

2018-2019 Team Handbook

Rappahannock Area YMCA Stingrays



Serving Fredericksburg-area youth since 1979, Celebrating over 30 Years of fast swimming



LEVEL 3
USA SWIMMING
CLUB RECOGNITION PROGRAM

VIRTUAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS
USA SWIMMING

Yards - # 108, Meters - # 103
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Full-Time Coaching Staff

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Head Coach	Bob Herlinger – SR	540-207-0846-c	robert.herlinger@gmail.com
Head AG Coach/RV Site	Andy Bertolet – AG1/SR	540-840-0680-c	swimfasternow@gmail.com
Head MY Site Coach	Josh Friedel - JR	540-455-3408-c	jfried3408y@yahoo.com
Head KGY Site Coach	Connor Muncie-AG1&JR/SR2	540-903-8867-c	munciecmrays@gmail.com
Head JRSSC Site Coach	Anthony Pedersen-JR/SR	703-919-5889-c	rayscoachanthony@gmail.com

For all other coaches, visit the RAYS website (www.swimrays.org) and click on the Coaches link under the About Us tab.

Board of Directors

Position	Name	Phone	Email
President	Danielle Euker	540-834-8121-c	danielleuker@gmail.com
Vice President	Kellie Ross	412-913-4253-c	kellie@fch1.com
Secretary	Agnes Pearcy	703-209-1669-c	agnespearcy@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Steve Hudak	804-922-7877-c	steve.h.psu@gmail.com
Team Manager	Jason Turner	703-943-9813-c	jturner@p2ptech.com
Meet Director	Chrissy Urian	410-440-1111-c	chrissyurian@me.com
Social Committees Chairperson	Lydia Green	540-771-4476-c	lgreen5733@gmail.com

Key Personnel

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Bookkeeper	Carol Rowlands	540-659-2756-h	raysbookkeeper@gmail.com
Officials Chair	George Hunter	540-845-0580-c	bigjerky72@gmail.com



Mission Statement

The Stingrays' mission is to provide an organized, competitive swimming program for the youth of the Rappahannock area in association with the Rappahannock Area YMCA of Fredericksburg, Virginia. In keeping with the philosophy of the YMCA of developing mind, body, and spirit, the swim program emphasizes good sportsmanship, self-discipline, and achievement of goals. We recognize that swimming is just one part of a young person's life. Competition is a major, but not exclusive, measurement of success. All swimmers should have fun.

Achieving the Stingrays' mission requires commitment from the entire team. Swimmers are expected to show their commitment by attending practices on a regular basis, by respecting and supporting their teammates on deck and in the water, and by conducting themselves in a responsible manner. Parents are expected to support the team and their swimmers by contributing their time by assisting at swim meets and social events. In turn, the Stingrays Swim Team provides high-caliber swimming instruction in an organized, safe, and friendly environment.



Chapter 1: Team Overview

The Stingrays is a year-round USA and YMCA swim team. The team is divided into five practice groups based on ability. There is a natural progression through which the swimmer moves as he or she grows and matures. This structure is designed to encourage a swimmer's enthusiasm for the sport and meet the needs of swimmers with all levels of ability and interest.

Joyce O'Toole and Sue-Anne Shotwell, program director, established the Stingrays in 1979 for the YMCA. Carl Ingerbretsen, the first coach, organized the Stingrays as an Amateur Athletic Union team (now USA Swimming) and as part of the Virginia YMCA Association. Since the team's inception, Stingrays' swimmers have held national swim records, have gone on to compete at the college level, and have become coaches themselves. *Our swimmers have fun being successful.*

Virginia Swimming

The teams in Virginia Swimming, Inc. (VSI) are divided into areas, regions, or districts for competition. These are based on pool availability, number of swimmers, and geographic location. The Stingrays are in the Northern Virginia District.

Team Symbol and Colors

Our symbol originated as a play on the team's official name, Rappahannock Area YMCA Swim Team or RAYS. This acronym lent itself to the choice of a stingray as the team's symbol. The team colors are black, royal blue, and white.

Speedo Team

We are a SPEEDO sponsored team. Every season, through SPEEDO, the team offers a uniform package. Although it is not required, we strongly encourage each family to buy SPEEDO. In turn, SPEEDO donates apparel to swimmers who qualify for Sectionals, NCSA Junior Nationals, USA Futures, USA Swimming Junior and Senior Nationals, and Olympic Trials.

Team Locations

Massad YMCA – 212 Butler Road, Stafford, VA: 2 25-meter pools

Rosner YMCA – 5700 Smith Station Road, Spotsylvania, VA: 10-lane 25-yard pool

Jeff Rouse Swim & Sport Center – 1600 Mine Road, Stafford, VA: 8-lane 50-meter pool

King George YMCA – 10545 Kings Highway, King George, VA: 8-lane 25-meter pool

University of Mary Washington – Goolrick Pool, Rt 1 North of College Avenue in Fredericksburg, VA: 6-lane 25-yard pool (park in parking garage, go up steps to sliding doors)

Curtis Memorial Park – off Route 17 in Stafford, VA: 8-lane 50-meter pool (summer usage)

Team Mailing Address

Stingrays Swim Team (RAYS)
PO BOX 866
Stafford, Virginia 22555-0866

Swim Season

Practice begins the 1st Monday after Labor Day. Short Course meet season, 25-yard pools, runs from October through March. There is a two-week Spring Break at the end of the short course season. Long Course meet season, 50-meter pools, begins in April/May, lasting until the beginning of August. Summer Break is early August until early September.

How to Become a Member

Membership is open to boys and girls ages 5-18 and college athletes. Formal tryouts are held each year in August and September. Swimmers wishing to join the Stingrays should contact the head coach. After the season starts, swimmers may join the team if space is available. The number of swimmers currently on the team, the number of hours of pool time, and the age and ability of the swimmer determine availability of openings.

YMCA Membership

All swimmers practicing at a YMCA facility are required to be YMCA members. Register at the front desk of your YMCA. Inform the staff that you are joining the Stingrays and the initiation fee is waived. Swimmers are not allowed to participate in regular practice until they are YMCA members. As a YMCA member, swimmers are entitled to full use of the YMCA. The YMCA offers family and youth membership plans with several payment options. For a family membership, family members are entitled to full use of the YMCA and its facilities, including a free nursery that can be used when parents work out.

Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center (JRSSC)

There is no membership fee for a swimmer to practice at JRSSC. During practice, parents and other family members are invited to sit in the café or the pool stands. Membership is required to use any part of the facility.

USA Swimming Membership

USA Swimming membership entitles a swimmer to enter all USA Swimming events for which he /she qualifies. A swimmer must have a current membership to swim in a USA Swimming meet. Stingrays registration fee includes USA Swimming membership.

USA Swimming Membership includes insurance, which covers the member during supervised team practice, and at USA swimming meets. Insurance is secondary to other insurance carried by the swimmer's family.

Team Shirt and Swim Cap

The registration fee includes the cost of a RAYS t-shirt and swim cap. Shirts and caps are handed out within two weeks of season start. If joining during the season, a cap and t-shirt will be provided as soon as possible. If joining after March, only a swim cap is provided.

The team swim cap must be worn when competing. During morning or prelim sessions, swimmers must wear the royal blue cap. At final sessions, swimmers are issued and wear a black RAYS cap. Swimmers are allowed to wear tech caps at championship meets.

Chapter 2: Coaching

Coach's Responsibilities

The head coach supervises the entire competitive swim program. The coaching staff provide a program for youngsters that demonstrates the value of striving to improve oneself. Coaches manage training and competition. They are constantly updating the swimming program. Enthusiastic swimmers and involved parents get the most out of our program.

Coaches:

- Place youngsters in practice groups according to age and ability level.
- Promote a swimmer to a more challenging practice group.
- Develop training regimens based on scientific principles and geared to group goals.
- Determine meet attendance and event assignment(s).
- Conduct and supervise meet warm-ups for the team.
- Offer constructive criticism regarding a swimmer's performance following a race.
- Organize team relay placements.



Coaching Staff

Bob Herlinger, head coach, is very proud of his hometown, Baltimore, MD, where he went to Archbishop Curley HS and then graduated from Elon College, NC. Bob is beginning his 45th year of coaching. He has coached many levels of swimmers, ranging from developmental to Olympic Trial Qualifiers. He has coached 34 individual swimmers to 108 Top 16/10 times, 124 Top 16 relays, 78 Junior National qualifiers, 15 Senior National Swimmers, 1 National Team swimmer – ranked 21st in the world in the 200m Breaststroke, 1 National Junior Team swimmer – ranked 25th in the world in the 100m Breaststroke, 1 National Youth Team member, and 11 Olympic Trial swimmers– with 2 swimmers placing in semi-finals. In the summer of 2005, as a team, the RAYS came in 8th at YMCA Nationals; in 2009, our boys' team came in 4th place, our best-ever finish.



Andy Bertolet is the head age group coach and Rosner Y head site coach. Andy came to the Stingrays after being a head age group coach in North Stafford for eight years. During this stint, Andy coached multiple age group champions, with many athletes achieving quad and triple A time standards. Before moving to Virginia with his wife, Kate, he coached at all levels of the sport from developmental to NCAA. As a swimmer, Andy was a four-year high school all-American, Pennsylvania state champ in the 500 free, and qualified for US Senior Nationals in seven events. Andy also enjoys, cooking, reading and going to the beach with Kate and his three sons (Lowell, Miles and Brooks).

Josh Friedel is the Massad Y head site coach. Josh grew up in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where he first started swimming with the Curtis Park Seahawks at the age of 8. Josh has been part of the RAYS Swim Team since he was 10 years old. He was a four-year varsity letterman for the Mountain View Wildcats and a four-year varsity letterman for the Florida State Seminoles. Some of his swimming accomplishments include 2012 Olympic Trial finalist, 2009 Junior National Team member, All ACC Swimmer, Virginia State Champion in the 100 back, and three-time YMCA National Champion. After spending four years in Tallahassee, he is excited to be back in Virginia working with the RAYS.

Connor Muncie is the King George Y head site coach. Connor comes to the RAYS after graduating from VCU with his master's degree in Health and Physical Education. Connor grew up in King George, Virginia where he was a four-time varsity letterman for the Foxes. Connor also was the founding coach for the Hopyard Hammerheads, an RSL swim team, where he was the Head Coach for 5 years. Connor also has 4 years of year-round coaching experience, 3 of those four years were with teams in the Richmond area. Connor is a Health and Physical Education teacher at King George High School. In his spare time, Connor enjoys fishing, spending time outside and watching his favorite sport teams. Connor is very excited to be coaching for the RAYS in his home town of King George.

Anthony Pedersen is the Jeff Rouse Swim & Sport Center head site coach. Anthony has been involved in swimming for over 29 years. He is an ASCA Level 3 Coach and excited to bring his knowledge and love of the sport to the RAYS. He swam competitively for several club teams in Northern Virginia and the University of Mary Washington. Anthony has had great success in growing and developing swimmers. He has produced several LSC champions, Sectional qualifiers, Junior National qualifiers, and National Top 10. Coach Anthony also had a swimmer at the 2012 Paralympic Swimming Trials and 2014 Paralympic Pan-Pacific Games. He coached the International Paralympic Committee's top-ranked world swimmer in the 200m back in 2013. Anthony is married to Therese and has a son, Cooper.

To learn about the entire coaching staff, visit www.swimrays.org.

Chapter 3: Swim Program

Philosophy

The mission of the Stingrays is to provide an opportunity for children to learn a lifetime sport and recreational activity and to develop each swimmer's skills to the maximum extent of his/her commitment and abilities. The Stingrays program strives to instill in swimmers an appreciation for values such as self-esteem, self-discipline, teamwork, goal-setting, and achievement. Swimmers learn that they achieve goals through discipline, training, and commitment. Each level of the RAYS program is designed to help swimmers reach their full potential.

Short-Term Goals

- Develop a program that provides the background for competitive swimming, in conjunction with the YMCA philosophy, **“Everybody swims, everybody wins.”**
- Develop a progressive skill program based on age and ability, in conjunction with USA Swimming and YMCA Swimming.
- Provide a national-level training program at the senior level, in conjunction with USA Swimming and YMCA Swimming.

Long-Term Goals

- Provide physical development and encourage proper conditioning, self-discipline, and healthy habits for life.
- Provide an opportunity for social, emotional, and educational development and encourage peer and family participation.
- Provide the opportunity to learn sportsmanship, teamwork, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Participation

Participation in the Stingrays Swim Team involves payment of fees on a timely basis, attending practice, listening and following the coach's instruction, and participating in team competition. As athletes committed to the sport of swimming, all swimmers and parents are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at practice, swim meets, and social events. The base of this code of conduct is **RESPECT**.

As STINGRAYS:

- We **RESPECT** our fellow swimmer's commitment to the sport and their team.
- We **RESPECT** the professional skills of our coaches and their dedication to each of us as swimmers, scholars, and individuals.
- We **RESPECT** our parents, who provide the underlying support of all our athletic, academic, social, and moral development.
- We **RESPECT** the officials, managers, and those who manage our competitive programs.
- We **RESPECT** the facilities at which we train and compete.

This concept of respect — for one another, for our coaches, for our parents, for our facilities — forms the basis of our adherence to the Swimming Code of Conduct, which is appended to these policies and procedures. The STINGRAYS expect each swimmer and parent to adhere to this Code of Conduct. Furthermore, a breach of this concept of respect may result in warnings, suspension or dismissal from the team. The STINGRAYS will hold parent(s) responsible for the conduct and behavior of their children as well as their own conduct and behavior.

Any staff member or volunteer that violates this public trust with non-appropriate professional relationship with swimmer athletes will be immediately relieved of duties and terminated by the RAYS. Inappropriate behavior of the swimmer athlete and/or parent will result in the swimmer being suspended from the team but all financial obligations will still be expected and enforced. Inappropriate use of electronic communication and social media can also result in a member being criminally charged and convicted or facing civil action.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The concept of respect for one another also supports our anti -bullying policy. Bullying is a pattern of aggressive, intentional, and/or deliberately hostile behavior and/or hurtful acts, words, or other behavior toward another person. Bullying will not be tolerated. Bullying includes:

- Physical bullying such as assault and battery, punching, hazing, hair pulling, and beating.
- Emotional bullying such as rejecting, shunning, terrorizing, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics, manipulating friendships, isolating, ostracizing, applying peer pressure, put downs, threatening looks, gestures, or actions, and social isolation.
- Verbal bullying such as hurtful name calling, teasing, gossip, rumors, and false accusations.
- Cyber-bullying via electronic media.
- Sexual bullying such as exhibition, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.

Each swimmer and parent are expected to adhere to this policy. Bullying may result in warnings, suspension, or dismissal from the team.

Electronic Communication Policy

USA Swimming and the RAYS recognize the prevalence of email, texting, and social media in today's world and that many of us use these as our primary method of communication. While we recognize that technology has a wealth of positive benefits, it also provides a new mechanism for inappropriate and illegal behaviors. This policy provides rules and guidelines for responsible, professional use of electronic communication and social media by coaches, parents, and athletes. This policy aligns with USA Swimming Safe Sport Handbook.

Electronic communication and social media encompass software, applications (including those running on mobile devices), email and websites, which enable users to interact, create, and exchange information online. Examples include sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Wikipedia, Picasa, and Myspace.

With respect to electronic communications, electronic communications between coaches, parents, and swimmers should be **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches, parents, and athletes should be transparent. Communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches, parents, and athletes should be considered part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach, a parent and/or an athlete should be conducted professionally. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a professional communication.

If communications between coaches, parents, and athletes meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely the communication is appropriate.

Facebook, Myspace, Blogs, and Similar Sites

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete. The coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM method. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram

Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram or on any other similar application. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, or on any other similar application. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through any of these applications.

Texting

Texting is subject to the guidelines mentioned above. Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes between 5:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. to communicate team activities.

Email

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. to communicate team activities. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member **must** also be copied.

Inappropriate actions include:

- Making inappropriate online comments that lead to civil actions, such as defamation
- Disclosing confidential information about the RAYS, swimmers, parents and/or colleagues, thus breaching privacy policies

- Inciting hatred against an identifiable group or person
- Disclosing information about a minor, contrary to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*
- Using technology to harass a swimmer, colleague or others
- Encouraging drugs or alcohol use
- Engaging in sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- Using a computer to lure a child or for exchanging or forwarding compromising photos, videos or audio recordings of students leading to charges of possession or distribution of child pornography

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication. Send requests to RAYS, P.O. Box 866 Stafford, VA 22555-0866.

Procedures

Below are procedures that ensure all Stingrays benefit from their swim team membership.

Behavior – Every participant on the RAYS team has a right to be treated with respect, dignity and fairness, and to participate in an environment that is enjoyable and safe. Harassment, abuse, and other forms of inappropriate behavior deny participants these rights and will not be tolerated. Swimmers and/or parents who are unable to meet our minimum acceptable behavior will be suspended from the team, but all financial obligations will still be expected and enforced.

Counseling - A coach will counsel a swimmer or parent who displays disrespectful behavior. If the behavior represents a serious lack of respect for another swimmer, coach, official, other adult or facility, that swimmer's participation in the practice or meet may be terminated. In such a case, the swimmer's parent(s) will be notified of the circumstances in writing. The coach will also notify the Board of Directors when such action is taken. Notification may include a warning that further manifestations of disrespectful behavior may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.

Suspension - A swimmer or parent may be required to reexamine his or her commitment to the sport and the team by being suspended temporarily from participation in swim practices, swim meets, and other activities sponsored by the team. The circumstances warranting such a suspension generally involve a serious breach of the Swimming Code of Conduct or team policies and procedures. A coach may recommend suspension to the Board of Directors who investigate and evaluate the event, reach a decision, and inform the swimmer's parent(s) verbally and in writing in a timely manner. In the event of suspension from the team, no refunds of fees paid will be made.

Dismissal - A swimmer or parent may be directed to terminate his or her affiliation with the Stingrays for the remainder of the swimming season for an exceptionally serious breach or series of breaches of the Code of Conduct or team policies and procedures. A coach may recommend the dismissal of a swimmer or parent to the Board of Directors, who investigate and evaluate the event, reach a decision, and inform the swimmer's parent(s) verbally and in writing in a timely manner.

Practice Attendance

Swimmers should do their best to attend the requested number of practices each week; however, athletics should never compromise academics. Swimmers should arrive at the pool at least 10 minutes before the start of practice, so practice can start on schedule. If practice begins with dry-land training, swimmers should be in the proper attire at the designated start time. If the practice starts in the water, swimmers should have cap, goggles, and suit on. Swimmers should bring all required equipment to the pool side before practice begins. Visit www.swimrays.org, click the Equipment button at the top of main page, for equipment requirements.

Plan to stay for the entire practice. The last part of practice is very often the most important, and usually there are announcements made at the end of each practice. Parents should not interrupt swimmers or talk to coaches on deck during practice.

If a swimmer cannot attend the recommended number of practices for a prolonged period, please contact the swimmer's coach. The coach may be able to suggest opportunities to make up missed practices. If you are going out of town, notify your coach well in advance. Many out-of-town swimmers practice with the Stingrays when they are visiting Fredericksburg. Most clubs reciprocate this process. If an athlete cannot practice with a team, his/her coach may provide workouts, while they are gone. The practice calendar is online at www.swimrays.org.

Practice Schedule Changes

Practice Schedules are posted on the RAYS calendar per program per site monthly. Due to unforeseeable circumstances; inclement weather, or due to lack of pool availability, there will be times when practice schedules may be cancelled or re-scheduled for another time. The RAYS will attempt to reschedule cancelled practices; including utilizing another site if space is available.

Practice Behavior

Swimmers are encouraged to support their teammates at practice, as well as in competition. Working together, as a unit to benefit the individual and the team, is an important part of success.

Swimmers are expected to follow the verbal instructions of the coaching and facility staff. Swimmers must follow the rules of the YMCA, JRSSC, UMW, and Curtis Park. Disrespectful attitudes or behaviors are not tolerated. Abusive language, lying, stealing, and/or vandalism will not be tolerated. These behaviors violate the Swimming Code of Conduct.

Swimmers should be on deck 10 minutes before the scheduled time with caps, goggles, and required equipment. A Stingray coach or facility lifeguard must be present for swimmers to enter the pool. Swimmers must either be supervised or picked up no later than 10 minutes after their practice session. Swimmers may leave practice only with the coach's permission.

All swimmers, as directed by the coaching staff, must help in setting up and taking down equipment: lane lines, backstroke flags, and training equipment. Swimmers must replace any team or facility equipment he/she damages.

Only legal strokes, turns, and starts are allowed at practice. Swimmers must start and finish at the walls, using a proper push-off and finish. Swimmers must learn to read the pace-clock and push-off on time.

Interfering with a swimmer's progress during practice is not allowed. Use of the diving board at Curtis Park is always prohibited. Use of starting blocks is prohibited unless supervised by a coach.

Swimmers and parents are responsible for obtaining missed information and handouts when not at practice. Check emails or the website for team updates. Also, check your mailbox file kept on deck for ribbons and fundraising booklets.

Dry-land Program

Dry-land activities are an important part of Stingray training philosophy. Dry-land is almost as important as pool time; therefore, athletes should behave accordingly and dress appropriately.

Proper warm-up and cool-down exercises are important for the prevention of injuries. For this reason, warm-up/cool-down exercises should be performed before and after training. It will be the swimmer's and parent's responsibility to ensure the athlete is at practices and meets early enough so that they may complete their stretching and be ready for the start of warm-ups.

Expectations – We want dry-land training to be worthwhile, advantageous to the swimmers, and fun. Listed below are some reminders as you embark on a great dry-land season.

- **Wear comfortable clothing** – T-shirt, tennis shoes and shorts or sweat pants are required.
- **Arrive on time and plan to work the entire scheduled time** – Workout are between 15-45 minutes. Each wasted opportunity means one less step toward achieving your goals!
- **Recovery is important to good training** – Spend recovery time stretching, getting a drink, or moving to the next station.
- **There will be no unnecessary talking between sets** – Do not spend your recovery time talking. First, there should not be enough time; secondly, you're distracting your teammate's workout!
- **Be honest and complete your training** – Do not skip sets or days! Do what is requested carefully, completely and honestly. Remember that there are only so many opportunities to create the best swimming machine you possibly can by the championship season. Don't waste any opportunities!
- **Stretching vs. Proper Warm-up** – To perform as a highly trained, competitive athlete, the muscles must be prepared for 100% effort. This involves increasing blood circulation to bring nutrients to the muscles while helping the muscles attain the most efficient length for contraction. Muscles are strongest when they contract from a lengthened position. Groups of sub-maximal contractions (i.e. contractions during warm-up) must occur before the muscles can contract to 100% without the danger of tearing muscle and tendon tissue.

In addition to muscles, joints must also warm up. Before any athletic activity, joints should be put through a gentle range of motion. A warm-up lubricates the joints, tendons, and ligaments surrounding the joint with fluid. Warming up lessens tendon and ligament injuries. All practices and meets for Stingrays' swimmers begin with a swimming warm-up that consists of easy swimming of various strokes to accomplish the above principles. Swimmers who are late for practice or do not stretch before the practice lose the benefits of stretching and warming up properly and may run the risk of muscle tightness, soreness, or injury.

Stretching exercises are not an alternative to a proper warm-up. Their purpose is to relax and

lengthen the muscle and, eventually, to increase flexibility. Warm-up on the other hand, serves to increase blood flow, elevate the temperature of your muscles, and lubricate the joints via joint fluids. It also increases your heart rate, respiratory rate, and oxygen uptake. It is therefore the policy of the Stingrays that most stretching should be done outside of practice and that proper warm up is the most effective way to prevent injuries.

Equipment

Parents are responsible for purchasing equipment for their swimmers. Go to www.swimrays.org, click Equipment, which will bring up a list of required equipment by group. You may order this equipment online via Sport Fair.

Parent Role in Stingrays Swimming

To have a successful program, there must be cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your swimmer makes depends on this triangular relationship.

We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces the best results. Parents are asked to keep a positive perspective on the program. Discuss any problems you have immediately and directly with the coach and rest assured that he or she will do their best to address your concerns.

Parents will not be filming any swimmers during practice.

Coaches motivate and constructively criticize a swimmer's performance. Parents supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well. Always be supportive to ensure a positive experience for your child. Listed below are some questions to determine if you are a pressure parent. If you answer yes to one of more of these questions, you may be pressuring your child.

- Is winning more important to you than it is to your child?
- When your child has a poor swim, is your disappointment obvious?
- Do you feel that you must "psyche" your child up before competition?
- Do you feel that winning is the only way your child can enjoy a sport?
- Do you conduct "post mortems" immediately after competition or practice?
- Do you want to interfere during practice or competition thinking you could do better?
- Do you find yourself disliking your child's opponents?
- Are your child's goals more important to you than they are to your child?

Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children's abilities. Please do not compare the progress and development of your child with that of another child. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's progress and development in the proper perspective and help your child reach his/her full potential as an athlete.

- Every individual learns at a different rate and responds to different instructional methods. The slower learner takes more time to learn. This requires more patience on the part of the

- parents and coaches, who must both remember that the child's ultimate swimming potential may be as great as or greater than that of a fast learner.
- When a swimmer first joins the Stingrays, there may be a brief period in which he/she appears to slow down. This is a result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual.
 - Plateaus, both in competition and training, occur in every swimmer's career. Successful athletes work through these delays in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance.
 - Swimmers under ten are often inconsistent in their mastery of stroke technique. This can be frustrating for parents. Be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport and develop their mastery of stroke technique.
 - Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal for many children. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop a competitive spirit that is comfortable for them. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to competitive stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as youngsters prepare them for larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.
 - Coaches offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. Parents supply unconditional love, recognition, and the encouragement necessary to help a young athlete to have a healthy self-image.
 - If a parent can offer insight about their child that will enable that child's coach to work more effectively with the child, please be sure to contact the coach.
 - If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, contact your child's coach directly. Criticizing the coach in front of youngsters undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.
 - No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the coach, the team, or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coach and handled by the coach.
 - Be sure that your youngster swims because he/she wants to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus for all successful swimmers.
 - The etymology of the word "competition" goes back to two Latin words, "cam" and "petere" which mean "together to strive." Avoid playing your child against their competitors, thereby creating unhealthy competitive situations within the team and swimming community. Competition provides two great services for the athlete: it brings out the best in them and shows where improvement is needed.
 - Communication between coach and swimmer is very important. The coaches must have a swimmer's full attention during practice. Parents are invited to watch practice from the bleachers to avoid the temptation to coach.

In swimming, as in life, no one can succeed all the time. Every youngster can gain valuable experiences from swimming, whether or not a single race is ever won. What is important is to improve and learn from mistakes. We want to produce great young people who swim.

Problems and Questions Procedure

Questions should be directed to the person who can answer or solve your problem. Follow the guidelines below to get answers and solve problems quickly. These guidelines promote open communication between parents, swimmers, and coaches.

Problems or questions regarding practice, stroke instruction, meets, team rules, and the training program should be discussed with the individuals below, in the order listed. Please refrain from discussing problems with coaches during practice times. A coach may have another practice or duty after your own child's practice. Contacting coaches by phone or email is appreciated.

- Swimmer's group coach
- Head Site Coach at the swimmer's pool
- Head Coach
- Team President
- Board of Directors at a Board meeting

Other questions should be discussed with the individuals listed below, in the order listed.

- Head Coach
- Team President
- Board of Directors at a Board meeting

Photo Release

Swimmers are sometimes photographed or videotaped while participating in RAYS activities. This is usually done by coaches or parents, but the local newspapers will occasionally take photographs as part of an article. Additionally, the RAYS, Virginia Swimming, and USA Swimming frequently take and incorporate photographs in their publications. Any photos provided to the RAYS become property of the RAYS. If you do not desire that your swimmer be photographed or videotaped during a RAYS activity, please e-mail the RAYS president.

Chapter 4: Swim Meets

Meet Schedule

The meet schedule is distributed by the 1st week of practice after each season's break; short course season, 25 yards, in September and long course season, 50 meters, in April. Please review this schedule to determine which meets an athlete should attend. The meet schedules are the authorized meets for our team. If you plan to attend an unauthorized meet, you must receive permission from your coach.

Although meet attendance is not mandatory, we encourage all team members to compete once every three or four weeks. This meet schedule allows the swimmer enough time between competitions to develop new skills and master old ones. In some cases, meets are scheduled as close as two weeks or as far as five weeks apart. This happens when the meets available to us offer no other alternative. Multiday meets provide swimmers the flexibility of only competing on specific days.

Unless during championship season, we will not permit swimmers to compete in a competition on two successive weekends. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets Stingrays' swimmers attend. Individual and relays entries are made by the coaching staff.

Meet Announcements & Entry Confirmation

Meet announcements are sent to families via e-mail, placed on the bulletin boards, and posted on the RAYS website (www.swimrays.org) as soon as they become available. If you wish to attend the meet, log into the website and go to the Swim Meet tab on the bottom of the home page.

Confirm your intention to swim by picking the meet you want to attend and which days you are available. You will need to enter each swimmer separately. When the 1st and 2nd editions of entries are published, check to see if your entry is accurate. Failure to follow this procedure may result in a swimmer not being entered in the meet. If a meet is a prelim/final meet, **you must be able to swim finals and relays, if you qualify.**

Coaches track swimmers' times using Hy-Tek and Team Unify software. Coaches enter swimmers in meets and choose the appropriate events. After coaches complete the entry process, team members receive an email with the "**finalized entries**" attached. This is your confirmation that you have been entered in the meet. If there is a problem with the meet entry sheet, please contact a coach immediately.

During the championship season, one meet leads into another. An email is sent out before each meet stating if a swimmer qualifies for the next champ meet, whether as a new swimmer or with additional events. If you decide not to participate in the next champ meet, send an email to Coach Bob – robert.herlinger@gmail.com – stating that your swimmer won't be able to participate.

Occasionally, and regrettably, a swimmer will not be entered in an event or meet that he/she should swim. If space is available and the meet director is willing, a late entry may be allowed. In some cases, the host club may require an additional fee.

Sign-ups must be made by the due date. Meet information, including the sign-up deadlines, will be included in e-mail correspondence. If you still sign up late, you will be assessed a \$10 late fee, charged to your account. Late entries cause a lot of extra work for everyone involved in the meet entry process. Once entries are sent, the fees for the meet are paid and you will be charged for these fees through your meet fee account. Also, once entries are sent, there are no refunds for a swimmer who enters a meet and then does not attend the meet.

Each swimmer is assigned a USA Swimming membership number. This is a 14-digit (number/letter) identification; mmddyy of birthday, 1st 3 letters of your first name, MI, and 1st 4 letters of your last name.

Who Can Participate in Which Meets?

USA Meets: The determination of whether a swimmer participates in the “Mini B/C”, “BB/B/C”, “A/BB”, “A+”, or Senior is as follows:

Mini B/C Meets: All eight and younger swimmers may compete in “Mini B/C” Meets. Swimmer’s nine through 12 may participate in “Mini B/C” Meets in individual and relay events in which they do not have an “A” or “BB” time. Swimmer’s 13 and older may participate in the “Mini B/C” Awards Meet, but are no longer eligible to swim at any other “Mini B/C” meets.

BB/B/C Meets: This type of meet is normally open to 9 and older Class “BB”, “B”, and “C” swimmers. In addition, Class “A” swimmers may swim in individual events and relay strokes in which they do not have “A” times.

A/BB Meets: For 12 and younger swimmers, an “A/BB” Meet will require a minimum “BB” time for each event entered (occasionally a swimmer who has a “BB” time may swim other events if stated on the meet invitation). Thirteen and older swimmers do not have to meet the qualifying times for “A/BB” meets.

A Meets: If you have one A time, you may swim any event in the meet.

A+ Meets: To swim in an “A+” Meet the swimmer must have an “A” time in each event entered unless otherwise stated on the meet invitation.

Senior Meets: Any swimmer 12 years old or older may swim in a Senior Meet if he/she has a “15-16 AA” time in each event to be entered.

Meet classifications may vary. Read the meet invitations carefully to determine eligibility.

Swim Meet Procedures

Each group has a specific warm-up time to be adhered to. Be familiar with this warm-up time before leaving home. Arrive at the pool fifteen minutes prior to your designated warm-up times. report to your coach on deck with your suit, cap, and goggles, and be ready to get in the water. Warm-ups are mandatory and necessary for maximum performance. A member of the Stingrays coaching staff always conducts warm-ups.

All Stingrays swimmers are required to wear the RAYS royal blue team cap. A black RAYS cap

will be awarded, if you make finals and must be worn during that session. A team suit is recommended. All other team apparel is optional; however, wearing the complete team uniform promotes team unity and greatly aids in spectator recognition.

Each Stingrays swimmer is responsible for knowing which events he/she is swimming and being present in the team area before and after each race. Before reporting to the blocks, a swimmer should confer with a member of the coaching staff to review race strategy, technique, and goals. After each race, a swimmer must report immediately to a coach. This gives the coaches an opportunity to discuss the race with each swimmer and add positive comments concerning splits, stroke technique, and race strategy. If there is a designated area, proceed to the warm down lanes and do the proper cool down to help you get ready for your next race.

At most meets, electronic timing is used. The official time is generally the one recorded in the computer when the swimmer touches the touch pad and appearing on the scoreboard. If a swimmer misses the touch pad or there is a mechanical failure, various backup times may be used. The timing and scorekeeping personnel analyze all times to determine the official times that are then posted as final results.

In between races, swimmers are asked to rest and stay warm. All energy is to be stored up and used in competition, for swimming or supporting teammates.

Swimmers must check-in with coaches and get permission to leave the meet, especially at a meet when relays are involved.

Hunger and dehydration can lead to poor performance. Drink and eat throughout the meet.

Swim Meet Essentials

- Team suit or race suit – depending on level of meet
- 2 STINGRAYS caps
- 2 pairs of goggles
- 2 towels
- Old blanket or sleeping bag
- Quiet games or books
- Music to relax before races
- Water bottle and healthy snacks
- Foldable chair if deck has room

Check-in Events

The coaching staff is responsible for checking any swimmer in for their events. Usually all distance Freestyle/IM events will be check in events. The meet host will have a set time that all swimmers must be checked in by if they are going to swim. If they are not checked in, they will not be permitted to swim. Once checked in, if a swimmer misses the event, he/she will be automatically scratched from his/her next individual event.

Relays

Relays are a team effort. Every Stingrays swimmer should expect to swim a relay. It is extremely

important for swimmers to be on time to the meet, as relays are sometimes swum at the beginning of a session. Due to the length of most meets, planned relay events are often cut from the meet. Therefore, every swimmer should take advantage of the opportunity to experience relay competition in a meet atmosphere. Participation in relay events is a team effort and mandatory. The coaching staff will have the final say on relay team members. Before you leave the pool, check with the coaching staff to make sure you aren't in any relays.

Final Events

Before you leave the pool after prelims, double check the results to see if you made finals. If you are an alternate, someone ahead of you may scratch. If you are swimming in finals make sure you know when warm-ups begin before you leave. Failure to show up for a final event results in an athlete being scratched from the rest of the meet. You must be available to swim finals if you qualify – **team first**.

Time Trials

Some meets offer time trials, either at the end of the meet or the end of a session. Time trials are swum for an official time only; there are no places or awards given. The decision as to whether a swimmer will participate in a time trial rests solely with the Stingrays' staff.

Behavior at Meets

Whenever and wherever a Stingrays swimmer wears any item of the team uniform, the individual should remember that his/her actions and words reflect on the team. Let your actions reflect the pride you have in the Stingrays.

It is against USA Swimming Inc. rules for parents to be on deck during a meet. Only swimmers, coaches, and parents registered with USA Swimming Inc. and serving in a meet capacity, are allowed on deck. Any other person on deck will not be covered under the insurance policy umbrella provided by USA Swimming.

As a matter of courtesy, all questions swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff only. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through proper channels.

At the end of each swim session, help clean up the Stingrays team area.

Team members are never to add or scratch events without first consulting a team coach.

For all championship or travel meets, all swimmers, whether swimming or not, must come back to finals to warm-up and cheer for their team – **team first**.

Championship Swim Meets

The meet schedule includes the following championship meets: Virginia Swimming Age Group and Senior Championships, USA Swimming Age Group Zone and Sectional Meets, NCSA Junior Nationals, Futures and USA Swimming Junior and Senior Nationals, and Olympic Trials. These meets are open to swimmers who qualify, swimmers must attend 70% practice attendance to be able to attend AG Champ and above level meets.

Age Groups

Swimmers compete in age group categories: 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18. These age groups may vary from meet to meet. For example, instead of having separate categories for 8 and under and 10 and under, they may be combined as “10 and under.” Similarly, 15-16, and 17-18 may be grouped as 15-18. Some events are open and include all swimmers with minimum qualifying times and may include swimmers older than 18.

Classification

Swimmers are classified according to the time they swim in a specific event. Time criteria are set up by USA Swimming and are subject to change each October. Time standards are established for both **SHORT COURSE** (times swum in a 25-yard pool) and **LONG COURSE** (times swum in a 50-meter pool). Time standards are posted on our website.

Chapter 5: Swimmer Recognition

Swimmer of the Month Caps

Each month, group head coaches present Swimmer of the Month Caps to swimmers who go the extra mile at practice, show improvement, significant effort, or other accomplishment. These caps are worn during practice only.

Achievement Ribbons

“Personal Best” time improvement ribbons are awarded to swimmers, pick one for each improvement, who improve their best time in meets.

Award Bars

When a swimmer receives an “A” time he/she receives an **AWARD BAR** for that stroke which may be worn on the team warm -up jacket. Bars are awarded for each stroke, not each event. For instance, if a swimmer achieves an “A” time in the 50 and 100 Freestyle, he/she will receive only one freestyle bar.

“AAA” and “AAAA” Awards

Special “AAA” and “AAAA” patches are given out by the RAYS for those who achieve a time, once only, in these categories.

Team Record Awards

Any team member achieving a team record will receive a patch and a t-shirt for their achievement.

Awards Picnic

The Awards Picnic is held in the spring of each year. During the program, recognition and participation awards are presented to the swimmers. Trophies or plaques are awarded to the swimmers in a manner determined by the coaching staff.

State-Wide Awards

The prestigious Virginia Swimming’s Competitive Spirit Award Plaques are awarded to four swimmers, chosen by our coaches, from each Virginia swimming team. These awards are presented at the Annual Virginia Swimmers Banquet held at King’s Dominion in April. Swimmers who achieve progressively more demanding time standards will be invited to represent Virginia Swimming and/or the STINGRAYS at certain meets outside the State of Virginia (Zones, US Open, Junior and Senior Nationals and Olympic Trials). These swimmers are recognized throughout the year. The top male and female swimmers of the year for the State of Virginia are also recognized.

Chapter 6: Communications

The dissemination of information to all members and families on the team and the feedback of data are of paramount importance to the Board of Directors. Over the years, several methods have been used to “get the word out.” It is the family’s responsibility to supply and update email addresses.

Coaches

Call or email the coaches, or talk to them at the appropriate time after practices. Check the website, www.swimrays.org under Coaches for each coach’s email.

Handbook

The Stingrays handbook, located on the team website, www.swimrays.org is a combination of general information necessary for new team members and useful for older members.

Mailboxes

Each family has a file folder at their home pool – Massad Y, Rosner Y, the Jeff Rouse Swim and Sport Center, and King George Y. All members are urged to be careful to take information from the correct slot. Since we have gone paperless, these folders are mostly used for distribution of meet ribbons and medals, also fundraising material.

Website

Our web page address is www.swimrays.org. This site has team records, meet information (meet announcements, meet entries, warm-up information, meet results, meet directions), handbook, daily/monthly practice schedules, and your team account. You will also sign up for meets and volunteer on the site. In the event of inclement weather, the web site will include any information concerning cancellations.

Bulletin Board

The Stingrays have bulletin boards, at all practice facilities, to provide general information: MY - inside the pool area, RY - outside the pool area, JRSSC - inside the main pool entrance, and KGY – inside the pool area.

Team Phone Number

The Stingrays phone number is 540-207-0846. Team information can be obtained from the Head Coach at this number.

Email

Each head site coach is responsible for distributing team information to the membership. In general, e-mails are sent concerning meet sign-ups, meet results, fundraising activities, schedule changes, and team account fees information.

Chapter 7: Parent Responsibilities

The Stingrays expect parents to contribute their time and assist the team in swimming activities. Parents are expected to provide the physical equipment (suits, fins, etc.), transportation to practices and meets, proper food and rest, and unconditional encouragement and interest in the child's swimming activities. Parents must also meet their financial obligations to the team.

Volunteer Policy - Hosting Swim Meets

We host meets to give our swimmers the opportunity to swim close to home and keep costs down (about \$300 a year per swimmer). Since RAYS is a volunteer, non-profit, parent-run organization, parental involvement is vital to the success of the team.

RAYS Sponsored Meets

- Great Pumpkin Splash – October
- RAYS Stinger Invite - January
- North Region Champs – February
- Jeff Rouse Open Invite - May
- Summer Awards – July

Each family who has a swimmer in a RAYS-sponsored meet must work one session each day their swimmer attends or pay a \$100 per day fee in lieu of working each day. Additionally, if a family does not have a swimmer in attendance we do request help with hospitality donations or volunteer positions when able, but it is not required. Working as an official during a session of the meet qualifies for the meet obligation of that session. We encourage all families to help with meets whether or not their swimmer is competing. In the rare instance when you cannot help the day of the meet, we do have a limited number of jobs that can meet this requirement, but you must contact the volunteer coordinator to sign up to do them before the meet.

Working at Meets

Parents are **required** to work at all home swim meets and are asked to help at away meets when your child is competing. Parents do not need certification to time, place-judge, write ribbons, or be a runner. Parents are encouraged to obtain required certification for positions of stroke and turn, score keeper, clerk of the course, CTS operator, starter and referee. The Meet Director/Officials Chairperson publishes a list of workers before each swim meet. **You are required to work your assignment or find your own replacement.** Do not expect or ask the Meet Director/Officials Chairperson to do this for you.

RAYS Hosted Meet Hotel Accommodations Reimbursement Policy

The RAYS will reimburse reasonable and customary actual cost for hotel expenses for officials, Meet Director, Hospitality Coordinator, and Concession Coordinator in accordance with VSI procedures.

Hotel expenses will only be considered for RAYS hosted meets. Host teams may offer this benefit to officials/volunteers.

Officials, Meet Director, Hospitality Coordinator, and/or Concession Coordinator who live more than an hour away from the RAYS hosted venue may receive hotel accommodations at the Meet Director discretion.

- Swimmers entered in the meet are not permitted to stay in the accommodations provided by the RAYS.
- Rooms are assigned based upon double occupancy. Rooms will be shared by co-habiting officials, followed by same gender. In cases where a single occupancy room is the only option, priority is Meet Referee, Meet Director, Data Entry Operators, and Meet Admin.
- Those receiving overnight accommodations work all sessions the following day, unless extenuating circumstances exist and has been waived prior to the meet by the Meet Director.
- No hotel accommodations will be provided after the conclusion of the meet; unless waived by both the Meet Director and RAYS President and/or RAYS Treasurer.
- Hotel accommodations may be offered the night before the beginning of the meet, if the reasonable departure time to arrive on time at the venue is prior to 6am based upon their official capacity and home location.
- The Meet Director, at his/her discretion, may request for variances of this policy to the board to host a successful meet. Approved variances do not set a precedent for future RAYS hosted meets.

Chapter 8: Team Structure

The Stingrays Swim Team consists of a five-tiered structure, providing a natural progression through which the swimmer moves as he/she grows and matures. This structure encourages a swimmer's enthusiasm for the sport and meets the needs of children at all levels of ability and interest. When a swimmer is ready to move up to the next practice group, a coach will contact the swimmer and parent. Sometimes, there is a transition period where the swimmer attends one practice a week with the new group, while continuing to practice with their current practice group to see how the swimmer adapts to the advanced workout. Swimmers are advanced only after a successful trial period. No additional charges are incurred during the transition period. Dues are prorated and invoiced at the higher practice group amount upon permanent assignment to the higher-level practice group.

Developmental – MY, RY, JRSSC, KGY

This program is designed to introduce young swimmers, ages 5–10, into the sport of swimming, while allowing maximum opportunity to participate in other activities. Emphasis is placed on teaching fundamentals of the four competitive strokes by means of drills and games that make swimming fun. Participation in meets is appropriate, but not required. Practice is offered 3 times per week for 45 minutes. They do 70% - 80% drills and stroke work, and 20% - 30% games. A swimmer must be able to swim the 1 length of the pool, rhythmic breathing freestyle and backstroke, to join this group. Swimmers should attend practice 2-3 times per week.

Age Group 2 – MY, RY, JRSSC, KGY

This program is designed for swimmers ages 7–14 who can legally perform all competitive strokes and are ready for more advanced stroke technique. Increased emphasis is placed on teaching competitive starts and turns, and introducing the basics of training technique. Swimmers will be taught pace clock management and how to understand and execute swimming sets. Participation in all meet types is encouraged. Participation in other activities is still encouraged. Practices are offered for 1 hour on Monday – Friday. These kids do 50% stroke work, 50% aerobic training and some games. It is recommended that swimmers attend a minimum of 3 practices a week.

Age Group 1 – MY, RY, JRSSC, KGY

Swimmers, ages 9–14, build a work ethic with continued development of strokes and water skills. This is the first step toward year-round swimming, which requires a higher level of commitment, goal setting, mental training, and more advanced skills. Meet participation is encouraged. If other sports are played, swimming should be incorporated into that sport's season. Practices are offered Monday–Friday for 1 hour and 15 minutes of swimming, plus 30 minutes of dry-land training - 3 days a week. Recommend swimmers attend 3–4 practices weekly.

Juniors – MY, RY, JRSSC, KGY

For swimmers ages 11–15 years old, this program focuses on the competitive nature of the sport. Athletes prepare for the highest levels of age group swimming and beyond. Skill training is still important and incorporated into the different training sets. Dry-land is a very important part of training. Commitment and self-motivation are also very important. Practice is offered 6

days a week with 1 hour and 45 minutes of swimming and 30 minutes of dry-land, 4 days a week. It is recommended that they attend 4-5 days a week.

Seniors – MY, RY, JRSSC

Swimmers 14 years and older with ability and desire to train and compete on a regional and national level. They should be fully committed to improving their abilities to become the best they can be. Practice is offered 6 days a week and spend between 1 hour and 45 minutes and 2 hours and 30 minutes in the pool with at least 30 minutes of dry-lands, 3 to 4 days a week. It is recommended that they attend 5–6 days a week.

High School Prep – RY, JRSSC, KGY

This program is for swimmers 13 years and older (with some coach approved 12 year-olds) who want to get in shape for their high school swim season. This program runs September through early November.

JumpStart – MY, RY, JRSSC, KGY

JumpStart is for any swimmers, 7 and over, who have swum on a team before and are ready to get a “JumpStart” on their summer league competition. Must be legal in all four strokes. This program starts in early April through late May.

College – MY, RY, JRSSC, KGY

The collegiate swimmer program is for experienced USA Swimming athletes who are currently swimming for their college or university team.

Chapter 9: Organization

Board of Directors

The general management of the Stingrays' team is the responsibility of a Board of Directors, consisting of team members' parents, who volunteer to serve in the capacities of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Team Manager, Meet Director, and Social Committee Chairperson. Members of the Board of Directors serve two-year terms. Elections are held at the end of the Awards Picnic in the spring.

Position Descriptions

President: Responsible for the overall activities of the team; runs the Board of Directors, negotiates with coaches' contracts in collaboration with Treasurer and Head Coach; signs contracts; works to fill open positions for the Board; and acts as liaison with the Coaches.

Vice President: Fills President's role if he/she is unavailable; acts as liaison to all committees and special projects; he/she becomes the President Elect for the following year; holds Parent Meetings when parents have specific issues; and coordinates Scholarship programs.

Secretary: Maintains all correspondence, minutes, and files, performs team clerical duties; completes Monthly update on Team Unify for Board actions; work with Head Coach to update Team Handbook.

Treasurer: Responsible for all team finances, collections and disbursements; acts as liaison for financial issues with parents; coordinates and assists in all Tax preparation for the team; works in collaboration with President for Coaches contracts; updates Swimmer Contract; and works in the development of the yearly budget.

Team Manager: Liaisons with coaching staff; liaisons with swim parents; coordinate workers for team events or activities (timers, officials, concessions volunteers); and helps coaches maintain bulletin boards at each pool.

Meet Director: Responsible for RAYS hosted meets (facilities, officials and equipment); negotiates with facilities to host meets; helps with away meet hotel reservations; and keeps track of RAYS officials.

Social Committee Chairperson: Heads team social committee and is responsible for coordinating with site liaisons for all team social events, to include holiday parties, annual banquets, birthday recognitions, and other team or spirit building activities; assists coaching staff with ordering tri-folds, shirts, caps, and swimwear; and responsible for running all activities to bring new swimmers to the team for their respective site.

Head Coach/Executive Director: Serves in a non-voting capacity.

Team Meetings

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM with additional meetings scheduled as necessary. Meeting location is posted on the website. Parents are invited to attend the first part of the meeting. If there is an issue you would like to discuss at the meeting, contact a board member with topic, so it can be added to agenda. Meeting minutes are available by request from the Board Secretary.

Committees

Standing committees are appointed by the President as required. The Board of Directors forms special committees as the need arises. Our committees serve an indispensable need in the management and administration of our team and ensure current and future fiscal well-being. The hard work and creative talents of our parents insure our team's survival. Please get involved; your efforts will benefit your child and the team.

Parent Meeting

Meetings are held at each facility, one for each practice group, to discuss what to expect for the season. They usually are scheduled after the first two weeks of practice.

Annual Meeting

There will be an annual business meeting of the organization in the spring in conjunction with the Spring Awards Picnic.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the organization may be called during the calendar year by the President or an appointee of the Board of Directors as needed, with 10 days prior notification.

Chapter 10: Expenses

YMCA Membership

All team members, including new members, practicing at a YMCA facility must make their own arrangements with YMCA staff for payment of YMCA membership fees. YMCA initiation fees are waived when a member of the RAYS.

Team Dues

As we begin each swim year, the Board of Directors relies upon the online signed contracts to make budgetary decisions, because they represent the number of swimmers and fee income for the year. The Stingrays' membership fee structure is included in the annual contract.

The coaching staff will select swimmers for one of the five practice groups based on age, maturity, ability level, and space availability. The coaching staff will also determine when a swimmer is ready to move to a more advanced practice group. Yearly dues will increase as swimmers move into advanced practice groups.

The Stingrays offer two payment plans: 1) Payment in Full plan, and 2) Monthly Payment plan. **The Stingrays also offer a family discount plan.** All plans cover full membership for one swim season, beginning September 1 and ending July 31.

- (1) If you choose to pay for the year in full, you will receive a 5% discount from the monthly payment plan (amounts will be specified in the contract). Full payment is required by September 10.
- (2) The monthly payment plan is for 11 months with the first dues payment made in September and the last dues payment made in July.

Monthly Invoices

Monthly invoices are generated and emailed on the 1st of every month, showing your final invoice amount owed on your team account. Each family is responsible for paying the final invoice amount by the 10th of each month. If full payment is not received by the 10th of each month it will be considered late and your team account will be charged a \$40 late fee. The first monthly invoice will generate and be emailed on September 1. Monthly dues are invoiced September through July and all other fees are invoiced from October through August. Should any check be declined and returned by your financial institution you will be responsible for all fees incurred by the team, in addition to a \$50 returned check fee.

A payment past due more than 30 days may result in the swimmer not being permitted to enter into meets. Payments past due more than 60 days may result in the swimmer not being permitted to attend practice until payment arrangements are made. Should collections actions on your account become necessary, you will be responsible for all costs associated with collections actions, to include court costs and/or legal fees.

Family Discount Plan

The family discount plan is as follows: multi-swimmer discount is 6%, 12%, 20%, and 25% for multi swimmers 2 through 5 family members. This discount is calculated based on the total of per swimmer (athlete) program dues. Discounts or coupons cannot be used for High School Prep, JumpStart or Collegiate programs.

USA Swimming Membership

There is a non-refundable \$200 registration fee for each swimmer, which is separate from your dues payment. This fee includes the USA Swimming athlete registration fee of \$77, team registration fees, team t-shirt, and team swim cap.

Additional Family Credit (AFC)

AFC is not mandatory and is strictly voluntary. AFC is earned via credit through purchases of Scrip (gift cards from www.scripzone.com), securing team sponsorship sales, or participating in other AFC events. Additionally, AFC can be earned by officiating at RAYS hosted meets of \$25 per session. AFC credit/rebate will be posted to a family's account as it is earned monthly through July 20th, 2019. Our Swim-a-thon and Texas-Holdem' events are not applied to AFC. More information regarding gift card purchases can be found on the team's website under the tab AFC. If a check is returned due to insufficient funds, you will be charged for any expenses incurred by the team in addition to a \$50 returned check fee.

Every family is limited to earnings up to \$500 in AFC credit/rebate. Excess credit/rebate over \$500 will revert back to the RAYS, as a donation to the RAYS scholarship fund. Excess credit to a family's team account may not result in a refund of monies previously paid and a family may not delay a payment due in anticipation of future AFC credit/rebate. When a family leaves the team any excess funds in the family's team account, gained via AFC, will revert to the RAYS.

Outreach Program

All swimmers who qualify for the Virginia Swimming Outreach Program may be eligible to have their registration fee reduced by \$77 and all VSI sanctioned meet entry fees reimbursed by Virginia Swimming. All reimbursements received on your behalf from Virginia Swimming will be 100% applied to your account. If your family qualifies for Food Stamps, Free Lunch, or Reduced/Waived YMCA membership fees please contact Carol Rowlands, RAYS Bookkeeper, raysbookkeeper@gmail.com, to apply for this program. Upon acceptance into the Outreach Program there will be a onetime program dues reduction: \$75 for Developmental Program, \$150 for Age Group 2, \$175 for Age Group 1, \$250 for Juniors, and \$325 for the Senior program.

Swimmer Meet Travel Fees

Event and relay fees vary by meet. Each meet host also charges a swimmer or facility surcharge. Meet fees are included in the monthly invoice. RAYS swimmers entered in any meet will be charged a \$1.00 travel surcharge fee per meet entered. This fee helps with the cost of providing team subsidized championship apparel and/or sending swimmers to nationally ranked meets.

Meet Travel Reimbursement Policy

To be eligible for national meet reimbursement/assistance you must be in good financial standing and have been a RAY for one year. For new RAYS, reimbursement/assistance will be 50% of a returning RAYS swimmer. The maximum reimbursement/assistance is the highest-level meet obtained per swimmer per season. For example, a swimmer attends JR Nationals and NCSA JN for Short Course, the total reimbursement/assistance is \$50. Amount will be credited to their family RAYS account.

- NCSA JN & Futures Meets \$25
- Junior Nationals \$50
- Senior/Open Nationals \$75
- Olympic Trials/World Champs \$150

Additionally, the fund will be utilized to obtain the following for all qualifying attending swimmers, both returning and new swimmers, including relay only swimmers:

- Championship T-Shirt one per attendee (either SC or LC not both).
- Championship Apparel Express Shipping and Handling Charges up to \$100 per year
- Championship Jacket Supplement of \$15 to assist with the cost of the Championship Jacket of AG, SR, and Sectionals attendees one per year
- Championship Apparel Express Shipping and Handling Charges

For team unity all swimmers are expected to wear their RAYS provided apparel. During Championship meets all swimmers attending the first full day session (typically Friday) are encouraged to wear their RAYS T-shirt provided to them in the fall: on the following day (typically Saturday) their RAYS Championship T-shirt, and on the following days of the meet (typically Sunday) a RAYS T-shirt of their choice unless otherwise directed by the Coaches. Exception for Senior Champs (SC and LC) will be for graduating high school seniors can wear their college t-shirt they will be attending on the day of Graduating Senior Recognition (typically Saturday).

For national meets the swimmers will be notified prior to the meet the T-shirt uniform schedule by the coaches.

Sponsor and Ad Sales

The Stingrays Swim Team would like to encourage our members to seek out sponsors and solicit ads for the meet programs when we host meets. Contact the team's president or treasurer, if you are interested in obtaining a sponsor.

Medical Leave

For long-term illness or injury (5 weeks or longer) of the swimmer, the monthly dues will be reduced by 100% during the time the swimmer is out of the water; partial months are not prorated nor is AFP. The monthly dues are figured as follows: practice program fee of the ill/injured swimmer divided by 11. Requests for medical leave must be made in writing by e-mail or a mailed letter to the RAYS Board Treasurer at swimrays.treasurer@gmail.com with medical documentation attached.

Resignation

Only first year competitive swimmers are afforded the option of terminating this contract once entered into as long as written notification is provided by December 1, 2018. Exceptions to this policy are: 1) swimmers age 8 or younger as of September 30, 2018; 2) physician documented medical conditions for the swimmer; or 3) family relocation more than 30 miles from the nearest RAYS practice facility. All requests for release from financial obligation must be made in writing by e-mail or mailed letter to the RAYS Board Treasurer at swimrays.treasurer@gmail.com. Informing a coach or verbal notices will not be accepted; no exceptions. The request, if approved, will take effect at the end of the month in which the written request is received. Partial months are not prorated. The family is responsible for all financial obligations including AFP until written notice is approved. All financial obligations must be paid in full to be released from a contract and any promotional discounts will have to be reimbursed.

Early Termination

Requests for contract releases that do not meet any of the above resignations conditions may be offered an early termination option with a penalty fee. Early terminations are available only if the RAYS have met the total number of swimmer projections for the season. Early terminations, if approved, will take effect at the end of the month in which the written request is received. Partial months are not prorated. The family will be responsible for all financial obligations, including AFP, until written early termination release is approved. All financial obligations must be paid in full to be released from a contract and any promotional discounts will have to be reimbursed. In addition to being responsible for all incurred expenses a penalty fee is assessed based on the total remaining contract value as indicated below:

Nov 30, 2018 – 50% of total remaining contract value
Dec 31, 2018 – 55% of total remaining contract value
Jan 31, 2019 – 60% of total remaining contract value
Feb 28, 2019 – 65% of total remaining contract value
Mar 31, 2019 – 70% of total remaining contract value

Early terminations are not available after April 1, 2019. Early terminations are at the RAYS Board discretion; therefore, early terminations may or may not be approved or made available.

Chapter 11: Scholarships

The RAYS are excited to be able to offer 3 scholarships, (1) Merit, (2) Need Based, and (3) Graduating Senior. Both the Merit and Need Based partial scholarships will be available to RAYS athlete members of USA Swimming who are in good financial standing with the RAYS in Age Group 1, Juniors, or Seniors program groups.

The Graduating Senior scholarship is available to members of USA Swimming who are (1) in good financial standing with the RAYS, (2) who are graduating from high school in 2019 (or home school equivalent) and (3) accepted to attend an accredited college/university program as a first-year full-time student in the Fall of 2019. The application process and deadlines will be advertised via the RAYS website.

Scholarship/grants are limited to the availability of funds and a separate fund not associated with the RAYS General Fund has been established. Fundraising specifically designated for these scholarships occur throughout the year. To ensure the highest integrity of this program, an applicant number will be assigned to the application and members of the YMCA executives (non-RAYS members) will chose the recipients.

Merit and need based scholarship/grants are prorated over the season and paid as credit directly to the swimmer's team account. The Graduating Senior Scholarship is paid directly to the swimmer.

Chapter 12: RAYS Adaptive Provisions

RAYS Adaptive Provisions

Rappahannock Area YMCA Swim Team, Inc. (RAYS), in association with Virginia Swimming and USA Swimming, is committed to provide an environment for disabled swimmers to participate with the RAYS and to compete in meets

Inclusion Guidelines

1. USA Swimming Standards
 - a. In compliance with USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, RAYS desires to accommodate disabled swimmers. A disability is defined as a permanent physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities.
2. RAYS Special Administrative Standards
 - a. RAYS welcomes all swimmers with a disability and will make common-sense adjustments
 - b. Disabilities encompass the following major areas:
 - i. Hearing impairment
 - ii. Visual impairment
 - iii. Cognitive disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, severe learning disabilities, or autism
 - iv. Physical disabilities such as amputations, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, spinal injury, or other mobility impairments
3. Accommodations during practices should be up to the discretion of the site coach. Examples of such accommodations are:
 - a. Allowing volunteer helpers as needed for the disabled swimmer.
 - b. Including the disabled swimmer in practices by the swimmer's ability rather than age.
 - c. The coach of the practice group should have the same expectations of the swimmer with a disability as the other swimmers in that group with respect to effort, behavior, attendance, and other aspects of work ethic.
 - d. The same principles of training/conditioning, biomechanics, and sport psychology apply to the swimmers with a disability as the other athletes. Most coaches are expert at modifying practices to accommodate individual needs such as with shoulder injuries.
4. Inclusion of swimmers with a disability in sanctioned meets. This policy applies only to swimmers with permanent disabilities as defined above by USA Swimming.
 - a. In the regular season meets, disabled swimmers need not have achieved the qualifying time standards. The RAYS coach of the disabled swimmer, working with the Meet Director to ensure that no undue focus is placed on the swimmer during the meet, shall request to accommodate the swimmer without substantial negative impact on the meet time line. Examples of such accommodations are:
 - i. Allow the disabled swimmer to compete at a shorter distance, e.g. a 50 yard distance within a 100 yard event.
 - ii. Seed the disabled swimmer by the time rather than age; e.g., a 13-year old disabled swimmer could be seeded in the 11-12 age group of the same event.
 - iii. In championship level meets, disabled swimmers may enter with

permission of the Meet Director and Senior or Age Group Chairman. Accommodations as described above (or others, as recommended by the Adapted Swimming Committee based upon the specific disability) may be made by the Meet Referee.

- b. Places and awards for disabled swimmers can only be earned in the swimmer's actual event and/or age group. At the discretion of the meet host special awards may be given to disabled swimmers
- c. The athlete's coach is responsible for notifying the session referee of any disability prior to the competition.

Glossary of Swimming Terms

AGE GROUP –Division of swimmers according to age. The USA Swimming divisions are 8&U, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and senior.

AGING UP – When an athlete changes age groups.

ALTERNATE – In a prelim/final meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers are designated as alternates - the faster of the two being first alternate and the next being the second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on moment's notice. If an athlete is an alternate, but cannot make it back for finals, they should scratch from their alternate position.

AMERICAN SWIM COACHES ASSOCIATION (ASCA) – A professional organization throughout the nation, certifying coaches and offering many services for coaches' education and career advancement.

CHLORINE – The chemical used by most pools to kill the bacteria in water and keep it safe to swim in.

CIRCLE SEEDING – This is a method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes.

CONSOLATION – A term used in a prelim/final meet for the second fastest eight swimmers.

COURSE-Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition - Long Course-50 Meters - Short Course 25 Yards or Meters.

DECK ENTRY – Accepting entries into swimming events on the first day or later day of a meet.

DISQUALIFIED – A swimmer's performance is not counted because of a rule infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with open hand above their head. Its abbreviation, DQ, will appear next to the swimmer's name in the results.

DUAL MEET – A type of meet where two teams compete against each other

DRYLAND – Running, body weight exercises, and various strengthening programs swimmers do out of the water.

ENTRY LIMIT – **1.** The number of events an athlete may swim during a specific session. For most meets, this is four. For prelims/finals meets it is often three. **2.** Each meet usually has a limit of total swimmers that can be accepted. Once this limit has been reached, the meet will be closed to all other swimmers and teams.

ELECTRONIC TIMING – Timing system that has touch pads in the water that stop the clock automatically as a swimmer finishes.

FALSE START – When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn, resulting in a disqualification.

FALSE START ROPE – A rope is strung across the width of the racing pool to stop swimmers who were not aware of a false start.

FASTEST TO SLOWEST – A seeding method used in longer events held at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heat followed by the next fastest and so on.

FLIPPERS OR FINS – Used during practice in certain sets. All groups will be using this piece of equipment. Helps in ankle flexibility and aids in keeping the body in proper alignment in the water.

GALLERY – The viewing area for spectators during swimming competitions

HEATS – The division of an event in which swimmers are divided into groups of six or eight depending on the number of lanes in the pool. The fastest swimmers in each heat will be in the middle lanes.

HEAT SHEET – The pre-meet printed listing of swimmers' seed times in various events. Heat sheets are sold at the admissions table and are used mainly to make sure the swimmer has been entered correctly and to determine what heat and lane the swimmer will swim in for each event.

HIGH POINT – An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in an age group. Only some "A" meets and championship meets offer this type of award.

IM – This is short for individual medley. A swimming event using all four competitive strokes. The order of strokes must be butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

INTERVAL – Used in practice to determine how much rest to take between swims.

INVITATIONAL – Meets by invitation only. The host club decides invitees.

LAP COUNTER – The large numbered cards used during individual freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the card are odd numbers only, with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.

LSC – Letters that stand for Local Swim Committee. This is the local level administrative division of USA Swimming with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries. Virginia Swimming Incorporated (VSI) is the local governing body of USA swimming.

MARSHALLS – Officials in charge of the safety of swimmers and spectators at swim meets.

MEET DIRECTOR – The official in charge of the administration of the meet.

MILE – Slang reference for the 1650-yard and 1500-meter freestyle events.

SENIOR NATIONALS – The best swimmers from the United States and around the world compete at this meet. There are no age limitations and the time cuts are extremely difficult. Every four years this meet becomes the Olympic Trials.

NATATORIUM – A building constructed to house a swimming pool and related equipment. Usually a quality building used for big meets with ample seating.

NT – This is short for "No Time." This abbreviation is used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has never swam the event before.

PADDLES – Colored plastic devices worn on swimmers' hands during swim practice. Paddles help to create feel for the proper pulling patterns in each stroke as well as develop strength.

POSITIVE CHECK-IN – The procedure required before a swimmer swims a deck seeded event. The swimmer must mark their name on a list posted on deck at the meet. By doing so they have indicated they will swim, thus eliminating no-shows and assuring full heats. Positive check-ins are often done for distance events.

PRELIMS/FINALS – A meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are held in the morning with the top 8 to 24 qualifiers returning to compete in the finals at night. This format is typically used for championship meets.

PRE-SEEDDED – A meet in which the swimmer knows which heat and lane they are in by looking at the heat sheets. Most meets in Virginia are pre-seeded.

PROOF OF TIME – Swimmers or coaches must supply proof of time with some meet entries, and other meets where it is required when a swimmer misses a meet cut-off time. Official meet results can be used as proof of time.

PSYCH SHEET – This sheet lists swimmers from fastest to slowest by event. Usually this is a prelude to deck seeding.

PULL BUOY – A flotation device used to keep the legs afloat during pulling sets.

REFEREE – The USA official in charge of all decisions made on deck regarding the administration and running of the meet.

SCRATCH – When you withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, that if not followed results in a penalty to the swimmer.

SECTIONALS – An upper level meet below Junior National standard. There are no age groups and time standards are difficult to achieve. This meet will be held in a South-Eastern location.

SEEDING – Creating heats for each event by determining each swimmers heat and lane.

SHAVE – The process of removing all arm, leg and exposed torso hair, to decrease the drag or resistance of the body moving through the water. Used in conjunction with the taper process.

SPLIT – A portion of a race that is timed to help in pacing.

STAR – All Championship USA Swimming meets will be sent to the National office, where upon a US Open, Senior National or Olympic Trial standard will be set.

STARTER – The USA official in charge of starting each race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP – A meet held twice a year for both Age Group and Senior swimmers, sponsored by the LSC.

STROKE JUDGE – The USA Swimming official positioned at the sides and end of the pool that judges strokes.

TAPER – The resting phase at the end of a season, before a championship meet. Tapering allows a swimmer's muscles to fully recover before racing.

TIMED FINALS – Competition in which there is only one session per age group and final places are determined by the times swum in heats.

TIME STANDARD – A time set by a meet or LSC that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition. Also insures that all competitors are of the same ability level at the same meet.

TIMERS – The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks or finish end of the pool who are responsible for getting watch times on each heat and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.

TIME TRIAL – Some meets will offer time trials, either at the end of the meet or the end of a session. Time trials are swum for an official time only, there are no places or awards given.

TOP 10 – The top 10 times nationally in each event for 11 and above swimmers as compiled by USA Swimming

TOUCH PAD – The removable pad at the finish end of the pool that is connected to the electronic timing system. The swimmer must properly touch the pad to register a time.

TRANSFER – When a swimmer leaves one club and goes to another. One hundred and twenty days of unattached competition is required before a swimmer can represent another club.

UNATTACHED – A swimmer who competes but does not represent a team. Unattached swimmers may not swim relays and do not score team points.

ZONES – Eastern Zone All-Star Championship Meet contested twice a year at the end of each season. In Short Course, the LSC teams consists of the top two swimmers in each event/age group. In Long Course, swimmers must meet qualifying times (usually 3 AAA).

*A non-profit youth organization affiliated with
United States Swimming, Inc., Virginia Swimming, Inc., & YMCA of the USA Swimming and Diving*

