

# HANDBOOK 2026 SEASON



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## 1. About the Modesto Mavericks

The Modesto Mavericks Swim Team is a recreational swim team established in 2017. The Modesto Mavericks Swim Season starts the first week in April and goes through the third week in July. Practices are Monday through Thursday every week with meets on Saturdays through most of the season. We compete in the Mid-Valley Swim League (MVSL). Our conference is composed of six (6) teams: Tracy Tritons, Ripon Sea Lions, Manteca Dolphins, Discovery Bay River Otters, Turlock Sea Dogs, and our Modesto Mavericks Swim Team!

## 2. Our Team Vision

Building better people through the sport of swimming!

## 3. Our Team Mission

The Modesto Mavericks is a recreation-based competitive swim program committed to instilling a LOVE of swimming in every participant. We believe that by providing the fundamentals of stroke technique, sportsmanship, teamwork, and goal setting, our program teaches essential life skills to our swimmers. We focus on accountability at every level of our organization, from our Board, to our Coaching Staff, to our Parents, and to our Swimmers.

## 4. Communication and Apps

- Team Unify Website: [www.swimmodestomavericks.com](http://www.swimmodestomavericks.com)
- Team Email: [swimmodestomavericks@gmail.com](mailto:swimmodestomavericks@gmail.com) (PREFERRED)
- Team Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/modesto.mavericks/>
- Group Me Application: Download from App store, search Modesto Mavericks
- Meet Mobile App: Provides meet entries and results in real-time, available on app store (fee may apply)
- On Deck App: Complimentary app for our website to register swimmers, etc, available on app store (fee may apply)

Please feel free to contact any Board Member at any time. We have an open-door policy and will be happy to assist whenever you need assistance. We do ask that you hold your questions to the coach until after the swimmers have left the pool. The eyes and ears of the coach need to be on the swimmers in the pool.

## 5. Media Release

The Modesto Mavericks Swim Team reserves the right to any photographic or electronic reproductions of your swimmer for the purpose of public media, as deemed appropriate by Modesto Mavericks Swim Team Board.

## 6. Coaching Staff

Head Coach: Kerra Houser, [HeadCoach.MMST@gmail.com](mailto:HeadCoach.MMST@gmail.com)

Assistant Coaches: Kassy Schanen, Jessica Focha, Kaydence Bispo

The Modesto Mavericks provide high quality coaches that exemplify our team values. All coaches understand and accept the philosophy of the team and the Mid-Valley Swim League. They are the example of leadership, accountability, collaboration, and good sportsmanship - all values to pass down to the swimmers.

### Coach Responsibilities:

- Manage and provide quality practice plans
- Guide swimmers through practices and meets
- Be present for social events
- Display good character that swimmers can emulate
- Know each swimmer and help maximize each swimmer's potential
- Schedule meet line ups
- Disciplinary Action if necessary (see below)

### Disciplinary Action Guidelines:

- In the event of a violation of the Swimmer Commitment agreement and/or general deck rules, or any behavior deemed unacceptable or unsafe at any team event or function, the coaches shall have the discretion to enforce disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion for the team.
- Junior Coaches, Deck Coaches, and Assistant Coaches will refer all matters requiring disciplinary action to the Head Coach.
- If it is determined that an infraction may have occurred, the Coaching Staff and the Maverick Board will work to gain context of any given situation before moving forward.
- If a disciplinary action is decided upon by the coaches, and the parents disagree with the decision, parents have one week to write a letter (send an email) to contest the decision. The Coach and Board President will have an additional week to schedule a meeting between Coach, Board President, and Parent (and club manager if necessary). At this time, the group will collaborate and finalize a disciplinary decision.

## 7. Swimming Eligibility

Any swimmer who is 18 & under as of April 1, 2024, is eligible to swim in our league. The age group is determined by their age on April 1, 2024. Swimmers will swim with their age group during practices and at meets. Swimmers may be placed in a relay with an older age group, if necessary, but may not swim in a younger age group. If there are physical or developmental challenges where swimming with their age group could be difficult, please bring that to a board member for review.

Swimmers need to have basic swimming skills and must be able to swim one length of the pool safely and not be afraid to put their face in the water.

Swimmers are taught the four basic swimming strokes: butterfly, breaststroke, backstroke, and freestyle.

In order to remain eligible to swim in the Mid Valley Swim League, a swimmer may not receive private lessons, practice with, nor swim for, any other swim team from November 1st through March 31st. Swimmers who participate in high school swim or water polo programs will be granted an exception to this rule.

## 8. Pool Rules

- Swimmers are to exhibit pool safety standards. Basic rules will be enforced at all times.
- Swimmers are not to enter the pool without a coach/lifeguard present.
- The use of profanity or verbal abuse toward another swimmer or coaching staff will not be tolerated. This includes both the swimmer and the parents. If this occurs, the swimmer and/or parent will be asked to leave that practice or meet. If this occurs repeatedly, the swimmer will not be allowed to remain a member of the Modesto Mavericks Swim Team.
- Respect other swimmers from our team and other swimmers from all teams. Sportsmanship is an honorable trait.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct from the swimmer/parents can lead to disqualification at the meets. Repeated unsportsmanlike conduct from either the swimmer or parent is grounds for dismissal from the team.
- Swimmers should respect the coaching staff and listen to their instruction. Swimmers are not to be playing in the lanes during practice or hanging on the lane lines.
- Pets are not allowed on campus.

## 9. New to Modesto Mavericks Swimmer Try Outs and First Practice

Try outs are on Wednesday, April 1st, 2026 for all new to Modesto Mavericks swimmers. New swimmers must be able to swim across the 25 yard pool unassisted.

Thursday, April 2nd, 2026 is the first practice day for 8 years and under AND all new swimmers. This practice day is intended to help swimmers and parents understand the check in process and rhythm of practice.

The first official practice for all swimmers is Monday, April 6th, 2026. Times and location is determined by Modesto City Schools- we are typically assigned Enochs High School or Downey High School. Practice times range from 5-9pm are broken out by age with younger swimmers going first.

## 10. Regular Practice Sessions

Swimmers are assigned to a practice group by age. Unless arranged with the coach in advance, the swimmer is not to swim at different times or change time slots. Please try to be on time for practice, as our pool time is very limited and practice groups may overlap. Parents should pick up their children promptly at the end of practice.

## 11. Swim Meets

- Time Trials (aka. A Practice Meet). Each team holds time trials, which only includes our team and gives the swimmers an entry time for future meets. They also give the coaches an opportunity to evaluate a swimmer's ability to perform in a swim meet atmosphere. If you are a new swimmer, time trials are essential. If you are a returning swimmer, you can establish a personal best time for future meets; however, your historical best time will be used as your entry or seed time. Time trials are also treated like a mini-meet, which gives parents and swimmers an idea of what to expect during actual meets. It is highly recommended that swimmers attend time trials. The MMST timed trials will take place the first Saturday of May.
- Swim meets are posted on our website under team events.
- Meets begin promptly at the posted time on the meet invite. The meet invite and any pertinent information can be found attached to the event on our website. You will receive an email when it opens.
- Meet registration is typically open one week prior to the meet date. There is a cutoff date to register your swimmer for the meet and events. Please be sure to meet that deadline as we cannot accept late entries.
- There is no way to predict when a meet will end; however, most dual meets end by 2 pm. Invitationals are usually done by 4pm- these are only estimates. To keep the meet running smoothly, please be sure to have your swimmers at the pool deck prior to their race and be ready for their relays.
- Relays are determined by coaches! When registering for a meet indicate if your swimmer does NOT wish to be placed on a relay. Your swimmer could be in as many as 2 relays per meet, a medley relay at the beginning and a freestyle relay at the end. Relays are typically posted the night before and are available the morning of the meet. Please understand that relays can change multiple times throughout the day pending attendance. You will need to check Group Me or the relay table for updates. We have a relay table where swimmers can gather for their relay and walk together to the pool deck. This is very important for swimmers 12 and under so please be sure to get your swimmer to their relay on time.

- If you have registered for a meet and then are no longer able to attend, please send an email to [swimmodestomavericks@gmail.com](mailto:swimmodestomavericks@gmail.com) before 7AM day of the meet. No call, no shows will be billed \$10 per swimmer. *See Check In & Warm Up section.*
- Invitationals: There are two invitationals. The Tracy Invitational is a two-day meet, and the MVSL Invitational. The team pays fees to participate so it is important that you only register if you know you can attend. If you have registered and then are no longer able to attend, you will be charged the swimmer fees paid by the team.
- Championships are an event where qualifying swimmers from all teams in the MVSL compete against each other. To qualify to swim in the Championship meet, a swimmer must have competed in at least two individual events in at least four MVSL meets (this can include invitationals). There are no additional fees for championships.

## 12. Relays

There are two relays each meet: medley relay is the first event of the day and freestyle relay is the last. Swimmers are responsible for making it to their races on time. A few events before your relay starts, please head to the relay table to meet up with the rest of your relay team. Once there, DO NOT LEAVE!!! Once your relay team is all together, a parent or coach will lead the team to the pool deck for any ages 10 & under.

Notify the coach when you know you are leaving early so the coaches have enough time to move the relay teams around for a viable relay alternative. If you are in a relay and do not notify the coach of your departure- you will be billed \$10 per swimmer. The coaches will do their best to form a relay for every age bracket. Sometimes there are not enough swimmers to make up a relay team. In this instance, the coach may move swimmers up brackets to form a relay team. A swimmer can only move up two age groups (for relays only).

## 13. Check In and Warm Up

Check in for most meets starts by 7:00 am. Please check the team event on the calendar for details. If your swimmer has not checked in by 7:30, they may be scratched from the meet. Please be on time or communicate with the coach or board members if you are late. After checking in, swimmers need to warm up; be sure to locate your coach for warm up instructions on the day of the meet. When at all possible, check in and warm up times will be posted on the website in advance of the meet. Team emails and Remind app messages will be sent out for last-minute details.

## 14. Age Groups

Swimmers are divided into age groups and gender for competition: 6 and under, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18.

Swimmers will swim for the age group in which they fall into on April 1st. If the swimmer has a birthday after April 1st, that swimmer may move up into the next age bracket; however, they must remain in that age group for the remainder of the season.

A swimmer may compete in three (3) individual events per swim meet, and two (2) relay events (at coaches' discretion). A swimmer may move up two age groups for relays only, as designated by the coach, and a swimmer must swim in his/her own age group for individual events. For the Tracy Invitational, which is a two-day meet, swimmers may swim in all individual events if they choose. Relays are still at the coach's discretion.

## 15. Stroke Reminders

Swimmers must swim each stroke legally according to the USA Swimming guidelines for the year. This handbook will be made available at all meets and can be referenced at any time.

The swimmers should not be made aware of a possible DQ during the race. If there is a DQ, the meet referee has to review to confirm it is valid. At that point the Meet Manager will enter the result and the swimmer will not receive any points for the event. DQ Slips are given to the Head Coach who will address issues during subsequent practices.

Please remember that disqualification protests should only come from team designee. At no point should a parent, under any circumstances, approach a meet official.

Below are various tips which may help the swimmer swim a legal race. Please refer to the USA Swimming guidelines for the year for official information.

### Backstroke

- One hand touch at both ends.
- Do not turn on your stomach at any time, except for flip turns.
- Continued motion must be present in the backstroke turn.

### Breaststroke

- Two hand, synchronous touch for turns and finish.
- A single dolphin kick to be followed by a breaststroke kick is permitted after the start and each turn while the swimmer is completely submerged.
- Underwater pull must contain a full arm pull, a full up/out/together leg kick, and the hands must join together and not separate until the water surface is reached. Head must break water before arms/hands are shoulder width apart.
- Up/out/together leg kicks...not scissors kicks.
- The arms should never exceed a half-circle pull.

### Butterfly

- Two hand, synchronous touch for turns and finish.



- Underwater dolphin kick distance is limitless, but the smart swimmer surfaces when he finds himself gliding slower than the surface stroke allows.
- Legs/knees/feet should not break their closeness and cannot kick at opposing intervals/times. No scissor kick.
- Shoulder/arms/elbows need to fully exit the water surface each pull.

Of course...

- Never touch the bottom of the pool.
- Never leave the starting block until you hear the signal to do so.
- During a relay, you cannot leave the starting block until your teammate touches the wall.

Parents: try to review these principles with your children on a regular basis so that it becomes “second nature” to the kids. It’s easy to forget a 2-hand touch!

## 16. Team Points and Awards

Placing and points are determined by the number of lanes at a meet as follows:

Points for eight-lane pool		
	Individual Event	Relay
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	9 points	16 points
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	7 points	14 points
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	6 points	12 points
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	5 points	10 points
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	4 points	8 points
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	3 points	6 points
7 <sup>th</sup> Place	2 points	4 points
8 <sup>th</sup> Place	1 points	2 points

Points for ten-lane pool		
	Individual Event	Relay
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	11 points	20 points
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	9 points	18 points
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	8 points	16 points
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	7 points	14 points
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	6 points	12 points
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	5 points	10 points
7 <sup>th</sup> Place	4 points	8 points
8 <sup>th</sup> Place	3 points	6 points
9 <sup>th</sup> Place	2 points	4 points
10 <sup>th</sup> Place	1 points	2 points

Dual/Tri Meets: Ribbons are awarded through the number of lanes available at meet; i.e., eighth for eight lanes, etc. Heat winner ribbons/bands will be awarded for fastest swimmer in their heat.

If a swimmer has received a Personal Best and NOT a placement ribbon, they will receive a PB ribbon. If a swimmer receives a PB and has placed in the top 10, they will only receive a placement ribbon.

Invitationals/Championships: Medals are awarded for first through third places; ribbons for fourth through eighth or tenth. Individual high point trophies will be awarded for each age group; team awards will be awarded for first through third place teams.

Heat winner awards will be given to all heat winners.

If there is a tie for 1<sup>st</sup> place, the tie will stand and 2nd place will not be awarded.

After the MVSL Championships, the Modesto Mavericks Swim Team will host an awards and family event. Recognition awards are given at that time (i.e., most improved, high point, etc.). High point awards are given for each age group for boys and girls. Every child gets an award for participating in the season.

## 17. Refund Policy

There will be NO REFUNDS if a parent/player pulls their swimmer for another activity or the swimmer chooses to stop swimming. Refund requests will ONLY be considered for the following three (3) reasons:

- A swimmer is unable to participate due to an injury. A doctor's note must accompany a letter requesting the refund.
- A swimmer is unable to participate due to a move that takes them more than 15 minutes away from Modesto. Proof of the new address must accompany a letter requesting the refund.
- A swimmer registered but was unable to qualify during new swimmer tryouts.

## 18. Swimmer Commitment

- I will declare (In or Out) for each meet on the Team Website by the registration deadline.
- Within a single swim season, I will aim to attend at least 2 (two) league meets and will swim at least 2 (two) events at each of these meets (not to include relays).
- I will aim to attend the Championship Meet.
- I will aim to attend at least 3 practices each week.
- I will wear appropriate swimwear, goggles, and swim cap (long hair) to practice as directed by the coaches. The team uniform (or black racing suit) and team cap should be worn at all swim meets.
- I will be on time for all practices and swim meets.
- I will only be on the pool deck during my practice time, and I will let the coaches focus on the swimmers in the pool.

- I will show respect for all facilities and other property used during practices, competitions, and team activities.
- I will refrain from foul language, violence, behavior deemed dishonest, offensive, or illegal.
- I will not use, possess, or be associated with any alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, or any illegal substances.
- I will always maintain a cooperative and positive attitude during practices and meets.
- I will refrain from bullying. If I witness bullying, I will notify a coach or a parent.
- I will respect myself and those around me by doing and being my best.

## 19. Parent Commitment

- I will read and understand the Handbook.
- I will ensure my swimmer(s) arrives to practice on time.
- I will ensure my swimmer(s) is well rested, hydrated, and properly nourished at meets and practices.
- I will declare my swimmer(s) as “In” or “Out” for each meet of the season as required by the coaching staff.
- I will set an example of good sportsmanship through positive behavior and communication.
- I will stay off the pool deck during practices.
- I will not bring pets to practice nor meets nor championships.
- I will use appropriate procedure to resolve conflicts.
- I agree to the VOLUNTEER AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEMENT REQUIREMENT as set forth for each season.
- I will aim to commit my swimmer’s attendance in at least 2 league meets a season.

## 20. Conflict Resolution Procedure

When a conflict arises between parents and coaches, email is the best way to communicate any concerns you may have. If you prefer to meet in person, a board member must also be present and the following steps should be taken:

- Avoid discussing the issue with other parents or coaches on deck.
- Schedule a specific time to meet with a coach via email with a reason for the Meeting.
- Be prepared with specific concerns and suggestions to resolve the issue.
- If the conflict is not resolved, the parent should take the written complaint to a member of the swim team board via: [SwimModestoMavericks@gmail.com](mailto:SwimModestoMavericks@gmail.com)

## 21. Volunteer and Fundraising Commitment

The continued success of the Modesto Mavericks Swim Team is based on several factors. One of the most important factors is parent participation and volunteering. For questions or concerns please reach out to: [Finance.MMST@gmail.com](mailto:Finance.MMST@gmail.com)

- **Meet Volunteer Hours:** Each family is required to volunteer a minimum of one two-hour shift per family at any swim meet that your swimmer attends. If you do not volunteer at the meet (and your swimmer is swimming) your swimmer will not be allowed to swim in the next meet.
  - No Shows: If you sign up for a volunteer position and do not show up, you will be billed \$25/hour.
- **Swimmer Fees:**
  - Swimmers will be charged \$10 for all meet scratches after 7am the day of the meet.
  - Families will be charged invitational fees for swimmers who scratch after the sign up deadline.
  - Swimmers will be charged \$10 for all same day relay scratches.
- **Fireworks Booth Volunteer Hours:** The fireworks booth is by far our biggest fundraiser of the year. We have a great spot for the booth, in the DD's Discounts store parking lot on the corner of Hatch Rd and Richland Ave. It is mandatory for parents to volunteer for at least one 2-hour shift during the few days the booth is open for sales.
  - Volunteer timeslots sign up will close 2 days prior to the shift. Parents are responsible for coverage of their shift after that time.
  - Booth volunteer hour buy out is available for \$125.
  - No Shows: If you sign up for a volunteer position and do not show up, you will be billed the buy out amount (prorated for partial time).
- **Fireworks Scripts Purchase:** Each swimmer must purchase/sell \$50 Fireworks Scripts for our Fireworks Booth fundraiser. If you have more than one swimmer, you must purchase a total of \$75. Unsold scripts will be directly billed through Sports Engine. Swimmers with outstanding balances will not be eligible for the following year.
- **Outstanding Balances:** Swimmers with outstanding balances will not be eligible for the following year until balances are paid in full.

## *Appendix I: Description of Volunteer Positions*

### **No/Minimal Training Required:**

- **Setup:** Arrives before meet to set meet up for the day.
- **Printer/Verifier:** This position works closely with the Starter, Colorado Operator, and Stroke and Turn. They are responsible for verifying the paperwork from these groups and to check for anomalies and to confirm all submitted paperwork.
- **Hospitality:** Sets up and delivers snacks and refreshments to parents who are volunteering during their shift.
- **Awards/Ribbons:** Sits at the awards table and uses preprinted labels that are received from the registrar to place on appropriate ribbons. Takes ribbons and places them in the appropriate team bin for pick up.
- **Timer Runner:** Picks up event sheets from each lane at the end of a heat and takes it to the head table.
- **Head Table Runner:** Picks up the events from the meet manager and runs them to Stroke/Turn, Announcer, Head Table, Starter, Timers, and
- **Lane Assistant:** Assist the swimmers with heat and lane assignments on the pool deck. Helps line up swimmers at the designated area and get them to their lane assignments.
- **Table monitor/Check-in:** Allows swimmers on deck and behind the blocks for events. There should be no more than 3 heats of swimmers behind the blocks at any time.
- **Timers:** Be at the assigned lane ON TIME. When a swimmer comes toward the finish, the timer must get up from their seat and move to the edge of the lane, lean over and push the electronic timer (held in the hand) when any part of the swimmer touches the finish wall. One timer is responsible for writing down the time of the swimmer. Each timer should confirm that the appropriate swimmer is in the correct lane. There are three timers per lane. Timers are asked to refrain from using their cell phone while in this volunteer position.
- **Timer (stopwatch):** There is one stopwatch timer per lane along with the electronic timers. The stopwatch timer watches for a signal from the starter and then starts the stopwatch. The stopwatch timer must get up from their seat, lean over the edge of their lane and stop their watch at the finish of the race.
- **Backup Timer:** A backup timer is responsible for the main stopwatch during a meet. They must watch the start from the starter strobe light and engage their stopwatch. It is their responsibility to run a stopwatch out to a timer if they forget to engage their stopwatch or it malfunctions.
- **Clean Up:** Works with the Facilities Manager in taking down the snack bar, EZ-up tents around the pool area, Colorado System, timing system, wiring, head table, chairs, etc.

**Previous Experience Required:**

- **Meet Manager:** Responsible for event scratches, deck seeding, and resolving any issues regarding swimmer entries.
- **Colorado System Operator:** This person enters information on the Colorado System. Works with the Starter and sits at the head table.
- **Announcer:** Announces events, heats, swimmers, and general announcements during a meet. Works with Starter so there is no conflict when announcing.

**Training Required: Training hosted by Ripon at season start.**

- **Starter:** Responsible for starting the swim meet. Including: calling swimmers to the blocks, sets the swimmers, and starting each heat and race.
- **Stroke and Turn Judge:** Judges the swimmers to make sure that the strokes are done correctly, and the swimmer touches the walls on the turns. Judges are required to write disqualification slips if the swimmer does not swim the stroke correctly or does not touch the wall.