

Meet Volunteers

Executing a swim meet requires many hands. The support of parents, older siblings and our swimmers is necessary and required. Fortunately, our volunteer needs are not difficult, and most give you a great view of the action! A few volunteer positions require special training, but most do not. There will always be friendly people willing to 'show you the ropes' if you've never volunteered for a job and need some assistance.

Family Volunteer Requirement

All families with children swimming in a given meet are expected to volunteer to fill the positions listed below, in addition to other roles that may exist throughout the season based on the needs of Team Coordinators. Each family is required to fulfill a minimum of five (5) volunteer positions throughout the year. Failure to meet the volunteer requirement by the end of the summer swim season will be assessed a \$150 volunteer fee. The Board recognizes that extenuating circumstances may exist that do give families ample opportunity to fulfill the requirement. In these conditions, the Board will handle exceptions to the requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Volunteer Job Descriptions

USA Swimming sets the requirements for an official meet. Each meet requires volunteers to fill the following positions:

Head Timer (1) - Home Meet only

The Head Timer hands out stopwatches, explains timing procedures to the timers, and verifies there are enough timers for each lane. The Head Timer also starts a pair of extra watches in case one of the timers misses the start or has a malfunctioning watch. The Referee checks with the Head Timer to make sure the timers are ready to start the race.

Timers (9-12)

Each timer (three per lane) operates a stopwatch to time the swimmer's heat. One of the timers records the times on the swimmer's heat card.

Card Runner (2)

After each heat, the Card Runner collects the heat cards from the timers and delivers them (along with occasional disqualification slips) to the computer operators. Card Runners also move cards from one side of the pool to the other, based upon which side of the pool a heat starts. The Card Runners may also provide additional support to the Clerk of Course.

Clerk of Course (1)

The COC ensures the smooth flow of swimmers throughout the competition. He/she organizes all swimmers in the Clerk of Course area of the pool, in advance of swimmers walking up to

swim in an event. Swimmers are lined up and sit in a specific seat, based upon the lane to which they have been assigned to swim in their heat.

Ribbon Writer (1-2) Labels and distributes ribbons for event winners and personal best scores.

Computer Operators (2-3)

Computer operators enter times and disqualification information into the league database and print meet results and labels for ribbons. *Interested volunteers must complete training for the specialized software at the beginning of the season.*

Meet Officials: Referee, Starter, Stroke and Turn Judges (the White Shirts)

Meet Officials are required to complete a USA Swimming course, pass an open-book test, and shadow experienced officials at meets. Parents interested in becoming Meet Officials should contact a team board member for upcoming training dates or check the calendar on the website.

The Referee is in charge of the overall conduct of the meet, including having final say on any disqualification. You will hear them blow the whistle to signal the swimmers.

The Starter announces the name of each heat and starts each heat with the signaling device. The Referee and Starter together determine if there is a false start requiring a restart.

Stroke and Turn Judges observe the swimmers in each heat to verify strokes and turns are performed correctly, and identify violations to disqualify swimmers for that heat.

Other Opportunities

In addition to the positions that are mandatory for a swim meet to function, other functions exist that make the day a better experience for both the home and visiting teams. Some of these functions include deck setup and cleanup, as mandated by the Saratoga Pool, and concessions sales.

If you are a new swim family and any of these things seem intimidating, there will always be more experienced swim parents willing to guide you along the way.

Throughout the swim season other volunteer opportunities will be made available, primarily based on the needs of Team Coordinators. Assistance with special team events is always welcome, and can be an excellent way to help the team off the deck. Watch your email for opportunities throughout the season.

How to Volunteer

As you can see, a lot of volunteers are needed for our swimmers to have a successful season. You can sign-up to volunteer on the Saratoga Stingrays website using the following steps:

1. Go to www.saratogastingrays.org
2. Log in with your email and password
3. Go to HOME page and find **Swim Meet tab** on the bottom menu bar
4. Click on the “Job signup” button by each event that you can volunteer.
5. When the event opens to a new page, click on the job you wish to do.
6. At the bottom of the page find the “signup” button and click on it

The morning of a meet, the Volunteer Coordinator or another Board member will review the volunteer sign up page to see who has signed up to volunteer and whether there are any additional volunteer needs. He/she will then enlist the support of those parents who have not otherwise signed up for that meet, or haven't been volunteering at meets, in general.

Remember, as a general rule, if your child is swimming in a meet, please expect to lend a hand somewhere on the deck.