



# **Burke Centre Stingers Family Handbook**

**Revised 2/26/25**

## Welcome to the Burke Centre Stingers

Dear Stingers Parents,

We welcome all families and look forward to working with both new and returning Stingers swimmers. Get ready for a fun and busy summer. We have a season planned that not only encourages a healthy sense of competition and team spirit but also one that includes fun activities.

Parental involvement is the glue that holds a good swim team together. It takes a minimum of 30 people to run a swim meet, not including set-up, tear-down, or snack bar/concessions operations. Your participation in volunteer jobs is crucial, as we cannot have a successful meet without your help!

Also, your attendance at as many events as possible is STRONGLY encouraged. Swimmers' participation in our swim team activities, both in and out of the pool, helps build great team spirit. The more assistance you are able to provide (of your time!), the better and more memorable the season will be for all of our swimmers.

We look forward to a busy and fun-filled summer!

The Burke Centre Stingers Managing Board  
 Bert Neal, President  
 Tricia Kapuscinski, Vice President  
 Judy Crossin  
 Molly Guthrie  
 Deb Hein  
 Kelly Schulze

### **Philosophy and Goals**

*The goal of the Burke Centre Swim Club Teams is to provide a fun, competitive, summer swimming experience that will help swimmers:*

- *Develop self-esteem, confidence, and a sense of personal achievement by teaching sound swimming mechanics and techniques;*
- *Develop discipline, responsibility, and commitment;*
- *Learn how to accept both victory and defeat gracefully;*
- *Grow in an environment of healthy competition in which each individual can succeed by improving his/her swim time(s) and skill level.*

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## Stingers Expectations

### Team Expectations

1. **Be a swimmer!** The Stingers is not a swim lesson program. To qualify for the team, a swimmer must be able to meet a modified version of the Red Cross Level III performance criteria. Specifically, they must be able to swim 15 yards front and back; float and/or tread water for 30 seconds. Swimmers must be able to demonstrate an independent level of comfort in the water and follow directions given from a Coach. Swimmers do not need to know all competitive strokes. Once the season begins, we will help him or her become a better swimmer, as long as he or she is willing to practice and try his or her best!
2. **Be involved!** This includes family members and swimmers. Swim team is a fun family experience! We hope everyone can participate fully and enthusiastically in swim meets, social events and fundraising activities. This will help keep our team alive!
3. **Pay attention to the coaches!** With over 200 swimmers on our team, the coaches work very hard to communicate effectively with each swimmer. The swimmers therefore must strive to listen carefully to feedback and instructions from the coaches. Remember that disruptions are not fair to the other swimmers.
4. **Be committed to doing your best!** Stick with it! Come to all (or as many as possible) practices and meets. *Everyone wins* when a swimmer does his or her best each time.
5. **Safety is of paramount importance!** Observe all pool safety rules at both our pool and every other pool. Rules are posted at each pool and/or established by coaches.
6. **Have fun!**

### Parental Expectations

Under no circumstances should your child be dropped off at the pool without first ensuring that at least one of the team coaches is present on the pool deck. If parents decide to stay at the pool during swim practice, please sit away from the training area so that swimmers can give the coaches their full, undivided attention.

**Parents are responsible for picking up their children on time at the conclusion of their designated practice. Repeated violations of this safety procedure will result in exclusion from meets and/or the team.**

Summer swimming involves the entire family! 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 who support the team members, cheer them on, and help in organizing the team's activities. The children love enthusiastic spectators. Cheer on all the kids, as well as your own. Please show your volunteer support so our children

can continue to enjoy this summer program. For more information on volunteering, please refer to the Volunteer Support section on page 17.

## Organization of the Stingers

The Burke Centre Stingers is a member team of the Colonial Swimming League (CSL) and is one of two teams that make up the Burke Centre Swim Club (BCSC) along with the Burke Centre Penguins. The BCSC is a chartered organization of the Burke Centre Conservancy. *All families registering to participate with the Stingers must purchase a pool membership with the Burke Centre Conservancy.*

The Stingers and the Penguins both have a board of directors. All board members are volunteers working to ensure all swim team members have an opportunity to experience and enjoy competitive swimming, as well as accomplish other goals set forth by the BCSC and the individual teams.

The Stingers consist of over 200 swimmers from approximately 100-120 families, with swimmers ranging from 5 to 18 years old. The team has 10-12 coaches on staff during the season. The coaches are the only paid members of the team, and usually consist of a head coach, an assistant head coach, and multiple assistant coaches to support all of the age groups.

Funds necessary to run the swim team come from three primary sources: the team registration fees; team fundraising efforts, including snack bar/concessions and spirit wear sales; and community sponsors.

The BCSC has a board of directors consisting of 6 members made up of 3 members from each team's board. Corporate officer positions include a President and Vice President, alternating between teams each year. Appointed club level positions are BCSC Treasurer, BCSC Registrar, and the BCSC Liaison to the Burke Centre Conservancy when needed. Each team also has a Team Representative. The Team Representatives act on behalf of their respective teams for all CSL activities and meetings, and coordinate with other team representatives for meets.

## Organization of the Colonial Swimming League (CSL)

The [CSL](#) was founded in 1962, to sponsor competitive swimming among community swimming organizations in Northern Virginia.

**The objectives of the Colonial League swimming program are:**

- To foster a high level of competition by grouping teams of comparable strength in the

same division in accordance with the League team seeding procedure.

- To develop the potential of individual swimmers of different ages and abilities by sponsoring a full summer dual-meet season, which concludes with Divisional Qualification Meets and a Colonial Swimming League All-Star Meet.
- To single out for distinction individual swimmers, age groups, and teams.

The Colonial Swim League currently consists of 24 swim teams. The teams are divided into four divisions (e.g. red, white, blue, and gold) depending on competitive strength. Every year the CSL evaluates each team's performance during the previous season and determines division placements and meet schedules. The Stingers will swim competitively in scored Saturday "A" dual meets. In addition, they will swim in Wednesday evening "B" developmental meets that are not scored but are essential to the development of all the swimmers.

## Stingers Practice

To succeed at anything, one must practice! Swimming is no exception. The Stingers summer season lasts approximately nine weeks. During this timeframe we will teach the rules of competitive swimming, work to improve strokes, and build strength and endurance. To achieve these goals, it is important that all swimmers come to practice on a regular basis.

### Season Practice

Season practices begin the Wednesday after Memorial Day with afternoon practices. Check the team websites for practice times and updates when needed.

### Practice Guidelines:

- Always be on time
- Show enthusiasm
- Help set up and clean up
- Follow all pool rules
- Be attentive and respectful to the coaches and your fellow swimmers

### Practice Cancellation

We swim if it is raining, but in the presence of thunder or lightning, county regulations require pool

#### Child Safety Guidelines

**PARENTS:** Make sure a coach or adult is on the premises before dropping your child at swim practice.

**PARENTS:** You are responsible your swimmer is picked up promptly at the end of practice.

No swimmer is allowed in the pool until a lifeguard/ pool operator is on the deck and gives permission.

**COACHES AND PARENTS:** If an individual swimmer needs special attention, please make sure there is another coach or adult with you.

Physical, mental or verbal abuse of any of the participants, coaches, or volunteers is not permitted.

Inappropriate touching is forbidden.

No running or dangerous play on the deck or in the pool.

Be respectful and polite at all times.

closure for at least 30 minutes and immediate clearing of the pool area. Practice can resume if no thunder or lightning has been observed for 30 minutes. The team will notify parents as soon as possible of practice cancellations or updates. There are no make-up sessions for cancelled swim practice. If you are uncertain about the weather conditions prior to practice, please call the respective practice pool for a report or check the Burke Centre Conservancy Pool App.

## Swimmer Apparel and Accessories

Swimmers should wear a swimsuit that is comfortable for racing. The Stingers have a team suit. Wearing the team suit is strongly encouraged, but not required. Every swimmer needs a towel, goggles, a swim cap, sunscreen, and a bag to carry everything.

## Family Box & Team Websites

The Stingers use a family box and the team website for team communication and information. The family box is a large file box which contains a folder for each family. Ribbons and other documents will be placed in each family's folder on a routine basis. This file box is available at all practices, and swimmers should check the family box frequently.

The Stingers website can be found [here](#). The website contains important team information including: the team calendar, team events, newsletters, contact info, and meet results. The website also serves as the portal for declaring your swimmer(s) for meets (both "A" and "B" meets), for registering/signing-up for volunteer jobs, and RSVPing for team social events. Families should check the team website frequently throughout the season to stay abreast of important information and updates.

## Suggestions for Good Communication

- ✓ **Put it in Writing:** Please put any information or suggestions you have for the coaches, team president, or board members in writing.
- ✓ **Check the Website and Family Box:** The Family Box will be available at each practice. Late-breaking news about practice times, meet locations and times, and event assignments for Saturday meets will be posted on the website, shared via email and/or text, posted on social media, or placed in the Family Box. Stay informed!
- ✓ **Talk to the Coaches:** The coaches are happy to answer any questions you may have, but please be aware of their need to focus on the team/swimmers *during practice and meets*. Please feel free to ask a question before or after practice or contact the coach by email.
- ✓ **Problems and Comments:** Questions may be directed to the Stingers President at [StingersPresident@gmail.com](mailto:StingersPresident@gmail.com)

## Structure of the Swim Meets

There are several different types of meets that take place throughout the season. The following is a list of the meets followed by a short description:

- (1) Time Trials
- (2) Saturday "A" Meets (Competitive)
- (3) Wednesday "B" Meets (Developmental)
- (4) Colonial Swim League Relay Carnival
- (5) Individual Medley (IM) Meet
- (6) Divisional Qualification Meet
- (7) Colonial Swim League All-Stars

### Time Trials

The Stingers hold Time Trials at the beginning of the season to practice meet procedures and familiarize new volunteers with how a meet is run. The goal of Time Trials is to obtain a recorded time for *every* swimmer in *all* strokes (if time allows) at the start of the season, which the swimmers and coaches can use as a baseline to measure individual progress throughout the season. Time Trials are normally scheduled for the Saturday after the last day of school for Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

### Saturday Competitive "A" Meets

Saturday "A" meets are dual team competitions against the other teams within your division. These meets are held on five consecutive Saturday mornings beginning in June after Time Trials. At an "A" meet there is one heat for each event, and every heat will include three (3) swimmers from each team, totalling six (6) swimmers. There are 52 events in every "A" meet. The coaches determine which swimmers are selected to swim each event based on who has declared for the dual meet. Generally, the three declared swimmers with the fastest times in the designated stroke will be entered into the heat. Ribbons and points (individual and team) are awarded to the swimmers with the three fastest official times.

**The list of the Saturday "A" meet swimmers is sent to parents via email the Thursday or Friday before the meet and may also be posted at practice. It is the responsibility of the swimmer and their parent(s) to check the Saturday meet list to verify if their swimmer has been selected to swim in the upcoming "A" meet.**

Results of the "A" Meets are used to determine Colonial Swimming League awards. A trophy and banner are given to the Division winner. This includes the team with the best win-loss record and age group winners, with the awards being presented at the Divisional Qualification Meet.



### SEEDING

During the Saturday “A” meets, the home team is designated lanes 1, 3, and 5 while the visiting team is designated lanes 2, 4, and 6. (Lane 1 is always on the right side as you stand facing the pool at the starting end.) The fastest swimmers swim in lanes 3 and 4, the next fastest in lanes 5 and 2, and the next fastest in lanes 1 and 6. Swimmers are seeded based upon their fastest times obtained in a prior competition.

### SCORING

**First** place winners earn or score 5 points for the team

**Second** place winners earn 3 points for the team

**Third** place winners earn 1 point for the team

In the event of a tie, the points are shared (e.g. tie for first: first two swimmers each get 4 points; tie for third: each swimmer gets 0.5 points).

**Winning relay** teams earn 7 points for the team (0 points to loser)

There are 444 points up for grabs in a Saturday meet. Unless one or more places are not awarded in an event, due to DQs or lack of swimmers, you need 223 points to win.

### Wednesday “B” Meets (Developmental)

Wednesday “B” Meets are non-scored swim meets held on Wednesday evenings. Developmental Meets provide opportunities for swimmers who do not qualify for Saturday meets to swim in a competitive-like environment at their appropriate swim level while working to improve their strokes. All swimmers are encouraged to swim in the Developmental Meets. There are as many heats as required to accommodate the number of swimmers who desire to swim, time permitting. Individual medleys (IM’s) may be swum at the end of “B” Meets. At Developmental “B” Meets, no team scores are kept, and no team winner is determined. However, individual times are recorded to determine progress.

Per CSL rules, a swimmer cannot swim in any event that he/she has “ribboned in” (placed 1, 2, or 3) during the previous Saturday “A” Meet. For example, if your swimmer placed 1st in the 25 freestyle at the “A” Meet, they cannot swim 25 freestyle in the following “B” Meet.

The CSL organizes four Developmental “B” Meets per season. The Burke Centre Swim Club organizes a fifth “B” Meet between the Stingers and the Penguins to give our swimmers an extra opportunity to compete. This meet is typically the Wednesday after Time Trials.

Heat winner ribbons are given at the developmental meets for ages 12 and under and place ribbons are generally given to the swimmers finishing in the top 6 places. Swimmers may also receive personal best ribbons. No ribbons are awarded at Time Trials

or the extra BCSC meet. Swimmers can find their ribbons in the family box, typically one or two days after the meet.

### **CSL Relay Carnival**

The CSL Relay Carnival is a meet usually held on a Sunday morning midway through the season. This is a team event. No individual events are swum. The Stingers will select swimmers for the team events based on the best times, and at the coaches' discretion, to maximize performance at the meet.

### **Individual Medley (IM) Meet**

The CSL holds two IM meets each season, one of which the Stingers will be invited to attend. Depending on the pool hosting the meet, the number of participants may be limited. To be eligible to participate, a swimmer needs to have completed and received a time in a qualified IM at an "A" or "B" meet prior to the IM meet. The Stingers will select swimmers for the meet based on the number of slots provided to the team.

### **Divisional Qualification Meet**

At the end of the regular season, a Divisional Swim Meet is held by each of the four divisions in the CSL to determine who will compete at the All-Star Meet. The location of the Divisional Meet rotates among the teams. The team may select three (3) eligible swimmers to participate in the 5 individual events (free, back, breast, fly, and IM). To be eligible to swim in this meet, a swimmer must have swum in at least two league-sponsored meets during the current season. A swimmer may swim in a maximum of three (3) events for this meet. Swimmers for each individual event are selected based on the best times, swimmer preferences, and coaches' discretion. Ribbons are awarded to the top six places, and meet programs are made available by the host team, giving the name and lane assignment of each swimmer.

### **All-Star Meet**

The All-Star Meet is the last meet of the season. The sequence of events is exactly the same as the Divisional Qualification Meet. The eighteen swimmers (plus three alternates) with the best times from the Divisional Qualification Meets throughout the Colonial League are eligible to swim in the All-Star Meet. As always, it is very important to let the coach and team representative know if a swimmer will not be able to attend the All-Star Meet.

## **MEET PROTOCOL**

We ask that all swimmers stay in the team area during the meets. Swimmers need to return to the team area as soon as possible after swimming their event. If you wish to congratulate your swimmer, do so in the spectator area and encourage your swimmer to

return promptly to the team area. We also ask that all swimmers stay until the end of the meet to cheer on their teammates for all events and relays. It is important that we keep our team area clean at both our pool and at other pools. Please ensure that everyone cleans up before leaving a meet.

### **CANCELLATION OF A MEET**

A meet can be postponed by mutual consent of the Team Representatives. Summer storms (those involving thunder and lightning) tend to be very localized. The weather might be rainy in the Burke Centre area but may not be raining at all at the meet pool. Therefore, we generally go to the meet pool before making a final decision. We do swim if it is only raining, but if thunder and/or lightning are observed, county regulations require the pool deck be cleared immediately, and the meet delayed for a minimum of 30 minutes. The meet can be resumed if no thunder has been heard (or lightning seen) for 30 minutes. Unfortunately, Wednesday Developmental meets are subject to delays due to evening thunderstorms. A cancelled meet, due to weather, may be rescheduled by agreement of the Team Representatives.

## “A” MEET (Saturday) EVENTS

<u>Boys</u>			<u>Girls</u>
<u>Event No.</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Event No.</u>
<b>00</b>	<b>Mixed Gender / Mixed Age 200 Free Relay</b>		
1	8 & Under	25m/yd Freestyle	2
3	9-10	50 m/yd Freestyle	4
5	11-12	50 m/yd Freestyle	6
7	13-14	50 m/yd Freestyle	8
9	15-18	50 m/yd Freestyle	10
11	8 & Under	25 m/yd Backstroke	12
13	9-10	50 m/yd Backstroke	14
15	11-12	50 m/yd Backstroke	16
17	13-14	50 m/yd Backstroke	18
19	15-18	50 m/yd Backstroke	20
21	8 & Under	25 m/yd Breaststroke	22
23	9-10	50 m/yd Breaststroke	24
25	11-12	50 m/yd Breaststroke	26
27	13-14	50 m/yd Breaststroke	28
29	15-18	50 m/yd Breaststroke	30
31	8& Under	25 m/yd Butterfly	32
33	9-10	25 m/yd Butterfly	34
35	11-12	50 m/yd Butterfly	36
37	13-14	50 m/yd Butterfly	38
39	15-18	50 m/yd Butterfly	40
41	8 & Under	100 m/yd Medley Relay	42
43	9-10	100 m/yd Medley Relay	44
45	11-12	200 m/yd Medley Relay	46
47	13-14	200 m/yd Medley Relay	48
49	15-18	200 m/yd Medley Relay	50
51	Mixed Age	200 m/yd Freestyle Relay	52

## ALL-STARS AND “B” MEET (Wednesday) EVENTS

Event numbers 1-40 are the same as the above

41	8 & Under	100 m/yd Individual Medley	42
43	9-10	100 m/yd Individual Medley	44
45	11-12	100 m/yd Individual Medley	46
47	13-14	100 m/yd Individual Medley	48
49	15-18	100 m/yd Individual Medley	50

## Swim Strokes and Age Groups

Swimmers are divided into groups according to their age and sex. The age groups are as follows:

- 8 years old and under
- 9-10 year olds
- 11-12 year olds
- 13-14 year olds
- 15-18 year olds

The age of the swimmer is determined by their age **on June 15<sup>th</sup> of the current season**. A swimmer can swim in an older age group at any meet, but never in a younger age group.

We will briefly describe the strokes below. The rules below are the USA Swimming Rules as modified for use in the Colonial Swim League.

### Freestyle

Freestyle is defined as any means of swimming across the pool. Any stroke and kick are acceptable. However, you cannot push off or walk on the bottom of the pool or pull yourself along using the lane lines. 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 fun. They bounce off lane lines and wonder where they are. Eventually, they will learn to guide off the lane lines, the overhead backstroke flags, and the lane line markings to know where they are in the pool. They will also learn to 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, 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 beyond the waist area except

on the first pullout stroke at the start and turns. The head must break the surface of the water before the arms reach the widest part of the second arm pull. 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 will 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. In butterfly it is permissible for the swimmer to be submerged for not more than 15 meters. Turns and finishes also require a simultaneous **two-hand** touch at the wall.

## Individual Medley (IM)

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 each stroke is swum for 25 Meters, or one pool length. 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 of strokes is backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle. In all relays, each swimmer must wait until the previous swimmer touches the wall prior to leaving the deck.

## Disqualifications (DQs) and False Starts

In swimming, the rules must be followed, or the swimmer can receive a disqualification (DQ). This can be traumatic, especially if it's the first time a swimmer is "DQ'd", or if it's for just one, seemingly small mistake. Swimming regulations exist, however, to ensure fair competition across all strokes, and these rules must be enforced and followed.

## **Disqualifications**

A DQ is any violation of the rules observed by any appropriate official. Some of the more common reasons for “DQing” in a particular stroke are as follows:

### **FREESTYLE:**

- Failure to touch the wall at the turning end of the pool
- Walking on or pushing off the bottom
- Pulling on the lane lines
- Exiting the pool before swimming the specified distance

### **BACKSTROKE:**

- Body moving past vertical towards the breast at any time except during a flip turn
- Leaving the wall after a turn with body past vertical towards the breast
- Improper flip turn (older swimmers)

### **BREASTSTROKE:**

- Incorrect kick, such as a Scissor kick or Flutter kick
- Non-simultaneous two-hand touch or one hand touches at turn or finish
- Toes not pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick
- More than one stroke underwater (double arm pull) per kick
- Arm recovery past waist except on first stroke after start or turn
- Head didn't break surface by widest part 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 (scissor or flutter)
- Arms not brought forward over the surface of the water
- Non-simultaneous arm movement during recovery

## **HOW WILL I KNOW A DQ OCCURRED?**

Unlike football, we do not blow a whistle and announce to the world that a regulation violation has occurred. Except during relays, when a Stroke and Turn Judge observes a violation, the Judge raises his/her hand to signal to the Referee that he/she has observed a violation. The Referee will then consult with the Stroke and Turn Judge to determine what the Judge observed, and whether a violation occurred. If a violation is sustained, a DQ slip is completed indicating the violation observed, and is signed by the Judge and the Referee. The DQ slip is then sent to the computer operators for official documentation.

### **HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD DQ'd?**

Your child will probably know before you do since the Team Representative tells the coach, who then tells the swimmer. You may also become aware if you saw your swimmer finish with one of the top three times but they are not announced later in the top three places. Similarly, if your swimmer finished 4th, 5th or 6th, but is announced as one of the top three finishers, the likelihood is that someone DQ'ed. The most accurate way to determine if your swimmer DQ'd however, is to consult the printed official meet results, which are posted at the pool as the meet progresses.

### **A WORD ABOUT OFFICIALS AND DQ's**

Every Official on the deck will always give the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer. The difference between "legal but ugly" versus "illegal" is sometimes a close call, so any violation called by an official is an "I saw" not an "I think I saw".

### **CAN A DQ BE PROTESTED?**

The Team Representative is the only person who can officially question a disqualification or any other call by an official. If something happens involving a swimmer that you do not think is right, talk to the coach or the Team Representative. The Team Representative will initiate action in accordance with CSL rules if thought to be appropriate. Please do not question the judges or referee. Remember, all Judges, Officials, and Team Representatives are volunteers!

### **False Starts**

Any swimmer who is not motionless at the start, or who enters the water prior to the Starter's signal, may be charged with a false start. The Starter and Referee shall independently determine whether any swimmer should be charged with a false start. If both confirm the false start, then the race will proceed without recall, and the swimmer or swimmers charged with a false start shall be disqualified at the completion of the heat. No disqualification shall be assessed if, in the opinion of the Referee, the false start was caused by reaction to motion by another swimmer, or by extenuating circumstances (such as a loud noise at the start).

## **Special Events**

### **Officials Training Clinics and Hy-Tek Training Clinics**

Traditionally, the CSL offers multiple training sessions for officials and Hy-Tek computer operators. The league typically offers an Officials Clinic the Saturday or Sunday after Memorial Day in Burke Centre to train individuals to officiate swim meets (Stroke and Turn, Starter, and Referee). Additional clinics are scheduled at other locations, including virtually. Access the CSL website for a list of dates and locations for training clinics. **The**



**Stingers are always in need of additional Stroke and Turn Judges and Hy-Tek trained volunteers.**

### **Social Events**

Throughout the season there are social events that allow our swimmers and their families to get together outside of the practice environment. Social activities might include events such as a **team breakfast, swim-a-thon, bowling, movies, tubing, waterpark, Kings Dominion, picnics, socials at a local restaurant, an ice cream social or pizza party on a Friday night before a meet, to coincide with pool set up, etc.** Please contact the Stingers' Social Coordinator to share ideas and/or volunteer.

### **Suit Fitting and Swim Attire**

Summer swimming is a team sport. We strongly encourage the wearing of a team suit and team swim cap, but this is not required. Team suit and team cap information can be found on the Stingers website. Families can be fitted and purchase team suits from SuitUp online or at the SuitUp store location at University Mall.

The CSL has specific rules regarding swimsuits and swim caps that may be worn at meets. The team suit conforms to these guidelines, as do many of the well-known competitive swimsuit brands such as TYR, Speedo, Arena, etc. If you are new to the Stingers and are unsure, or your swimmer will not be wearing the team suit, please speak to the Team Representative to ensure the suit is permitted. Swimsuits with zippers, sleeves, or full-body swimsuits are NOT permitted, and the swimmer will be notified by the Referee of the violation prior to the start of the event and will not be permitted to compete until corrected. Swim caps worn during meets **MUST** be the team cap or a plain cap that **does not** include the name, logo, or insignia of any other swim team.

### **Team Pictures**

Team pictures are usually scheduled for the end of June. Information about team photos can be found on the team website.

## **Volunteer Support**

Swim teams, unlike most other children's athletic activities, require a large number of parental volunteers. Some jobs like runner, timer, snack bar helper, or set up/clean up can be accomplished during the day of the meet and take very little, if any, additional time. Other jobs, such as Officials or Hy-Tek trained computer volunteers, require some training but are essential to the success of Stingers. Every meet hinges on filling all volunteer slots.

Families are asked to volunteer their time throughout the season so we can offer successful meets and team events. We typically ask each family to volunteer for a minimum of 6 volunteer jobs during the season. All families must submit a volunteer deposit check, for the determined amount for the season, during new swimmer evaluations or the first day of practice. If the volunteer requirement is fulfilled, the check will be voided at the end of the season. We do understand however, that every family may not be able to fulfill this volunteer requirement for the summer, and you will be notified prior to your check being cashed upon the season's conclusion. Details on the volunteer requirement, volunteer job descriptions, volunteer opt-out fees, and volunteer deposit checks can be found on the Stingers website or in the team Volunteer Handbook. Online job sign-ups will be posted on the Stingers website. You can track how many volunteer jobs you have completed in your Team Unify account.

## Swimming Hydration and Nutrition for Your Swimmer

### HYDRATION

The majority of young swimmers on a swim team do one of two things: either they do not drink water at all, or they drink sports drinks. Neither of these approaches is ideal. Sport drinks were originally designed as a replacement for nutrients and electrolytes that are lost after exercising for hours. The truth is, many sports drinks contain large amounts of sugar, and that is not what your swimmer needs. We swim during the hot summer months and hydration is critical for optimal performance. **The most important thing you can drink during swim meets and at practice is WATER.** Cells cannot function properly without an ample supply of water, and in a dehydrated state proper fluid replenishment can take time. By drinking water, which contains zero calories and no sugar, your blood chemistry remains balanced, and your body can focus on clearing toxins and delivering essential nutrients to your muscles throughout your swim practice or competition. The key is to hydrate, before, during, and after every swim meet or practice to avoid muscle fatigue.

To minimize poor performance due to dehydration swimmers should:

- Drink two cups of fluid for each pound lost in workouts/competition.
- Drink one to two cups of fluid prior to working out or competing.
- Drink 4-10 ounces of fluid every 15-20 minutes during training.
- Dark urine indicates dehydration and the need to replenish fluids.

Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink! By then your body is already dehydrated. A good measurement to use is the color of your urine. If it is clear, then you are doing a good job. **Bring water to practice!**

## NUTRITION

Another area for improvement is what swimmers eat in preparation for their races. The time to eat a large meal is **not** right before a swim meet. A nutritious meal should be eaten the night before the meet, to ensure the swimmer is not super hungry the morning of the meet, and after the swim meet, to replenish the body from exertion during the swim competition. This is because there is ample time for the body to digest the food. Swimmers should be competing at swim meets on a fairly empty stomach. They should not be starving but should not be full either. When you eat food, blood rushes to the stomach and intestines to aid in digestion. If your blood is in your stomach, then it cannot be in your muscles helping you perform. This can cause cramping and a decrease in performance. Remember the old saying, "Wait 30 minutes after eating before you enter the water"?

Most meets are quite lengthy however, and eventually you will have to eat during a meet. The kind of food you choose to eat can make a big difference in your swimming performance. **It is always best to stay away from sweets, and foods with little nutritional value around race time, because of the effect it can have on your blood sugar levels (see above explanation in hydration paragraph).** It is also important to stay away from "Power Gels" and "GU". These products were designed for endurance athletes (such as triathletes and marathon runners) and are filled with high levels of sugar. It is almost like taking a shot of frosting, resulting in a sugar spike, followed by a sugar crash. This will cause problems with your blood chemistry if you eat this before a race.

**The best advice on what to eat during a swim meet is easily digestible food items that can supply quick energy, like fruit, energy bars, or anything with some nutritional value (preferably with some protein in it). Remember to save the "big" meals (steak, chicken, pizza, etc.) for the night before and after the race.**

## PRE-RACE MEAL

Stay within your normal eating habits. Do not try anything unusual right before your event. Eat 2-4 hours before the race, if you can. Have your meal be high in carbohydrates (100-200 grams) and low in fat and protein. Both fat and protein take longer to digest and require too much additional blood in the process.

Example: bagel or toast & jam, banana, apple slices with peanut butter, cooked rice, or baked potato.

For the athlete that finds they get too nervous to eat properly as their race draws close, they can consider buying Sports Nutrition drinks. Items like Boost or Insure Lite fit the bill perfectly.

### SWIM MEET FOODS

Here's a list of easy-to-take-along high-carb foods for eating during a daylong swim meet

- Water
- Juices and sports drinks (limited)
- Fruit - Banana, apple, grapes, orange, melons, peach, pear, dried fruit,
- Whole-grain bread, low-fat energy bars, low-fat muffins or cookies (fig-bars, ginger snaps, vanilla wafers)
- If you have more than two hours between races, have some dairy items such as yogurt, low-fat cheese, or crackers.

**\*\*Try limiting or avoiding these items during and immediately before competition:**

- Fatty Foods - Fast foods, ice cream and fries.
- High Protein Foods - Meats, dairy and protein supplements.

### Sleep

Lack of sleep the night before a competition, or consistently poor night sleep patterns leading up to an event, can cause fatigue and hinder performance. Sleep is important because this is when physical growth actually occurs and tissue recovery from daily activity takes place. The number of hours needed for rejuvenation is age dependent.

AGE	HOURS OF SLEEP NEEDED
9 years	10 ¼
10-11 years	9 ¾
12 years	9 ¼
13+ years	9
16-20 years	8-9

### Winter Swim/ Year-Round Swim

The Stingers offer a winter swim program from September to May. Details can be found on the team website. There are several other swim teams and programs to consider as well. These are great opportunities to develop swim skills that appeal to all levels of abilities and commitment.

Here is a list of some of the **year-round swim programs** available in our area:

LOCATION	LINK
Nation's Capital Swim Club	<a href="http://www.nationscapitalswimming.com">www.nationscapitalswimming.com</a>
Mason Makos	<a href="http://www.makoswimming.net">www.makoswimming.net</a>
Machine Aquatics	<a href="http://www.machineaquatics.com">www.machineaquatics.com</a>
Fairfax Area Aquatics	<a href="https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/pvfaa/page/home">https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/pvfaa/page/home</a>
Potomac Marlins	<a href="http://www.potomacmarlins.com">www.potomacmarlins.com</a>
York Swim Club	<a href="http://www.yorkswim.com">www.yorkswim.com</a>
FISH	<a href="http://www.pvfish.org">www.pvfish.org</a>

### Other Helpful Swimming Links

Colonial Swimming League	<a href="http://csl.nvblu.com">csl.nvblu.com</a>
Burke Centre Stingers Team Unify	<a href="https://www.teamunify.com/team/reccobcs/page/home">https://www.teamunify.com/team/reccobcs/page/home</a>
Burke Centre Conservancy	<a href="http://www.burkecentreweb.com">www.burkecentreweb.com</a>
Burke Centre Swim Club	<a href="http://www.BurkeCentreSwimClub.org">www.BurkeCentreSwimClub.org</a>
Potomac Valley Swimming	<a href="http://www.pvswim.org">www.pvswim.org</a>
USA Swimming	<a href="http://www.usaswimming.org">www.usaswimming.org</a>

### Contact Information

If you need to get in touch with the swim team, please utilize the email addresses below or check the Stingers' webpage for contact information.

**Burke Centre Stingers President**  
[StingersPresident@gmail.com](mailto:StingersPresident@gmail.com)

**Burke Centre Swim Club Registrar**

For any questions regarding registration or refunds:

[BurkeCentreRegistrar@gmail.com](mailto:BurkeCentreRegistrar@gmail.com)

**Burke Centre Swim Club President/Liaison to the Burke Centre  
Conservancy**

For any questions regarding the Conservancy or pool passes:

[BurkeCenterSwim@gmail.com](mailto:BurkeCenterSwim@gmail.com)