



Landen Stingrays Parent Guide

Welcome to the Landen Stingrays swim team! Our club is a summer, recreational swim team offering quality coaching and technique instruction for all ages and abilities. The goal of our team is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at his or her level of ability. Our goal is to create, develop, and maintain a love for swimming, in a positive, supportive and fun atmosphere.

Basic Information

The Landen Stingrays Swim Team is one of 16 members of the Tri-County Swim League, which is comprised of swim teams from northeastern Cincinnati. Our team colors are Black, Blue & Yellow. The season runs from early June to mid/late July, and all meets are swum at pools that are 25 meters long.

The swim season consists of regular practices, local swim meets, a championship meet, 'fun' events during practice, social events and an end-of-season awards banquet. While there are a number of swim meets on the schedule, it is not necessary that your swimmer attend all meets. In order to compete in a championship meet, the Tri-County League requires a swimmer to swim in at least 2 meets during the season. Because we usually have a couple of thunderstorms every year that can cancel a meet at any time, please plan on attending as many meets as possible to avoid being ineligible for Championships.

Website and Communication

- The Stingrays website is www.landenstingrays.com. Our website will have timely information on practice schedules, meets & results, the team calendar, directions to meets and links to other important sites.
- Weekly (and sometimes more frequent) emails
- Landen Stingrays Facebook Account
- Rainout Text Alerts. We will typically use a texting system to communicate practice schedule changes, (i.e. rain delays or cancellations.) Parents and swimmers can text STINGRAYS2025 to 84483 to receive alerts.

For all families, we must have proper email addresses and phone numbers on file in the event of an emergency, weather, etc. Please update your information on your team unify account if important information changes.

While the coaches and the board do our best to ensure that the program is running smoothly, there may be issues or questions that arise throughout the season. Please don't hesitate to discuss this with us. However, here are some tips:

- If you have concerns or suggestions about any part of our program, talk to the board member responsible for that area.
- Fill out the Swimmer about Me/Goals Survey
- Encourage disgruntled swimmers to take their swimming related problems to the coach and solve for himself/herself. If your swimmer cannot find a good solution, then arrange a meeting. Don't let problems fester. Most issues can be quickly, and happily, resolved.

- Coaches - Direct communication with the coaches is encouraged, but we ask that you please DO NOT engage the coaches in conversation during practice sessions or meets.
- Using the note section in Team Unify when you declare your child swimming at a meet is a great way to tell the coaches info about events they like/don't/need.

Mini Stingrays:

6 and Unders versus the Minis program:

-6 and Under swimmers need to be able to swim a full lap of 25 yards by the end of the first week of practice. 6 and Under swimmers who don't meet this requirement, will be placed with Minis.

-The Mini program is for swimmers 4-6yrs old, who can swim but are not ready for swim team. Minis practice weekly. They need to demonstrate the ability to jump in and swim back to the wall unassisted. This can be ANY type of swim, doggie paddle, underwater, just comfortable in the water without floatation; Minis can swim, just not for a long period of time, or distance. For the home meets the Mini's will have the opportunity to swim free and/or back. They will only swim these in the meet if they are comfortable swimming the lap without their parent in the water. However, they may use the lane line as needed or have a coach/order swimmer in the water - if discussed with their coach prior to the meet.

These requirements are in place for the safety of the swimmers. Both groups will use flotation often to work on technique, but the child needs to be comfortable in the water on their own. We want kids to love the sport of swimming by avoiding any unnecessary fear and pressure. If your child is fearful, it is probably best to wait until next season. One year can make a world of difference!

Meet Signup:

For all meets, swimmers must be signed up on TeamUnify for each meet by the Friday prior to the meet. With such a large number of swimmers, coaches can't make individual phone calls to find out if you are swimming. If you don't indicate that your swimmer is swimming, we must assume NO and they will NOT be entered in the meet. All meets are open for signup. If you signup early, please don't forget to update/delete if your plans change!

To sign up using Team Unify, please click on the "Edit Commitment" button on the meets listed on the team Events page. Click on your swimmer's name, and then select "yes, please sign ---- up for this event" or "no, ---- will not attend this event", and save your changes. Notes can be made about strokes your child would like to swim.

If you sign-up for a meet and do not show up to swim or notify the coach in case of emergency, you may not be allowed to swim relays in the next meet. Please make every effort to get to a meet if you have signed up. **Coaches and board members must scramble at the beginning of the meet to fix relays and rearrange kids when kids don't show. Other swimmers may have to give up additional swims/relays when someone does not show.**

Swim Meet 101

For new parents that have never been part of, or even attended a swim meet, the first meet will be chaotic and overwhelming. Like most things – once you've done it a few times, it will become routine. If you are at a meet and have questions, ask a team parent, coach, or one of the meet volunteers from the hosting team. Veteran parents are very knowledgeable and extremely helpful. Don't be shy about asking questions. We have all been a 'new parent', and we know it's confusing at first.

Arrival: Please allow for traffic when driving to the meets, unfortunately many of our warm-up times coincide with rush hour. Please remember the parking lot at Woodfield is for the **visiting** team during our home meets. Please respect the "No Parking" signs in the Woodfield subdivision, or you could be ticketed by Deerfield Township. DO NOT ARRIVE EARLIER to the pool than what is scheduled-these are residential pools and the homeowners in these neighborhoods have the right to swim until the lifeguard closes the pool. DO NOT BLOCK their exit. Stand off to the side and be polite. Allow them to exit. YOU ARE REPRESENTING OUR TEAM AND SETTING AN EXAMPLE TO YOUR CHILDREN. Also, dont be a space hog.

Arrive at the meet 15 minutes before warm-ups are scheduled to start, with kids already in their suits. This will give you time to find an area to sit, and it will make your swimmer less stressed before the meet.

Items to bring:

Your swimmers bag: goggles, cap, towel(s), change of clothing, things to do, water, snacks
Folding Chairs and blanket (note – your blanket will get stepped on)
Sharpie to write events on swimmer's arm
Heat sheet printed from home
Highlighter to highlight events on Heat Sheet
Camera / Phone with Rained Out Subscription
Proper gear for the weather: sweats & jackets, umbrellas, sunscreen, etc.

What happens during a meet

For the swimmers, meets are typically a lot of fun. Teams typically sit together as a group and socialize during the hours that they are there. Between events, the swimmers get to visit with each other, eat, and play. Once they race, they will see their times start to improve and know that their hard work at practice has paid off.

Most of our meets are Dual meets (with only one other team). Dual meets are usually weeknight events. For most meets, you will spend the bulk of your time "camping out" near the pool deck and come and go from the pool deck when your child swims. Expect to be at a swim meet for several hours, so please bring activities they can enjoy with their friends, as well as snacks or cash for the concessions that are available. (Swim meets make kids very hungry)

Landen Concessions

For all Home meets we sell fruit salad, veggies and individually wrapped baked goods in order to raise funds for the team, while providing goodies for the swimmers and families. We typically divide the food assignments alphabetically, with an email sent a few days before the meet. We will also have 'dinner' foods such as Chick-fil-A, buttered noodles, pizza, and many snacks & beverages available.

Preparing to Race

Somewhere near the pool there will be a board with numbers on it. (a manual, flip-style board). This number signifies the event the meet is currently swimming. Keep an eye on this board, and about three events before your child is to swim, take your child to the blocks to get lined up and to their lane. (Many times, the coaches will help to gather the younger age groups). It is up to you and your swimmer to keep track of what event the meet is on, and to get your swimmer to their event on time. This is probably one of the more stressful things for new parents and new swimmers. It may take time to get the hang of it and start to understand how the meet progresses. If they need to go to the restroom, make sure that they go early enough. The younger swimmers' 25 yard events can go very quickly.

When helping your child report to the blocks, please make sure your child is in the correct lane and the right “place” in the line. For example, if your swimmer is in heat 2, they should be standing behind the swimmer in heat 1. If your swimmer is in heat 1, they should be standing in line behind the swimmer of the last heat of the previous event. Each lane will have 1-2 timers with a clipboard and the heat sheet. In many cases they will help ensure that the child swimming matches the heat sheet, but it can be difficult for timers to manage during a busy meet.

Note – Your child may start out in the correct lane, but may wander to another lane to visit a friend. With only seconds between heats, if this happens, it is possible that your child will miss the event. Please make sure to tell them to stay in their lane, or help monitor them closely, until they have some experience with meets. Coaches will help younger kids, especially at the early season meets, but with a great number of kids to manage, it's great to have parental assistance.

Please have your child (and you, too!) cheer for their teammates. No negative cheering of our opponents, please, as their swimmers are trying their best also. It's also helpful for your child to compare their progress (time drops) from meet to meet, versus comparing themselves with other swimmers. Every child will progress at different rates (throughout their season and also throughout their swimming career). Focusing on comparing children to one another, can often lead to poor sportsmanship and frustration.

Please note, it is very important that you do not leave a meet until you have confirmed that your child is not in a relay near the end of the meet. We'd hate to have them miss it. Also, if you are signed up to perform your parent meet work and your child is done swimming you CANNOT LEAVE. Make arrangements for your child as you are expected to finish your assigned task.

Arm Marking for Meets

Before or after your child is done with warm-ups, write their events, heats, and lanes on their forearm or hand in sharpie. For younger children, please write their last name on their right shoulder/upper back, at least during the beginning of the season. Doing this helps everyone (including timers) find your child, and the arm marking helps your swimmer and timers know which events the swimmer is in.

E (event) H (heat) L (lane) S (stroke)

Under this little chart, list the event number, the heat number, the lane number and the stroke they are swimming. For example, a swimmer's arm might look like this:

<u>E</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>S</u>
23	2	4	Back
33	3	1	Fly
43	1	2	Free Relay – 3

This would mean that the swimmer is swimming in event 23, the second heat, in lane 4, and they'll be swimming backstroke. They are also swimming the butterfly in event 33, heat 3, lane 1. The last event, 43, is a freestyle relay. They are in heat one, lane 2 and they will be the third leg of the relay. Legs 1 and 3 would line up on the block side of the pool, while legs 2 and 4 will line up on the opposite side of the pool for 8 and unders. The other relay your son or daughter might swim is the medley relay – a relay where each of the four swimmers swims a different stroke: back, breast, fly, free. If they are in the medley relay (back-breast-fly-free), also make sure you note which stroke they will be swimming.

Tip: Sunscreen/baby oil and rubbing with a washcloth will remove the Sharpie

Tip: Google the 2 relay types and keep a screenshot of it in your “favorites” album on your phone

Seeding, Heats, and Lanes

A swimmer's seed time is their best time recorded for an event. If your child has never competed in the event before, they have no seed time and will be listed with a time of "NT". They will get their first time when they swim the event in their first swim meet. Then, that time will be their seed time going into their second meet.

When all the swimmers have registered, it is likely that there are more swimmers registered for an event than there are lanes in the pool. When this happens swimmers are grouped into heats. If, for example, it is a 6-lane pool and there are 12 swimmers registered to swim, there will need to be 2 heats.

Heats are usually organized/seeded from slowest to fastest based on entry times. A "NT" (No Time) entry will be seeded behind the slowest entry time. Additionally, within the heat, swimmers with the fastest seed times swim in the center lanes of the pool, and the slower times in the outside lanes.

For many meets, we will try to have swimmers compete to get a time which will allow them to compete in the event at championships. (Remember, NT's are not allowed). If the event is full, an additional 1-2 heats may be created. The coaches are limited in the overall number of heats they can have at a meet in order to complete the meets in a timely fashion.

**Coaches will do their best to swim kids in a maximum number of events in each meet. However, depending on the number of kids signed up, a child may only have 1-2 events (individual and/or relay) during a given meet. We will make every effort to even out the number of swims for each child throughout a season, depending upon attendance and availability.

The Race

The announcer will indicate when it's time for the next heat to start, and for your child to get up onto the starting block. The timers in each lane will assist – and may ask your child for their name, just to make sure it matches the heat sheet. Note that while you can take pictures, no flash photography is allowed at the start of the race. We also ask for no cameras behind the blocks.

Once the heat starts, the meet officials will watch the swimmers, and make sure they don't do any illegal moves for that event. If your child does something illegal for that event, they will get disqualified (DQ'd). It is not unusual for new/young swimmers to get DQ'd, as they are still learning the strokes and the rules. Very few young/first-time swimmers can swim breaststroke, butterfly, or IM initially, without being DQ'ed.

When the event is over, your child should ask the timer for their time, and then go see their coach for immediate feedback. After that, they usually find you and you leave the pool deck to relax and wait for their next event.

Ribbons

Some meets have heat-winners, where a ribbon is immediately given to the winner of each heat. In general ribbons are awarded for the event winners and top finishers. These are NOT given out during the meet. You or your child will find them in their swim folder within a week after the meet. Each team is required to give ribbons for 1st to 3rd place for individual events and 1st place for relays. Some teams choose to give more (ex. 4th to 6th place), but this is not required so you may see differences in how ribbons are awarded at each meet based on which team is hosting the meet. New this year 10 and under swimmers who are not top finishers should receive participation ribbons. At the end of the season our team recognizes every swimmer with a medal at our Awards Party.

Committee Leaders

Please address questions regarding items such as volunteer jobs, social events, awards, etc., with the respective committee leader or Board Member. Coaches should not be contacted regarding such issues. Committee contacts are listed on the Signup Genius.

Parent Board

For non-coaching related questions, concerns, and other inquiries, please use the Parent Board as your main contact before going to the coaching staff. Parent Board contact information can be found on the website or please email landenstingrays@gmail.com .

Practice Expectations & Equipment

Practices are not mandatory, but practice attendance will directly impact the meet performance of your swimmer. Practice attendance may be taken into account when determining relays.

Each swimmer is expected to be ready to swim by the start of practice, and is expected to stay until the end. If you have any on-going reason that your child will need to be late or leave early, or would need to miss a number of practices, please email your child's coach, or discuss it outside of practice time.

The water is almost always COLD at the beginning of the season. Once the kids are swimming, they warm up and it's not typically an issue. Please have warm, dry clothes and towels available for your swimmer after practice, especially early in the season.

Swimmers who swim year-round on another club team may attend practices for that team instead of Landen. Please contact your age-group coach to let them know if your swimmer will be practicing with another team.

It is important that swimmers attend only the practice times assigned for their group unless otherwise given permission by the coaching staff. Swimmers should have a practice suit, goggles, towel, and a swim cap (optional).

If you stay for practice, please sit away from the competition pool and let the coaches work with your child. We have great coaches and you will be amazed at the difference in your son's or daughter's swimming ability and confidence by the end of the season. If you want to talk to the coach, please do so either before practice starts or after it ends – or email them and set up a time to talk. Never bother them during practice as they need to concentrate on the kids.

Please note, dogs are not allowed on the pool deck. The deck closes at 10pm daily for us and we need to exit at this time to allow the lifeguards ample setup time for the Woodfield residents.

Swim Strokes & Events

An Event is a specific race in a competition. There are four competitive strokes in swimming – (1) Freestyle, (2) Backstroke, (3) Breaststroke, and (4) Butterfly. Events are held in all competitive strokes in varying distances based on age-group. In addition to events in the four strokes, there's an Individual Medley (IM) where the swimmer swims a combination of all strokes (Butterfly, then backstroke, then breaststroke, then freestyle)

Younger swimmers will typically swim 25 meter events, as well as the 100 IM, older swimmers will swim 50 meter events, as well as the 100 IM.

In addition to the individual events, there are also 2 relay events. Each relay consists of four swimmers from your child's age group. In the Freestyle relay, all four swimmers swim freestyle. In the Medley relay, each swimmer swims one of the four competitive strokes. While the entries to the individual events are registered prior to the meet, the entries for the relay are chosen by your swimmer's coach, sometimes the relays are not finalized until the swim meet.

Your child will learn all the "rules" for each stroke at their practice. The parents often want to know these rules too (how to start, how to finish, legal turns, illegal kick or stroke...). The best way to understand this is to ask the coach or an official directly(not during a meet in progress), or review information found on swimming websites. If your child does not perform the stroke according to the rules, they will be disqualified (or "DQ'ed"). While it seems harsh to DQ young kids, it actually is critical to their development as a swimmer and will help them learn to swim the strokes properly. When a swimmer is disqualified, the time for that event does not count & they do not score points or receive an award for that event.

Please approach your child's coach if you disagree with a disqualification or have an issue. Do not approach Officials or Timers directly.

Championships- July 18-19 Championships will be held at Mason this year.

Swimmers are **strongly** encouraged to swim at the championship meet. Championships are exciting for the kids & a place where swimmers can celebrate and measure how much they have progressed during the season. The schedule is as follows:

Friday, July 18 Morning Session - 13 and older

Friday, July 18 Afternoon Session - 11&12's

Saturday, July 19 Morning Session - 9&10's

Saturday, July 19 Afternoon Session - 7&8's and 5&6's

Swimmers may enter three (3) individual events and two (2) relays. 6 and under swimmers may also compete in one (1) 8 and under event, excluding the freestyle and backstroke event; however, the total number of individual events may not exceed three. Teams may enter only two relay teams per event.

** NT will be acceptable for freestyle and backstroke events ONLY. ** NT will not be accepted for any other stroke. Swimmers only receive times for legal swims.

Parent Responsibilities & Meet Work Commitments

Please note, families who have **only a Mini Stingray swimmer OR **only** a Club swimmer are not required to fulfill meet work commitments, due to the limited role that the swimmer has with the team.

As a swimming parent, your most important role is to be encouraging and supportive. You will not only have responsibilities, but opportunities to learn how your child reacts to the meet experience, to praise their achievements, to help them deal with their mistakes (like those DQs) and learn from them. Part of supporting your child also means being part of the groups that run each meet.

The Stingrays are managed by a 5 person Volunteer Parent Board, and support for the team is needed from each and every parent with a child on the full team – no exceptions.

Parent involvement is mandatory. We depend on parent meet work to perform all roles during the swim meet and execute team events. Without all parents joining a committee, we cannot host swim meets or participate in championships. Please do not sign up for a committee that does not fit your family's life/schedule. If you are struggling to find one simply reach out-we are flexible and

can be creative. If committee duties are not met your swimmer(s) will not be allowed to sign up for the team next year. If you are unable to complete your meet work on your original committee, you must contact your committee chair well in advance of the date, in order to make alternative arrangements.

Terms you might hear this summer

- DQ: Disqualified – means the swimmer's time will not count, normally due to an incorrect kick, start, turn, or stroke.
- Heat: Sometimes there are more kids swimming an event than can fit in the number of lanes so multiple 'heats' are held so all the swimmers can swim and compete. The best times from all of the heats are used to determine the winner. However, for the younger kids, if they come in first in their heat, they will receive a 'heat winner ribbon' – this can be a great motivator.
- IM: Individual Medleys. This is an event where one swimmer swims each of the four strokes in a specific order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.
- Medley Relay: Four swimmers swim one stroke each for the appropriate length (younger kids are normally one length of the pool – for a total of 100 yards – older kids do two lengths for a total of 200 yards, or 50 yards each). The strokes, in order, are: Back, Breast, Fly, and Free.
- Freestyle Relay: Four swimmers swim freestyle for the appropriate length.
- Block: starting platform

Tips for Parents

- Complete your meet work obligations. A swim team can't exist without the support of ALL parents.
- Leave the coaching to the coaches. Please do not pressure or volunteer swimming advice to your swimmers. Parental coaching can cause much confusion and harm to the swimmer's progress.
- Please nip your concerns with coaches or the board in the bud. Arrange a meeting (or phone discussion), work it out, and drop it. Do not carry grudges, gossip, or create a negative atmosphere for your child and other families.
- Please remember you are setting an example for your kids to follow. Their attitude and enjoyment of the sport is often a reflection of what they have seen from your words and actions.
- Talk to other swim parents. They have been in your shoes and are willing to help you.
- Summer swimming is meant to be low pressure and fun. The program is intended to be competitive and create a love for swimming. Have fun...laugh a lot, cheer hard, and celebrate your swimmers accomplishments, no matter how small.

PARENTS' CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE TRI-COUNTY SWIM LEAGUE TO PROMOTE BETTER SPORTSMANSHIP:

1. I will not force my child to participate in swimming.
2. I will remember that my child swims for his/her enjoyment not mine.
3. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
4. I will teach my child that doing one's best is as important as winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of an event.
5. I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.

6. I will never harass, ridicule, or yell at my child, his/her teammates, or opponents for any reason or for making mistakes or losing a competition.
7. I will remember that children learn best by example. I will applaud good performances by my child, his/her teammates, and their opponents.
8. I will never question or approach an official on any call. All questions are to be directed to the meet referee BY THE COACH.

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