



# Team Packet 2024-2025

*“If everyone is moving forward together, then  
success takes care of itself”*

*- Henry Ford*

## **Welcome** to our new and returning swimmers and parents!

We are so glad to have you be a part of the Lakers family, and we hope you come to love our swim club as much as we do!

This team packet will provide you with all that you need to know about the Lakers Aquatic Club. We hope to provide you with all the basics of a USA Swimming club, answer your various questions about the team and swimming in general, and give you guidance on our website as well as other relevant websites for the team.

*This packet may not answer ALL of your questions, so please let us know if you have any questions not answered here.*

## **About The Lakers Aquatic Club**

The Lakers Aquatic Club offers training and practice groups for swimmers of all ages and ability levels. It is the goal of the Lakers Aquatic Club to offer age-specific training for all of our athletes geared towards challenging each individual and developing each individual to the best of their abilities. We hope to create a positive environment that encourages swimmers to push themselves outside their comfort zones and strive to improve themselves and their fellow swimmers. We want our swimmers to take what they have learned from their time with us and apply it to their daily lives. The Lakers want to create lifelong swimmers and exceptional individuals in and out of the pool!

## **Why swimming?**

Competitive swimming is one of the best sports and activities an athlete can participate in. Along with the overall health benefits, swimming provides real-life experience in regard to work ethic and perseverance. Within swimming, the work you put in is the work you will get out. Swimming is very one-to-one: if you work hard and push yourself, you will see improvement. And swimmers don't have to be at the Olympic level in order to see success! There are opportunities for all levels of athletes to swim and find success.

## **The Coaches and Board**

Our Head Coach is Danni Kudla. Our Primary Age Group Coach is Nick Rancilio and our Assistant Coaches are Alley Ruthenburg, Ian DiCerbo, and Reid Schoenherr.

Our board members are President - Cristine Patterson, Vice President - Lisa Brass, Treasurer - Brian Mieczkowski, Secretary - Yolanda Sutton, Membership Chair - Jaime Harpe, Marketing Chair - Angela Christy, Social Chair - Sheryl Mieczkowski, and Safe Sport Coordinator - Jessica Wise.

You can find more information about our coaches and board members as well as their contact information on our website under the Coaches and Board tab.

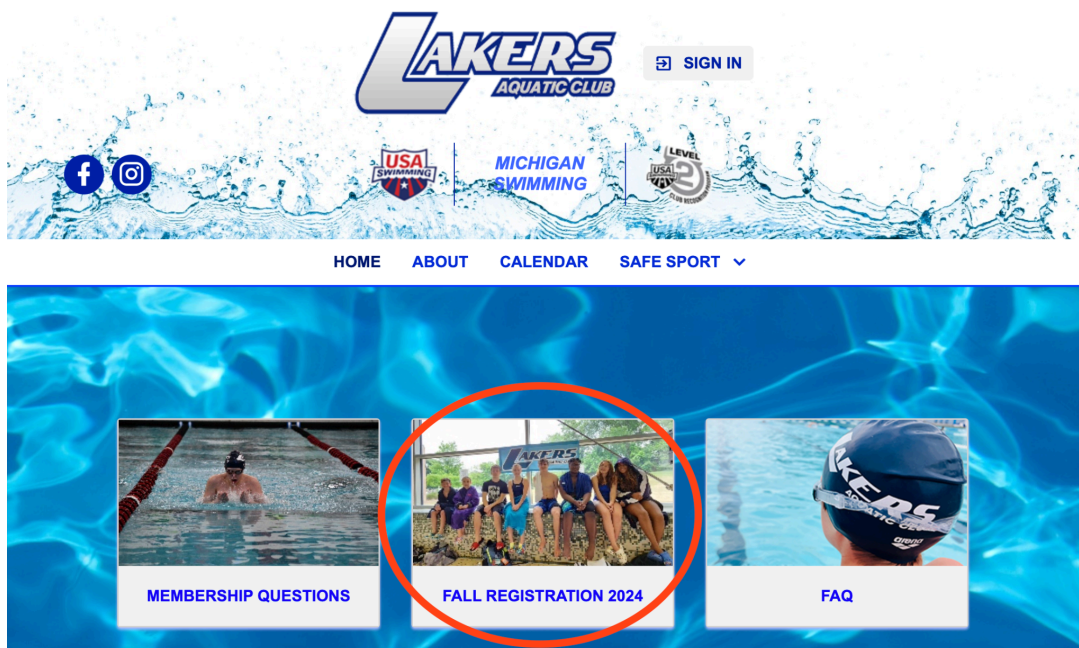
## **What is the first step?**

After inquiring about the Lakers via the membership email ([membership@lakersaquaticclub.org](mailto:membership@lakersaquaticclub.org)), we will reach back out to you to schedule an in-water evaluation to get your swimmer in their perfect group.

Coaches will be evaluating the swimmers on their knowledge of the four strokes and their efficiency in performing those strokes as well as their overall strength, speed, and cognitive abilities (i.e. ability to hold their attention for their group's practice time, ability to comprehend instructions and ask questions, and ability to follow directions). Groups are designed to allow swimmers to learn in a comfortable environment and to be pushed to an appropriate level.

## Online Registration

Once your swimmer has completed their in-water swim evaluation and the coach has determined which group they will be swimming with, you will then complete the online registration process. Below is an image of the current website:



*\*Our website does go through changes periodically throughout the year as we update items and try to provide a better experience for our members. We will try to update this packet with new images and the website with clear instructions when things change.*

Once your swimmer is registered, they will receive a Lakers t-shirt and cap to wear proudly!! It is important for swimmers and parents to represent the Lakers in and out of the pool; apparel is one of the best ways to advertise for the team and get new people interested in the team. In order to continue to be successful, we need to keep the program growing.

## Stay Connected

The Lakers have various forms of communication to send updates to the club on what the team is doing during the week, meets and events, and last-minute updates.

Website: [www.lakersaquaticclub.com](http://www.lakersaquaticclub.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LakersAquaticClub/>

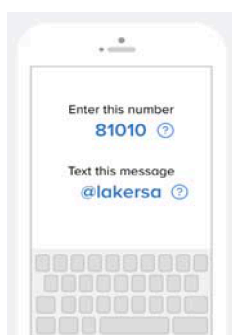
FB Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Lakersaquaticclub/>

Main Email: [faq@lakersaquaticclub.com](mailto:faq@lakersaquaticclub.com)

Membership Email: [membership@lakersaquaticclub.com](mailto:membership@lakersaquaticclub.com)

Remind Text: @lakersa

Go to: <https://www.remind.com/> or load the app on your smartphone and signup below for last-minute announcements regarding practice changes or info for meets.



## Our Groups

The Lakers offer various groups for swimmers to participate in. Each group is specifically designed for swimmers to be successful for their age and skill level as well as for appropriately challenging swimmers to grow and improve. There are various factors that go into placing a swimmer in a certain group. Through our evaluations, coaches will be able to place a swimmer in the group they will be most successful. Coaches' discretion will be the main factor in deciding a swimmer's group. Each group will teach swimmers what they need to know and do in order to move up to the next group. Below is a breakdown of the groups:

<u><b>Name</b></u>	<u><b>Description</b></u>	<u><b>Times &amp; Days</b></u>
<b>Minnows</b>	<p>This group is our learn to swim group and is offered two days per week. The main focus is the FUNdamentals: teaching proper body position, breathing techniques and stroke drills. Swimmers in this group will be introduced to the 4 competitive swim strokes.</p> <p><b>How to Advance:</b> Swimmers are required to complete 8 x 25 yards of at least 2 of the competitive strokes (legally) in order to advance to the Speedster group. Additionally, athletes must be physically and mentally prepared to complete a 1 hour practice.</p>	45 minutes of training, 3 days a week
<b>Speedster</b>	<p>This group is offered as training for the early-competitive swimmer and trains four days per week. The main focus will be working on stroke drills, streamlining, turns and breathing techniques required to move to the Junior competitive group. Swimmers in this group will be introduced to training concepts that include interval swimming.</p> <p><b>How to Advance:</b> Swimmers are required to complete 3x100 freestyle and 2x100 IM with minimal rest and perform all strokes and turns legally in order to move up. Additionally, athletes must be physically and mentally prepared to complete a 1.5 hour practice.</p>	60 minutes of training, 4 days a week
<b>Junior</b>	<p>This group practices five days per week, and the main emphasis of this group is still stroke technique and building endurance among all 4 strokes. Swimmers in this group will be introduced to plyometric exercises and stretches in order to build strength and prevent injury.</p> <p><i>All the goals of Speedster group must be met before the consideration of moving a swimmer up to this group.</i></p> <p><b>How to Advance:</b> Swimmers need to be able to perform the 500 freestyle in less than 7:30, complete 5x100 yard freestyle @ 1:45, and 5x100 yard IM @ 2:00 in order to advance to the Intermediate group. Additionally, athletes must be physically and mentally prepared to complete a 2 hour practice.</p>	90 minutes of training, 5 days a week 120 minutes of training on Saturdays
<b>Intermediate</b>	<p>This group practices five days per week and the main emphasis of this group is still stroke technique and endurance training with the introduction of race strategy. In addition to swimming and plyometric training, TRX bands and medicine ball exercises will be introduced.</p>	120 minutes of

<b>Intermediate (cont.)</b>	<p><i>All the goals of Junior group must be met before the consideration of moving a swimmer up to this group.</i></p> <p><b>How to Advance:</b> Swimmers need to be able to complete a timed 400 IM and 1000 freestyle, 8x100 yard freestyle @ 1:40, and 5x100 yard IM @ 1:50 in order to advance to Senior group.</p>	training, 6 days a week
<b>Senior</b>	<p>This group is for the older, experienced swimmer, who has demonstrated excellent attendance and leadership in the Intermediate group. The Senior group has a practice attendance expectation of five days per week. They must show an ability to train as described in the Guidelines for Advancement. Good flexibility is required as is a demonstrated ability to push oneself through challenging training sets required to compete at the open state level of swimming. The main emphasis will be stroke technique, conditioning and intense training of all energy systems of the body. The swimmer in this group has made a clear commitment to their sport and training.</p>	<p>150 minutes of training, 5 days a week 120 minutes of training on Saturdays</p>

## Additional Fees and Costs

Along with the cost of the groups, there are additional fees and some other costs that are required for the team:

<b>Registration Fee</b>	This fee may vary from session to session	\$150
<b>Annual USA Swimming Membership</b>	The USA Swimming Registration Fee is required for every USA swimmer and includes USA Swimming insurance while at all organized Laker functions.	\$90
<b>Basic Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple swimsuits (Practice and Race variants)</li> <li>• A few pairs of goggles</li> <li>• Plenty of swim caps</li> <li>• Water bottle</li> </ul>	
<b>Required Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Bottle</li> <li>• Mesh equipment bag</li> <li>• Kickboard</li> <li>• Fins</li> <li>• Pull Buoy (Junior, Intermediate, Senior)</li> <li>• Paddles (Intermediate, Senior)</li> <li>• Swim Snorkel (Intermediate, Senior)</li> </ul>	\$50 - \$100
<b>Team Suit</b>	It is highly recommended that swimmers represent our team at competitions by wearing a team uniform suit. Girls wear one-piece racing style suits and boys wear Jammer or brief style suits.	\$60 - \$75
<b>Meet Fees</b>	Meet entry fees are charged by the hosting club based on the number of events your swimmer(s) is entered into. In addition there is also a flat meet fee based on the meet type (Local, Travel, Championship).	<p>Meet Event - \$7.50/event Local Meet - \$25 Travel Meet - \$50 Championship Meet - \$75</p>

## Swimsuits, Goggles, and Swim Caps

Just like with any other sport, athletes having quality equipment and gear will boost their performance in practices and meets. We recommend that swimmers have an appropriate competitive swimsuit, goggles, and a swim cap, especially if the swimmer has longer hair. This equipment does take a bit of “getting used to”, so please give swimmers time to adjust to these new items and encourage them to keep wearing these items to be more comfortable with them.

There are plenty of places to buy and order equipment, but the places we recommend are **Different Strokes** and **SwimOutlet.com**. Different Strokes store is located in Livonia (19651 Middlebelt Rd, Livonia, MI 48152).

SwimOutlet.com is a great website to get everything you need for the swim season. Just type what you’re looking for into the search bar and there will be a ton of options.

When choosing a swimsuit, there are different options for practices and meets. Swimmers should have a competitive swimsuit that fits appropriately for practices. Swimmers should also have a different race suit for meets. Both kinds of swimsuits usually run on the same side as their shorts counterparts. If your swimmer wears a 26 short, then their swimsuit should be the same size. Boys are encouraged to wear swim jammers or speedos. Girls are encouraged to wear training or competition suits.

For race suits, we recommend a much tighter-fitting suit for both boys and girls. Swimmers want to reduce as much drag as possible to be as hydrodynamic as they can be. If your swimmer wears a 26 short, get a suit that is one size smaller, 24. The suit should feel tight.

For goggles, there are plenty to choose from and everyone has their own preference. Try a few different ones and see what your swimmer prefers. We recommend mirrored/tinted goggles for outdoor meets and practices, they help keep the sun out of swimmers eyes when doing backstroke. Prescription goggles are also available for swimmers that wear glasses.

We recommend swim caps for all swimmers, regardless of hair length. Swimmers with shorter hair can get away with no swim cap, but any amount of hair will slow a swimmer down. Swim caps are made with latex or silicone. Latex swim caps run bigger and are more stretchy so you can fit more hair into it. Latex caps grip more so they can pull on hair when taking it off. Silicone swim caps are smoother and less stretchy. Silicone tends to be better overall, but it is a personal preference. As we have a partnership with TYR, only TYR swim caps or unbranded swimcaps should be worn at swim meets.

## Required Equipment

Swimmers are required to have the following equipment and bring them to every practice they attend. The equipment is very important for the success and improvement of your swimmer. Having the proper equipment will benefit swimmers and help coaches run practices effectively. Just like with the items above, you can purchase most of the items at SwimOutlet.com or Different Strokes. We will break down the required equipment so everyone knows what items need to be purchased:

- Water Bottle - All groups are required to have a water bottle.
- Kickboard - All groups are required to have a kickboard.
- Swim Fins - All groups are required to have proper swim fins. (Preferably long)
- Pull Buoy - All groups are required to have a pull buoy.
- Swim Paddles - Junior, Intermediate, and Senior groups are required to have a pair of hand paddles.
- Swim Snorkel - Junior, Intermediate and Senior groups are required to have a swim snorkel.

While the upper group equipment isn’t required for lower groups, you are allowed to purchase them for younger swimmers to occasionally use at practices, but it is NOT required.

## Pool Locations

Lakeview High School (LV) - 21100 E Eleven Mile Rd, St Clair Shores, MI 48081

Fraser High School (FR) - 34270 Garfield Rd, Fraser, MI 48026

South Lake High School (SL) - 21900 E 9 Mile Rd, St Clair Shores, MI 48080

Lakeshore High School (LS) - 22980 13 Mile Rd, St Clair Shores, MI 48082

Lac Sainte Clair Community Pool (SCS) - 27600 Jefferson Ave, St Clair Shores, MI 48081

## **Be Your Swimmer's Biggest Supporter!**

Swimming can be a tough sport. With the long and numerous days and repetition of practices, swimming can become boring or stressful for swimmers. This is why we encourage you to bring your swimmers the recommended number of days. There is a lot of burnout in swimming.

These are some simple, yet effective, ways to support your swimmer throughout their careers:

1. Stay informed: The website has a lot of information on it, but it takes time to explore it. If you have any questions you can always email [faq@lakersaquaticclub.com](mailto:faq@lakersaquaticclub.com). When you receive emails, make sure you click on the event info that is highlighted. Also, attend the meets as much as possible. Making friends with a veteran parent is really helpful too. They really remember how it was coming into the new club and will be a familiar face come swim meets.
2. Support the coaches: Allow the coaches to be the expert in their field. When watching practice or at a meet, stay in the stands. If you do need to communicate with a coach, wait until after practice or email with the above email. Patience is always the best way to approach anyone if there may be a problem. See also our Code of Conduct for Parents and the 24-hour rule.
3. Support the Program: Volunteering at meets, events, chairing a committee, and being on the board will definitely give parents perspective on how the Lakers Aquatic Club works. There are also social gatherings and "non-meet" events that keep our club fun and attending those help you make connections as well as your swimmer. There will also be some fundraising opportunities to help the individual swimmer or the club in general as the season progresses.

Providing the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary for the child to work harder in practice will in turn give them the confidence to reach their potential. As the swimmer improves, the parents will want to share in the moments of success, and also be there during moments of disappointment. Even the best swimmers will have meets where they do not swim their best times.

## **Swim Meets: The Basics**

While attending meets is not required, we STRONGLY encourage you to attend meets, at least one a month. There are a lot of nerves that come with a swimmer's first meet and meets in general. Becoming comfortable with attending meets comes with experience and going outside one's comfort zone.

There is A LOT of info on meets and it is all online on our website. Here are some of the frequently asked questions and information you may want to read over. With everyone's first meet comes many questions ranging from "I know this is a silly question, but..." to "I'll never make heads or tails of this...!" There are NO silly questions— we were all new to this at one time!

### **What is an invitational?**

- Invationals are two and three day long meets involving many swim teams from around Michigan, as well as other states and Canada. You can choose to participate in one day only, two days or all three based on your personal schedules as well as the offered events on any given day.

### **What should I do prior to the start of the meet?**

- You already know where the meet is, what events your swimmer is entered in, and what time warm-ups begin for your child's session. It is a good idea to write your swimmer's events on their hand in ink. This reminds them what they are swimming and what their event numbers are. Refer to the meet procedure below for more details.

### **Should my swimmer eat before a meet?**

- Yes, but this depends on your child. Normally, a light snack is in order an hour before warm-ups begin. Foods high in sugar should be avoided. Recommended foods include fruit or bagels. Refer to the nutrition information on the website.

### **Which meets can and should I sign up for?**

- Refer to time standards and meet progressions on the website.

### **How do relays work?**

- The relays are put together by the coaches after they know who is signed up to attend the meet. If time permits a list of the events the swimmers will be swimming in will be posted on the bulletin board at the pool and/or sent out via email. At the meet the coach will have a list of who is swimming on the relay teams. Have your swimmer check with the coach as soon as they get to the meet.

### **What do they mean by a "heat" and "lane"?**

- If there are more swimmers entered in an event than number of lanes provided for competition (this is usually the case at the weekend invitationals; not always at the dual/tri meets), the swimmers are ranked in order by time from slowest to fastest, based on their "seed" time (the time they are entered with\*). Then, beginning with the slower swimmers they will swim heat 1, the next group heat 2, next, then heat 3, and so on until every swimmer has had a chance to swim that event. A swimmer may win their heat, but they are competing against everyone entered in the event. At the conclusion of the event, all swim times are then ranked again from fastest to slowest to determine which place the swimmers achieved against the competition.

*\*For the swimmer's first time swimming each event they will either be entered with no time (NT) or their coach will make up a time for them based on their practice performance and what they feel this swimmer can accomplish. After the initial swim for each event, the swimmer will then always be entered with their best time achieved to date.*

### **What do the parents do while the swim meet is going on?**

- Relax, enjoy the meet from the stands, sit with other team parents and cheer for the swimmers. The coaches have the responsibility of your swimmers for the next 4 hours! Look forward to the occasional wet hugs when they come to see you in the stands!

### **What to Bring To A Meet**

- Lakers swim cap (Either TYR or unbranded)
- Team Meet Swim Suit
- 2 pair of goggles
- 1-2 towels (they get very wet, very quickly)
- T-shirt, warm-up suit, or swim parka (it gets chilly on the deck while swimmers wait)
- Flip-flops or Croc-type pool deck shoes
- Small Blanket to sit on (or more towels)
- Small cooler or lunch box for drinks and snacks
- An extra swimsuit in case of an emergency (suits have been known to rip!)
- Water bottle!!! (Swimmers get dehydrated quickly so bring lots of water)
- Sharpie for swimmers to write their events on their hand
- Stadium seats or seat cushions (this is for the parents! ☺)



## **Meet Procedure**

1. In order to identify our swimmers, we encourage all team members to wear the Lakers Aquatic Club team swimsuits and swim caps at the meets.
2. Swimmers should arrive at the pool approximately 15 to 30 minutes BEFORE the stated warm-up time to provide time for check-in, finding the coach, locker room change, stretching, etc. This also helps to ensure that parents are able to locate seats in the bleachers, some meets can be crowded in the stands.
3. FIRST, they should locate the sign-in sheets, which are usually posted on a wall near the entrance or by the locker rooms. Each swimmer MUST highlight their name to confirm their presence. This is a very important process, as this check-in time period usually expires within 15 minutes after warm-up, at which time the swimmer is scratched from the meet and cannot compete. State Championship meets and dual/tri meets do NOT have check-ins.
4. NEXT, the swimmer should proceed to the "team area." This is the area designated for the swimmers to put their belongings. The Lakers will have an area that we claim as our team location. This is where the swimmer should remain between events and with their teammates.
5. FINALLY, the swimmer should report to their coach; and be ready to swim warm-up. The warm-up is done as a team.
6. At meets, the heat and lane assignments are posted on a wall in the pool area after check-in has been closed. It is the swimmer's responsibility to refer to this sheet to know which heat and lane they will be swimming in and report to the blocks accordingly. The coaching staff will aid all new swimmers with either of these procedures. While it may be overwhelming at first, once the procedure is experienced it is easy.
7. AFTER each event, the swimmer needs to go directly to the coach to receive feedback. This is the most beneficial for the swimmer's growth and development. Also after each race, the swimmer should ask their time by checking with the timers or by looking at the board.
8. After they receive their feedback from the race, it is critical that the swimmers "warm down" if a warm-down pool is available. This will help prepare their muscles for the next race and will help to prevent muscle tightening which can result in injury.
9. Once a swimmer finishes all of their races, talks to their coach, and cools down, they are free to leave!
10. Notice the scratch rule stated in the meet information in all packets. This rule states: any swimmer entered in an event must swim in that event unless scratched by the posted time. If a swimmer fails to swim a non-scratched event, the swimmer will be barred from their next individual event in which they are entered on that day or the next meet day, whichever is first. This rule also applies to a swimmer accidentally missing an event because they are not in the right place at the right time. Because of this rule, it is always best for swimmers to remain on the pool deck between events, rather than visiting in the stands with their parents. The coaching staff on duty at the meet cannot take time to look for the swimmers. If a swimmer does want to go to the stands for a congratulatory hug or a little hello, they must check with their coaches first and let them know where they are going and find out how much time they have before they must return. Failure to note this rule can result in great disappointment to the swimmer.

## **Useful APPs for Parents**

- *Meet Mobile*: Many of the meets we attend post results in real time to Meet Mobile (an app). Within the app you can search for results by name of the meet or your child's name. There is a \$6.99 monthly fee or \$19.99 for an annual subscription. This is a great way to monitor your swimmers results.