head official (listed in pool directory). They will be happy to explain the various jobs and all they entail. The volunteer coordinators are also the ones to contact if an emergency arises and you need to find another parent to cover your volunteer shift (although it's your responsibility to find a replacement, the volunteer coordinators can help with contact info and availability).

The truth is, the volunteer jobs are easier than you think, and all are essential to making the WildThings a memorable experience for your children. There are lots of different volunteer positions so we're sure there will be something just right for you that will be lots of fun! Training is provided free of charge through NVSL clinics or by experienced parents. The clinics dates/times are listed in the Langley Pool phone directory and on the NVSL Web Site.

2. Questions and/or concerns about **your swimmer** should be addressed to the coaches **BEFORE OR AFTER** the daily swim practice (and not between the practice sessions because there is no free time then). For safety reasons, the **coaches should not be approached during practices or meets**. You can also e-mail the coaches at any time! If you have any questions, comments, opinions or suggestions about **swim team policy, schedules, or management**, please contact the Swim Committee Chairs (***and not the coaches!***). We value your input.

3. Complete and return all your forms – Registration, Health and Absences ASAP. Forms **must be submitted BEFORE the first swim team practice**.

4. Model good sportsmanship to your swimmers.

Chapter 2: Organizational Stuff

SWIM COMMITTEE, TEAM REPS, AND COACHES

The people you'll run into the most in your swim team dealings are the Swim Committee members, Team Reps and the coaches. The Swim Committee and Team Reps are volunteer parents who were new to swimming at one time just like you are today. Swim Committee members are responsible to the Pool Board for running every aspect of the swim team. It's a job that is impossible to do successfully without help from a great many parents. On the Swim Committee, the Committee Chairs hire the coaches (with the approval of the Pool Board). Team Reps are representatives of the Langley team to other swim teams and the NVSL. It sounds like an easy job, but most of the Team Rep's job is done before the meet starts. The Team Rep is also the designated recipient of all DQ slips for his team and is the only person with any official standing to challenge any decisions made by the referee. The coaches determine training needs for the team and based on this, they design practices and provide instruction to swimmers. Coaches and Team Reps also determine seeding of swimmers (Chapter 5).

NORTHERN VIRGINIA SWIMMING LEAGUE (NVSL)

In 1956, 8 Northern Virginia Pools founded the NVSL. Today the NVSL has over 10,000 swimmers on 104 teams and is the largest summer swim league in the United States. Obviously, with this many teams, there has to be some division of teams. During the off season, the NVSL ranks each team from 1 to 104 based primarily on swimmers times, and then divides the teams, based on these rankings, into 17 Divisions of five or six teams. This means that the fastest teams are in the lower numbered Divisions and the less competitive teams are in the higher numbered Divisions. NVSL information (which contains all A Meet rankings for all the divisions) and swim meet results can be found at: nvsl.nvpools.com. Langley Swim team results will also be posted on our bulletin board and website: (www.langleyclub.org)

USA SWIMMING

USA Swimming is the governing body for swimming in the United States. USA Swimming establishes rules for the strokes and for the conduct of competition. The NVSL swimming rules are USA Swimming rules with minor changes to accommodate the facilities and skill levels found in our league.

POTOMAC VALLEY SWIMMING (PVS)

PVS is the local “branch” of USA Swimming. It consists of **year round swim clubs** in the Washington 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. For those swimmers interested in continuing swimming **after the summer season** check the PVS Web Site for Potomac Valley Member Clubs at: www.pvswim.org/pvs_link.htm

Chapter 3: Important Basic Stuff

COMMUNICATIONS

Swim team information (including team records, meet results, social events...) are posted on the Langley pool's bulletin board and the website, too. General information is also posted on the bulletin boards. Be sure to check your e-mail and the bulletin board several times a week. For safety reasons, the **coaches should not be approached during practices or meets**; however feel free to approach them after practices or by e-mail.

PRACTICES

Practice times are posted in the Langley Pool Directory and on the website. For practice purposes, there is no 'A' Team or 'B' Team distinction. **All swimmers** should come to practice regularly and be prepared to do their best. Practice times are offered twice daily on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to accommodate those in morning camps, etc. Attendance to only one practice per day is necessary. Reminder that Junior Swim Team has a separate practice schedule.

SWIM APPAREL

The WildThings, like every other swim team, have an official team suit. We encourage all swimmers to buy the official team suit though it is not required at 'B' meets. 'A' meet swimmers must have a team suit (though the coach may permit other racing suits such as fastskins, aquablades). If swimmers have the team suit, we recommend they **only** be worn for the meets. For **practices** swimmers should wear a competition suit (one-piece racing suit for girls, briefs or jammers for boys). No bikinis or trunks are allowed as this makes proper stroke work difficult.

While not required, caps and goggles generally benefit the swimmer by keeping hair and water out of their eyes. We encourage swimmers to use these items at practices as well as meets. It is Langley team policy that swimmers wear their silver Langley cap only for all 'A' meet competitions. If a cap is worn during a 'B' meet, NVSL requires that it be only a Langley team cap or a plain solid color cap **WITHOUT LOGOS, SLOGANS, OR OTHER TEAM NAMES**. **Wearing any other swim cap is not allowed and is cause for disqualification.**

Be sure to label all caps, shirts, goggles, towels and anything else brought to practice or a meet.

Note that swim team items (tee shirts, jackets, towels, caps, etc. for both children and adults) are sold at the registration/opening weekend party. You can also get any available items by contacting your Swim Committee or Team Reps.). Show your TEAM SPIRIT!

Chapter 4: Meet Guidelines and Rules

1. All swimmers are to furnish their own transportation to and from meets. If a ride is needed, please contact someone on the team and make arrangements in advance. **Coaches will not provide rides for swimmers. For some away 'A' meets, we meet at Langley pool at a designated time to confirm swimmer presence and leave as a group.** Note that 'A' meets are meets with other teams of the same division and may be far from the home pool. 'B' meets are held with nearby teams of any division. Directions to the 'A' and 'B' meets are in the Langley Pool directory and on the website.
2. All 'A' meets start at 9:00 am sharp and swimmers will need to be at the pool by 7:50 am for **home meets** and 8:20 am for **away meets** for warmups. There are always two warmups at every meet. The home team warms up first and the away team warms up second. That's why arrival times to home meets are different from away meets. Typically, 'A' meets (including warm up) last ~2-3 hours.
3. All 'B' meets start at 6:00 pm and swimmers need to arrive by 4:50 pm for **home meets** and 5:20 pm for **away meets**. Typically, 'B' meets last ~3-4 hours.
4. Before each 'B' meet begins, swimmers are to report to the coach for their time card (these cards are used by the coach to write down the race time of each swimmer). They also confirm the swimmers presence at the meet and reaffirm the events in which they will participate.
5. Swimmers should stay in the team area during the meet and be available when called for their event. When called for their event, swimmers go to the Clerk of Course to check in and are not to leave the area until the clerk escorts them to their starting spot for the race.
6. When the referee blows the whistle for the start of an event, **absolute silence** must be observed until the race is underway to ensure that each race is started accurately and fairly. **TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS!**
7. If requested by the coach, swimmers should report to the coach immediately after each event for feedback on their swims. When all swimming events for an individual are done and that individual has checked in with the coach, he/she may join their family (and cheer on their team mates!!)
8. After either a home or away meet, swimmers and parents are to ensure the area is clean. After home meets everyone is to pitch in to get areas ready for general membership swimming.
9. All people connected with the Langley Swim Team will conduct themselves in a responsible and respectful manner. Follow and respect the rules of our pool and all host pools. **Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.** A Marshall is on deck during all meets to ensure safety and sportsmanlike behavior from swimmers and spectators.
10. **No smoking** in pool areas. This is an NVSL rule.

SPECTATOR GUIDELINES

1. Remember good sportsmanship!
2. Spectators and parents are asked to stay in the designated area for guests.
3. **No parents are permitted on the deck or in the Clerk of Course area, unless volunteering.**
4. **TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS!**
5. **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY!**
6. The area behind the timers must be kept clear so that swimmers may be positioned for the next race.
7. Table workers cannot provide spectators with information on scores and times. Results are announced periodically during the meet. Some pools have lane Time Boards, which will indicate each swimmer's time.
8. By NVSL rules, meet sheets must be posted. The official meet sheet results are generally posted by 5 p.m. after an 'A' Meet. Results will also be on the Langley pool bulletin board and the NVSL Website. 'B' Meet results will be posted on the pool bulletin board!
9. Only a Swim Team Rep may approach an official. Please remember, all officials are VOLUNTEERS!

WHAT TO BRING TO A MEET?

1. Cap and goggles (wear swimsuit)
2. Two towels
3. Cards and other "disposable" quiet amusement
4. Team shirt & shorts (sweatshirt for cooler days)
5. Shoes or sandals
6. DRINKING WATER!
7. SUN SCREEN!
8. Money—there is a snack bar (but save sweets until after the meet!)
9. FOOD BEFORE MEETS: Rule of thumb is—the night before a meet, carbo load (eat a high carbohydrate meal like pasta, noodles...) and drink LOTS OF FLUIDS, TOO!!! On the morning of an 'A' meet, eat a light breakfast, and on the evening before a 'B' meet eat a light dinner. Try eating at least one hour before meet time if not earlier.

NOTE: LABEL EVERYTHING WITH SWIMMER'S NAME!!

Chapter 5: Swim Meets

TIME TRIALS

Time trials are for ALL swimmers. This is a very important “mock” meet. Swimmers swim each stroke for practice, experience and seeding purposes. It also serves as a practice for our officials and volunteers (yes, volunteers are needed for this event) to be ready for the first meet of the season. They establish a baseline time for each swimmer for every stroke they swim. The results give each swimmer a time upon which they can build and reach a personal best time.

For swimmers who cannot attend time trials, efforts will be made to get times on some strokes at practice or the next ‘B’ meet.

NVSL records may only be set at ‘A’ and ‘B’ meets. A record set at the time trials is considered unofficial and is therefore only a personal record.

SO WHO GETS TO SWIM IN MEETS? (“Seeding”)

A seeding committee of coaches and Team Reps select swimmers for ‘A’ Meets. Swimmer times from the Time Trials will be used for seeding the first ‘A’ Meet of the season. Last year’s summer times may be used for seeding purposes at the first meet only. Swimmers participating in winter swim programs may not submit their winter times for seeding purposes.

‘A’ meet are all about scoring the most points. The fastest swimmers get to swim in ‘A’ meets. Three swimmers can be entered in each individual event and no swimmer can swim more than two individual events. The Seeding Committee chooses relay teams.

Finally, don’t assume that your ‘B’ swimmer won’t be placed in a Saturday ‘A’ meet. Swimmers do take vacations or might be ill and sometimes the team needs a swimmer to “Swim up” an age group. These are some examples of why a swimmer who does not rank in the top three swimmers in his/her age group in a particular event may be needed at a Saturday meet.

Ultimately, the needs of the team as determined by the seeding committee will determine which swimmers are entered in the various strokes. Please remember that coaches and reps take the seeding process very seriously. **Be sure to note all absences on the registration form. AND if** your vacation schedule changes, please notify a coach or Team Rep.

The results of the seeding meeting (i.e., participants identified for the following Saturday’s Meet) are given as soon as possible by e-mail and on the pool bulletin board. Be sure to check your e-mail by FRIDAY! The seeding takes place usually on Wednesdays, so the times from the Monday ‘B’ meets are included in the seeding process. Even though ‘B’ meets are un-scored meets, the times are official for the team and do make a difference for seeding purposes. Often a swimmer’s time at a Monday ‘B’ Meet qualifies that swimmer for the next ‘A’ Meet as one of the three fastest seed times in their age group.

ABSENCES

All meets are important to the Swim Team and individual swimmers. Saturday 'A' Meets are very competitive and swimmers are seeded according to their ability to bring in the most points for the team. Swimmer placement is critical and can affect the outcome of a meet. A single swimmer can make the difference between a win and a loss. The NVSL has very specific rules dealing with swimmer substitutions.

IF ANY SWIMMER WILL MISS A COMPETITION, ESPECIALLY A SATURDAY 'A' MEET, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE COACH OR TEAM REP BE NOTIFIED AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE OF THE SCHEDULED COMPETITION.

AWARDS

At 'A' meets, ribbons are awarded for first through sixth place. ALSO, NVSL results are listed on-line for those A-Meet swimmers who want to see their ranking. Note that swimmers who DQ do not get ribbons.

At 'B' meets ribbons are also awarded for 1st through 6th place and competitor ribbons are given for all other swimmers who compete (even those who have DQ'd).

Coaches distribute the ribbons. In the past, 'A' meet ribbons are given out at the "after meet" fast food restaurant (or at the next swim practice). 'B' meet ribbons are given at Tuesday practice. Be sure to ask the coaches if you have not received a ribbon that you deserve!

At our end-of-season banquet, **every** swimmer (A & B Meet swimmers) will receive recognition and an award. Swimmers receive different sized trophies depending on how many points they score at 'A' meets during the season. Relay points do not count toward a swimmer's total -- See "A Meets" Section for specific scoring criteria.

Swimmers competing in their last eligible season are recognized during a Saturday home meet.

Chapter 6: Swim Meets Specifics

There are two basic meets you will encounter as a parent. ‘A’ Meets, held on Saturday, which are scored dual meets in which 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 will be named. ‘B’ Meets, held Monday are un-scored dual meets.

Age is determined by the age of the swimmer on the day of the event.

‘A’ MEETS, SATURDAYS

All team members are encouraged to attend the Saturday meets to cheer the team to victory. After an away meet, the team usually meets at a fast food restaurant for lunch. Coaches will let you know!

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.

Saturday Meet Events and Distances

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 & 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, 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.

4. 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 ('A' or 'B' meets). Lane 1 is always on the right side as you stand facing the pool at the starting end.

NOTE: A swimmer swimming an 'A' meet must not leave the meet for any reason without notifying the coaches, even if s/he has completed swimming their assigned event. There may be a reason that a swimmer would be called on to swim an additional event later in the meet, due to illness, schedule changes, etc.

SCORING IN 'A' MEETS

These meets are **very** competitive. Three swimmers with legal strokes in each event from each team will compete in each event. The scores and "time in water" at these meets are used in determining the team's position in the NVSL for the following year. Events are scored as follows: 1st place = 5 points; 2nd place = 3 points; 3rd place = 1 point. Relays = 5 points for the winning team only. In the event of a tie, the points are split between 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. For a third place tie, each swimmer is awarded 1/2 point. There are 402 points up for grabs in a Saturday meet. Unless there are one or more places not awarded in an event due to DQs or lack of swimmers, you need 202 points to win.

'A' MEET SHEETS

While all NVSL meets have an announcer, the best way to follow the meet is with a meet sheet, which lists all the events, swimmers, and seed times. Meet Sheets are usually found in the concession area and typically sell for a nominal fee.

'B' MONDAY MEETS

'B' Meets, held Monday evenings, provide developing swimmers the opportunity to swim competitively with other nearby NVSL teams who may/not be in the same division. Team scores are not recorded. Each swimmer may choose two events plus an IM in which to participate.

Monday meets are basically the same as Saturday meets except as follows: In the Freestyle and Backstroke, a 6 & Under age group is added and the 13-14 and 15-18 age groups are combined into one. There is an 8 and under competition in the Butterfly. IM events are added for 10 & Unders, 11-12s, 13-14s and 15-18s.

The 'B' meets have multiple heats per event per age group. For instance, there may be 17 swimmers in the 9-10 age group swimming freestyle. The swimmers will be divided into multiple heats, each heat of five or six swimmers. However, all event times will be ranked together to determine the standings. **It is possible, therefore, to win or place in a heat, but not be the event winner.** Due to the large volume of swimmers at a 'B' meet, organization is critical. Swimmers

must confirm with a Coach which events (maximum of 2 events plus an IM) the swimmer will be swimming at that evening's 'B' Meet. Coaches will work with swimmers to select their events.

Please note that because these are developmental meets, swimmers who placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in an event at an 'A' meet cannot swim that event at a 'B' meet. All swimmers may compete in the Individual Medley (IM) in 'B' meets however.

Be careful where you park. A few grinchers in the community love to call the police to ticket cars parked within ten feet of their driveways (Really!). For home meets, cars along Live Oak Drive MUST be pulled ENTIRELY (this means ALL FOUR WHEELS) OFF the street and ON the grass to avoid ticketing!

OTHER SWIMMING EVENTS

(for the following events, swimmers are chosen by the Seeding Committee)

Relay Carnivals

Another NVSL event is the Division Relay Carnival, which takes place on the Wednesday between the third and fourth weeks of the season. All six teams in each division converge on one pool for an evening of relay races. These include both Freestyle relays (each swimmer swims the Freestyle) and Medley relays (each swimmer swims a different stroke). The next night, all the Division Coordinators meet and relay teams are selected to swim at the All-Star Relay Carnival the following week. The sole criteria for selection to the All-Star Relay Carnival is to have one of the eighteen fastest times in events swum in the Division Relay Carnivals.

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 (except for All Star Relay Carnival).

Divisionals

The sixth week, each Division has an Individual Championship meet, commonly referred to as "Divisionals." 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 other swimmers to fill the empty lanes. This is a meet for individuals and is not scored.

All Stars

After the Divisionals, all the Division coordinators meet to select swimmers for the All-Stars meet the following week. The sole criteria for selection to All-Stars is to have one of the eighteen fastest times swum in an event at the Divisional meets (this includes ALL divisions—not just ours). 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.

Chapter 7: MY KID SAYS HE'S SUPPOSED TO SWIM LIKE A BUTTERFLY: Stroke Info

If you're not a former swimmer, the 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 briefly 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.

Freestyle

The freestyle is defined as any means of swimming across the pool. Any stroke and kick are acceptable. There are, however, a few don'ts associated with this stroke, specifically: (1) You cannot walk on the bottom or pull yourself along using the lane lines and (2) In a 50 Meter race (two pool lengths) you must touch the wall at the 25 meter end before touching the wall at the 50 meter end (This may seem obvious, but sometimes swimmers miss the wall at the turning end of the pool)

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 will 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 starts in the water with feet planted against the wall and hands 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) may 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.

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.

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.

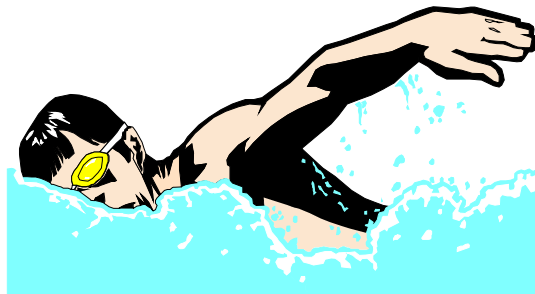
Individual Medley

The individual medley (or IM) is when an individual swims each of the four strokes in the sequence Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. 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 eight 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 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 (short for disqualification) is any violation of the rules observed by any appropriate official. Some of the more common reasons for DQing are as follows.

- Freestyle:**
- Failure to touch the wall at the turning end of the pool
 - Walking on the bottom or pulling on the lane lines
 - Exiting the pool before swimming the specified distance
- Backstroke:**
- Past vertical towards the breast at any time except during a flip turn
 - Leaving the wall after a turn past vertical towards the breast
 - Improper flip turn (older swimmers)
- Breaststroke:**
- Incorrect kick, such as a Scissors kick or Flutter kick
 - Non-Simultaneous two-hand touch or one-hand touch at turn or finish
 - Toes not pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick
 - More than one stroke underwater with arms fully extended at start or turn
 - Arm recovery past waist except on first stroke after start or turn
 - Head didn't break surface by conclusion of second arm pull underwater after a start or turn
- Butterfly:**
- Non-Simultaneous or one handed wall touch at the turn or finish
 - Non-Simultaneous leg movement during kicks
 - Arms don't break water surface during recovery (judged at the elbows)
 - Non-Simultaneous arm movement during recovery
- Relay Races:** - A swimmer leaves the deck before the previous swimmer touches the wall or deck
- False Start:** - A swimmer starts the race early (more details below)

How will I know a DQ occurred?

Unlike football, we don't blow a whistle and announce to the world that a rules violation occurred. When a Stroke and Turn Judge observes a violation, he raises his hand to signify that he has observed a violation then writes it up on a DQ slip. The judge then takes the slip to the referee, who verifies that a rule has been broken and can question the stroke and turn judge to insure that he was able to see the violation that was cited. Disqualifications for early relay takeoffs are done slightly differently. The referee receives all the take-off slips from all the judges. If both judges on a lane agree that an early takeoff occurred, the Referee will stand over the lane that the team being DQ'd swam in and raise his hand. But it's very possible that your child may know before you do

since the Team Rep tells the coach, who tells the swimmer. The coaches will explain to the swimmer why he/she was DQ'd. A DQ'd swimmer (no matter what place they finish) will not place in that event, allowing other qualified swimmers to move up in the finish order. The Meet Results will indicate finishing positions and are posted at the pool by 4 PM the day of the meet. You also can get results by visiting the NVSL web site.

False Starts

A false start occurs whenever a swimmer moves toward the pool after assuming a "set" position (taking his/her mark) and before the Starter has started the race. When this occurs, a swimmer is usually trying to anticipate the starting signal and beat the other swimmers into the water.

If the false start is detected before the starting signal is sounded, the offending swimmer can be removed from the race prior to it starting. If a false start occurs but the starting signal has sounded, the race will not be stopped. Instead the false starting swimmer(s) will be notified of their false start at the conclusion of the race. The use of a recall signal is now limited to a bad start (i.e. not all swimmers were ready) or for a safety reason. If the starter sounds the recall signal, no swimmer can be removed for a false start.

A Word About Officials and DQs

Every Official on the deck will always give the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer. Although the difference between legal but 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 that 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.

Chapter 9: WHO ARE ALL THOSE PEOPLE DRESSED IN BLUE AND WHITE?

Your first swim meet can be a bewildering experience as you encounter a vast horde of adults dressed in white shirts and navy blue shorts. This is an NVSL rule for all deck officials and helps distinguish persons who should not be on deck during a meet. Officials should not show team affiliation either by clothing or behavior. When working a meet, all officials assume the role of an NVSL official, and temporarily cease being a Langley parent. Representatives from the NVSL Board of Directors attend meets several times a season. Meet performance criteria include attitude and dress of deck officials. Note: non-logoed baseball hats are permitted.

Below are **volunteer positions** for family members over the age of 21. VOLUNTEERS, PLEASE NOTE: WATCHING YOUR CHILDREN SWIM IS A PRIORITY AND WORKERS MAY LEAVE STATIONS TEMPORARILY (OF COURSE, AS LONG AS THERE IS SOMEONE TO COVER WHEN NECESSARY—LIKE THE SNACK BAR) TO WATCH THE INDIVIDUAL RACES.

Timers

The timers are the most important people to every swimmer. 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** to help out in. 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'll 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. The middle time is the official time. The Chief Timer collects the time cards from the timers, reviews them for accuracy and completeness, and forwards them on to the table workers. Only the Chief Timer needs to attend an official training course.

Marshals

Marshals are responsible for ensuring that Warmups are conducted safely and that order is maintained during the warmups. Duties include insuring that diving starts are used in warmups only when a lane is “one way” away from the starting end, stopping any horse play and making sure swimmers aren't hanging or sitting on the lane lines.

Relay Take-off Judges

During relays, you'll see four Relay Take-off Judges at each end of the pool (two per lane). Their job is to insure that each swimmer touches the wall prior to the next swimmer in the relay leaving the deck. Each Judge notes on a slip of paper whether each swimmer in his lane left before or after the swimmer in the water touched the wall. Relay Take-off Judges do not raise their hands when they observe an early take-off because a disqualification occurs only if both Relay Take-off Judges observed an early takeoff.

Snack Bar Workers

These people (2 – 3 per home meet) sell food at the meets. One person is needed to cook hotdogs/hamburgers and/or chicken.

Clerk of the Course
(NVSL official training required)

The Clerk of the Course is the "gatekeeper" for all swimmers in our meets. The people who perform this function get the swimmers to the right lanes for the correct race. You can't run a race without swimmers and the clerk of the course makes sure the right swimmer gets to the right place at the right time.

Referee
(NVSL official training required)

The Referee is the chief official for each swim meet. He is responsible for the conduct of the meets and is the final authority on the interpretation and enforcement of all swimming rules. Prior to the start of each race, the referee sounds two or three short blasts to advise the participants to get ready. After the event is announced by the announcer or starter, the Referee sounds one long blast as a signal for swimmers to get into position for the start or to jump feet first into the water for a backstroke event. For Backstroke events, a second long blast is given to bring the swimmers to the wall for the start. When the referee sees that all the swimmers are ready, he extends his arm pointing towards the starter. At this point, the starter takes control.

Starter
(NVSL official training required)

The Starter is responsible for insuring that all swimmers are given a fair and equitable start. The starter will instruct the swimmers to "Take your mark". After all swimmers are ready and still, the starter will start the race, using a "Colorado System" (so called because it is built by Colorado Timing Systems). This system consists of a public address system, a horn, and a strobe light.

A race can be recalled only if it was a bad start by the starter (i.e. not all the swimmers were ready) or for a safety reason. This is done using a recall signal on the Colorado system (you'll know it when you hear it). For more information, see False Starts in Chapter 7.

Stroke and Turn Judges
(NVSL official training required)

Once the race has started, the Stroke & Turn Judges are responsible for insuring 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 sees a violation of the rules, he raises his hand to signify that an infraction has occurred. A Disqualification is recorded on a DQ slip, which the referee reviews and approves and forwards copies to the Table workers and the Team Rep.

Table Workers (NVSL official training required)

The time cards from the timers and any DQ slips go to the Table Workers who determine the order of finish for each event, score the meet, and prepare ribbons for the participants. Several people from each team perform these functions to insure that errors are caught before the results are announced. Basically, there are 4 “working tables”/1-2 Langley workers per table at each meet.

Table #1: **Time Recorder.** Time Recorder puts the swimmers' times in order of fastest to slowest and also marks DQ's with the DQ slips after each event. There should be one time recorder per team.

Table #2: **Scorer.** Scorers allot points to the teams based on swimmers placement in the events. Note, a home meet requires 2 scorers and an away meet requires one scorer from Langley Club.

Table #3: **Computer input.** Consists of a **Reader** (person to read race times) and a **Data Entry person** who inputs race times into the computer.

Table #4: **Awards Clerk (Ribbons).** Computerized data get put onto ribbons. Then ribbons are put in alphabetical order in the appropriate age group category. Completed ribbons are given to the coaches.

Other Very Important People (More Swim Committee functions, plus volunteers!)

It would be impossible to host a swim meet without a number of people in other Very Important Positions. These people set up the pool and report results to local newspapers. They also announce the results, run social activities and do other jobs that need to be done. We need the help of every family in order to have a successful swim season. Please join us—we'd like YOU to be a VERY IMPORTANT PERSON, TOO!

Chapter 10: We'd Rather Have Fun Than Be in Division 1

If you get to know the parents of swimmers in Division I 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 Langley, we like to win, but it isn't our reason for being. Some of the things we do to have fun are the following special events. **ALL SWIM TEAM MEMBERS ARE INVITED and EVENTS ARE FREE** (unless otherwise noted)! For details, see the Langley WildThings calendar located on the website, the pool bulletin board, and/or in the pool directory.

DAY BEFORE THE MEET: The worst thing for your swimmer to do before any meet is spend an afternoon at the pool, swimming or sunning. On days before meets, relax at home or any nice sun-free spot! **AND AS ALWAYS**, a good night's rest is important!

TUESDAY DONUTS: Offered to ALL swimmers after Tuesday practices.

TEAM OUTINGS: Two team outings (one 12 & under and one 13 & over) are planned. **ALL SWIMMERS** are invited and encouraged to come!

FRIDAY EVENTS: The Friday before the first A meet and every Friday thereafter has some special swim team event throughout the swim team season! **All GREAT FUN!**

TEAM PICTURES: We take a team picture **ONCE** every year (generally the last Tuesday in June or early July). **We'd like your swimmer to be in the photo!** Individual and/or family photo sessions are also offered. You are not obligated to purchase any pictures.

END OF THE SEASON SPLASH PARTY: **The Sunday before Divisionals, at the end of July.** Music, Food and **SUPER FUN** organized games on land and in the water for all ages!

AWARDS BANQUET (Pot Luck Dinner): We cap off the season with a terrific Swim Banquet! This celebration is held on the **evening of Divisionals**. **EVERY** swimmer on the team **GETS A TROPHY!!!** We like to dress up for this occasion (always optional) girls/dresses, boys/shorts & ties.

What's Mandatory?

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

GO WILDTHINGS!!!