

Midlakes Dive Coach Guide



This guide is intended to help the Coaches for Dive Teams in the Midlakes League to navigate the ins and outs of this role. It is a guideline and not set in stone. If you have questions about any of these procedures or guidelines, please contact the Dive Representatives of the Midlakes Swim League board.

Mandatory

- CPR and First Aid certification or Lifeguard certification through a valid organization
- Criminal background check, may be provided by the club/team
- SafeSport Training as a Coach, may be provided by the club/team
- Attend the season kickoff meeting for coaches and parent representatives. If you cannot attend, then you will need to send a substitute or meet with the Midlakes Dive Representative to acquire the necessary information.
- Attend all practices and meets.
- Prepare dive sheets for all divers for each meet and championships.
- Attend the Midlakes Dive Championships.

Safety

In addition to CPR/First Aid, you will:

- Focus on the divers and offer coaching with the highest regard for the safety of the divers and other pool occupants.
- Manage divers' behavior both on and off the diving board. If a diver engages in reckless or distracting behavior resulting in unsafe conditions for him/herself or others, you may withdraw them from the practice and notify their parent.
- Defer to the lifeguard on duty regarding all safety matters. If a lifeguard questions your coaching or instruction, you may present your case (e.g. diving is a sport with some risk and inward dives are within the boundaries of safe dives when taught correctly), and the lifeguard is the final authority.
- Report on any SafeSport issues.

Co-Coaching

Working with a partner coach or assistant coach can have challenges. If you have questions about how to work with your partner coach or assistant coach, you can reach out either to your team's parent representative or to the Midlakes League Dive Director for assistance.

- Define as much as possible ahead of time each of your responsibilities as well as the boundaries of your authority and theirs. Does one of you have the final word?
- Look for a win-win. Be respectful. Be inclusive. Be supportive. Be a team player.

Interacting with Divers

You were once a young person, and may even have been a young diver.

- Consider age and maturity.
- Consider skill level, e.g. novice, intermediate, advanced.
- Consider temperament. Is the diver “fearless” or “timid”? Even the most fearless diver may hit a wall when confronted with an uncomfortable dive or following a challenging day.
- Remember, everyone has good and bad days.
- When a diver is “misbehaving”, consider that he/she may have had a late night, other commitments, a challenging family situation, an undiagnosed behavior disorder, an emotional trigger, etc.
- Be respectful. Be encouraging.
- Be firm, but not too firm. Be strong, but not too strong. Be soft, but not too soft. It can be difficult to find this balance, especially since some divers need more firmness and some more softness just for their base personalities.

Divers may begin to negotiate... “I won’t do this, but I will do this.” Or “How about if I just do this instead...” If this happens, you might consider having the entire team work on the same skill during a practice, e.g. forward dives, backward dives, inwards, somersaults, twists, each to the skill level they have developed.

Interacting with Parents

Parents mean well. They love their kids. They may have different levels of engagement. They may have different levels of experience with diving themselves.

- As a general rule, do not talk to parents during practice, e.g. setting up a lesson, discussing their diver, reviewing the calendar, etc. Ask to speak to them after practice or make an appointment to talk.
- If a parent insists on addressing an issue during the practice session, all activity on the diving board must stop. Make sure the parent knows they are interrupting the entire practice and that it is important enough to do so, e.g. safety issue.
- Do not be afraid to ask a parent to monitor their diver during practice if the diver is distracting to you or others or demonstrates unsafe behavior.
- Do not be afraid to ask a parent to keep their coaching-like commentary to themselves and remind them to offer only words of encouragement, e.g. “That was great!” or “Much better” or “I loved watching that dive.” ***Parents should not be co-coaching with you.***

If you have questions about how to work with a particular parent situation, you can reach out either to your team’s parent representative or to the Midlakes League Dive Representative.

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When to Contact the Pool Manager

There are times when the first point of contact should be the pool manager.

- Diving board damage or equipment safety issue
- Pool maintenance issues (broken tiles, slippery deck area, damaged pool furniture, etc.)
- Contractual issues, e.g. payment, tax documentation, etc.
- Issues with specific pool personnel, e.g. lifeguards, maintenance person, etc.
- Report on any SafeSport issues.

When to Contact the Midlakes League Dive Representative

There are times when the first point of contact should be to the Midlakes League.

Questions or concerns regarding:

- Dive judging methodology, e.g. arms up/down, degrees of difficulty, required dives
- Preparing dive sheets
- Championships
- Report on any SafeSport issues.

You might also contact Midlakes if you are:

- Having difficulties with the team parent representative, pool manager, or a parent situation that can't be resolved.
- Concerned or confused about procedures in the Midlakes Dive Operating Plan.

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Calendar

April - May

Planning

- Dive Coach shares “bio” for your pool website/bulletin board
- Obtain Midlakes Dive Meet Schedule from Midlakes Dive Director or from Midlakes Website
- Confirm Spring Schedule dates (starting in late June) for team practice times.
- Your pool manager and/or website administrator should open registration. Find out if you have registration responsibilities.

June

Season Start

- Attend Midlakes Dive Kickoff Meeting for Coaches and Parent Reps (usually 3rd Saturday in June)
- Work with your pool manager and team parent rep to review the practice schedule for dive participants to ensure that no time block is overloaded or lacks sufficient participants.
 - e.g. If there are four 8U boys + four 8U girls, and eight 10U boys + twelve 10U girls, then you would be unbalanced with eight 8U divers and twenty 10U divers, so you could see if it's possible to break them out by gender rather than age, i.e. 8U/10U Girls (4+12) and 8U/10U Boys (4+10)
- Confirm if there are any “A” divers on the roster, i.e. divers who won championships in their age group in previous season or who was an “A” diver in previous season and has not moved to new age division.
- Confirm Roster with all diver names, age and division (8/10/12/etc. and A/B), practice schedule times, etc. This may be produced by Parent Rep or Pool Manager or by the dive coach.

Meets

- Prepare dive sheets for each diver for dive meets. Take into account “A” divers.
- If there is no team Parent Rep, you may need to send communications to families about each meet, along with directions if it is not a home meet, and request volunteer signups.

July

Meets

- Prepare dive sheets for each diver for dive meets. Take into account “A” divers. A diver who wins two meets moves up to “A” diver status.
- If there is no team Parent Rep, you may need to send communications to families about each meet, along with directions if it is not a home meet, and request volunteer signups.

End-of-Season Planning

- Awards – does your team do year-end awards? Work with your team Parent Rep to find out if there are certificates, decorated foam stars, trophies, or other responsibilities you have for an end-of-season celebration. After roster is completed, you will know how many awards you need (order 2-3 extra if late registrations).

Championships

- Prepare dive sheets for each diver for dive meets. Take into account “A” divers.
- Attend Parent Rep/Coach meeting usually 3 days before Champs to turn in dive sheets, volunteers list, and payments.