

Vitras Swim Club
2015–2016
Team Handbook



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Team Website

www.swimvitras.com

“Building a winning tradition, one stroke at a time”

At VSC we live by our name:

V- Value: We value our swimmers as athletes and people and work to develop and shape both.

I- Integrity: We believe in honesty and truthfulness both in and out of the pool.

T- Training: We know hard work pays off and believe that by training smarter and harder we will become better swimmers.

R- Racing: We know that competition is important and so is racing. We always expect to do our best in races, no matter the circumstances.

A- Attitude: We believe in positive attitudes and outlooks both in practices and meets. We know instilling an enthusiastic outlook on life in young swimmers helps them grow and develop into positive citizens.

S-Sportsmanship: We value being a good teammate and competitor. Learning to lose is as hard as learning to win and our swimmers will be prepared to handle both; in and out of the pool.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The VSC coaching staff is committed to helping every swimmer in the program reach their maximum potential. We feel we can do this for swimmers of all ability levels and age ranges. Naturally, at any given time, for many team members the development of potential will be observed as time improvement in swimming events. However, we don't feel that our guidance is limited to this aspect of development. We want our program to touch their lives in a number of meaningful ways.

We view our job as leading the swimmers on a journey of self-discovery, through the medium of competitive swimming. There will be ample opportunity for learning how to deal with success and failure, how to set and achieve goals, and how to explore and test one's limits.

In the younger age groups, our emphasis is placed on learning proper technique and learning to enjoy the sport. As the swimmers progress to our highest levels, we expect them to be able to commit to the pursuit of excellence and to exhibit good citizenship, leadership, and sportsmanship. If we accomplish these goals, we are certain that VSC will not only become a dominant force in competitive swimming, but a dominant force in the lives of our swimmers as well.

COMMUNICATION

Communication among swimmers, parents, and coaches is vital to the success of our team. Every effort is made to keep families informed of upcoming meets, team activities, and team news through the following:

VSC Website: The VSC website is located at www.swimvitrass.com and is our primary vehicle for communication and includes information on upcoming team competitions, team functions, training group information, monthly billing, and general team news. Families are expected to check the website on a daily basis.

Facebook: We have a very active facebook page that displays meet information, practice changes, announcements, educational articles and more. Please “like” our page and follow it for updates on the team.

Your Account: Once you register online at the website you will receive a password for the website. This password allows you to view all communication, review your bill, and enter your swimmer in upcoming meets. You can keep the password given or change your password. You also may add additional email addresses so that other members of your family can receive important emails.

Flyers and Handouts: Swimmers will receive handouts periodically at practice with details regarding swim meets, entries, team functions and other news from group coaches. Handouts are occasionally distributed containing educational information on competition, diet, and swimming techniques. Frequently these may be distributed via email.

Communication with Coaches: It is easiest to reach the coaches via email; however, you may feel free to call or text Coach Sarah at 630-728-9104. Keep the line of communication open with your coaches; they welcome the opportunity to discuss any matter either over the phone or in a private meeting. **Please do not discuss concerns with the coaches during practice.**

Email: Frequently VSC will send out “blast” emails to their groups about upcoming events or upcoming responsibilities that the swimmers/parents may have. It is important to check your email daily as frequently emails will be sent out and a response will be necessary within a 24-hour period. Aside from posting on the Website, coaches use email as their primary vehicle for communication, the easiest way to get in touch with a coach is through email.

TEAM STRUCTURE

The following descriptions briefly outline the training groups. The VSC philosophy has the developing swimmer going through 3 different “phases” of training and has structured the groups to mirror that philosophy. The coaching staff determines placement within the program and advancement through the different levels.

A Brief Explanation of the 3 Training Phases

The career of a swimmer can be broken down into 3 different training phases: learning to swim, learning to train, and learning to achieve. Although the current season is always important, it is important to consider the swimmers long term career development, and to follow a path that will lead to the swimmer reaching full potential as they progress through the team groups. Here each Phase is listed, along with the groups that fall under each category and a brief explanation of each group(s).

Phase 1 – Learning to Swim

This phase includes the years of the athlete’s first swimming lesson through their beginning years on the team. The primary objective is to learn the skills involved in swimming by developing each of the four strokes as well as the core elements of body control, feel for the water and stable movement patterns. Swimming is a skill dominated sport, particularly during the developmental period of early childhood. Skill development is paramount and therefore the principles that guide skill learning are applied to the training of each swimmer. These principles include the application of distributed and mass practice techniques, the partitioning of skills into a sequence of learning components (i.e. drill progressions), and the linking of individual skills to overall swimming technique. The quantity of practice (training) is always a consideration but volume requirements are secondary to the development of skill. We must take every opportunity to develop efficient swimmers in these groups as it is easier to teach before the swimmers have developed extensive muscle memory. Normal physical growth and development during childhood will ensure that performance improves from one season to the next. Thus focus should be towards ensuring the swimmers core body movements are efficient as these provide the basis for the “inside out” mantra of stroke technique. By the time they progress out of this phase the basics of stroke technique should be well in hand, and they should be ready to begin the next level of training, with consistent technique across the board in all strokes.

VSC groups that serve this Phase 1: Red I, Red II, Red III

The first levels of VSC emphasize building a strong foundation of technique. However, these swimmers will also be taught starts, turns and an introduction to training.

Phase 2 – Learning to Train

Typically as swimmer enters this phase they have mastered basic skills, and the demands of training take center stage. Swimmers must maximize their potential during the rapid increase of physical capabilities during maturation. The starting and ending points for this stage vary due to the differences in maturation.

During this period the objective is to extend the volume of training progressively. Training volume becomes a critical factor in long term improvement. The quality of training is expressed in terms of maintaining efficient and effective technique over progressively greater seasonal loads. Goals for groups within this phase should be a

general progression of training with improving technique all the way through each group. Typically a swimmer should begin to learn about pace, and how to train fast for longer periods of time. The two most important components to this phase are: 1) ensuring that the long term success for the swimmer is not limited by treating the swimmer as if they were a mature adult, and 2) failing to establish a proper training base of aerobic training.

VSC groups that serve this Phase 2: Black I and Black II, Silver

At each level the swimmers will notice an increase in expectation on the part of the coach regarding effort and participation. Fundamentals are still stressed, but these swimmers are exposed to varying forms of training, which not only prepare them for their current races, but will also provide a solid foundation for future performance.

Phase 3 – Learning to Achieve

The third phase, learning to achieve, occurs after the swimmer has mastered the first 2 phases of training. This phase typically represents the more advanced 13–14 year olds and most open swimmers. In this phase the swimmer can begin the more advanced aspects of training, lactate tolerance and production work, heavy VO₂ work, and advanced speed training (buckets, hand paddles, etc.). Technique work is essential for this group, but should be geared more towards mastering the finer points of swimming, not basic core movements. These goals are possible only when the groups before this commit to making sure that there are no training or technique shortfalls in their VSC swimming experience.

VSC groups that serve this Phase 3: Black III

Swimmers at this level feel further demands and they are taught how to internalize these higher expectations. Practices become more specific and additional emphasis is placed on performance criteria for practice and meets. The program becomes more individualized and swimmers are expected to accept responsibility for their improvement.

ADVANCEMENT WITHIN THE PROGRAM

The process of assigning groups always proves to be one of the most difficult things we must do. Our decisions are based on a number of factors; meet performance, training, attendance, maturity, lane space and our future expectations of the groups. Swimmers and parents must understand that we realize the social aspect: the desire to be with friends, the competition and comparing, and the multitude of other approaches or views swimmers and parents have about swimming and other athletes. Every swimmer will be given the opportunity to grow and develop over the season. Please be patient and realize that there may be adjustments to groups based on what we see in practice and how individual swimmers perform.

Generally speaking, swimmers are grouped according to ability level. At the entry level, age is probably an equal consideration. We want these swimmers to feel comfortable within their peer group. Later in their development, however, ability takes precedence. It's important that the upper groups contain swimmers of similar ability for the sake of practice management.

All swimmers satisfying the prerequisites, performance standards, and personal development expectations for a particular group will be considered for advancement within the program. Advancement could take place depending on group numbers, team breakdown, and the coaching staff's decision based on individual swimmer's needs. The coaching staff will make all decisions. Movement within our program will occur seasonally so that all swimmers are able to start out with the proper training groups per season.

We will move swimmers up after: Summer Season (ends in July), Fall Season (ends in November), Winter Season (ends in March), Spring Season (ends in May).

Black III: Coach Sarah Byers

I. Prerequisites

A. Minimum Age: 12 for girls, 13 for boys

B. Attendance: 90% season in previous group

II. Training minimums

Training intervals are considered "base" for training. This would mean that a swimmer could descend, build, negative split, etc. on this interval, and not just "make it".

A. Freestyle 1:20 SCY

B. IM 1:30 SCY

C. Kick 1:45 SCY

D. Attendance recommendation: 10 days per week

E. State or Senior State times for their age group

III. Personal

A. Commitment and Desire

B. Demonstration and Comprehension of Technique

C. Physical, Psychological and Social Readiness

Black II: Coach Sarah Byers

I. Prerequisites

A. Age - minimum 9 years old

B. Attendance - 85% season in previous group

II. Training minimums

Training intervals are considered "base" for training. This would mean that a swimmer could descend, build, negative split, etc. on this interval, and not just "make it".

A. Freestyle 1:30 SCY

- B. IM 1:45 SC
- C. Kick 2:00 SCY
- D. Attendance recommendation: 6 days per week
- E. Younger swimmers: state times for their age group. Older swimmers: several regional times for their age group.

III. Personal

- A. Commitment and Desire
- B. Demonstration and Comprehension of Technique
- C. Physical, Psychological and Social Readiness

Black I: Coach Sarah Byers

I. Prerequisites

- A. Age: 7–12 years old
- B. Attendance: 80% season in previous group
- C. Able to read pace clock with intervals

II. Training minimums

Training intervals are considered “base” for training. This would mean that a swimmer could descend, build, negative split, etc. on this interval, and not just “make it”.

- A. Freestyle 1:45 SCY
- B. IM 2:00 SCY
- C. Kick 2:05 SCY
- D. Attendance recommendation: 4 days per week
- E. Regional times for their age group.

III. Personal

- A. Commitment and Desire
- B. Demonstration and Comprehension of Technique
- C. Physical, Psychological and Social Readiness

Silver: Head Assistant Coach Katie Gunther

I. Prerequisites

- A. Age: 10–18 years old
- B. Attendance: 70% season in previous group

C. Able to read pace clock with intervals

II. Training minimums

Training intervals are considered “base” for training. This would mean that a swimmer could descend, build, negative split, etc. on this interval, and not just “make it”.

- A. Freestyle 2:00 SCY
- B. IM 2:15 SCY
- C. Kick 2:30 SCY
- D. Attendance recommendation: 3 days per week

III. Personal

- A. Commitment and Desire
- B. Demonstration and Comprehension of Technique
- C. Physical, Psychological and Social Readiness

RED III: Head Assistant Coach Katie Gunther

I. Prerequisites

- A. Age: 9–14 year olds
- B. Able to swim 500 yards freestyle with no open turns, 200 yards backstroke, and 200 IM legally including all turns.
- C. Can read and follow interval clock.
- D. All four strokes with legal starts, turns, and finishes

II. Performance

- A. Freestyle 2:15 SCY
- B. IM 2:30 SCY
- C. Kick 2:45 SCY
- B. Attendance recommendation: 2–3 days per week

III. Personal

- A. Commitment and Desire
- B. Demonstration and Comprehension of Technique
- C. Physical, Psychological and Social Readiness

Red II: Head Assistant Coach Katie Gunther

I. Prerequisites

A. Age: 6–13 year olds

B. Is comfortable in the water.

C. Able to swim 200 yards of freestyle with no open turns and 200 yards of backstroke and a 200 IM legally including all starts and turns.

CI. Able to execute a competitive dive and turns for all 4 strokes.

CII. All four strokes with legal starts, turns and finishes.

II. Performance

A. Attendance recommendation: 2–3 days per week

III. Personal

A. Commitment and Desire

B. Demonstration and Comprehension of Technique

C. Physical, Psychological and Social Readiness

RED I: Head Assistant Coach Katie Gunther

I. Prerequisites

A. Age: 6–9 year olds

B. Able to swim a 100 freestyle with no open turns and 100 backstroke and 100 IM unassisted without stopping.

C. Able to swim freestyle and backstroke technically and legally correct.

D. Knowledge of the fundamentals of butterfly and breaststroke.

E. Able to dive fingers first into the pool

F. Can focus for 45 minutes of practice

II. Performance

A. Attendance recommendation: 2 days per week

III. Personal

A. Commitment and Desire

B. Demonstration and Comprehension of Technique

C. Physical, Psychological and Social Readiness

PRACTICE EQUIPMENT

All swimmers are expected to furnish their own practice equipment. Standard practice equipment for all training groups is a practice suit (any make, any color), swim cap (optional), goggles, and towel.

Other training equipment is introduced as the swimmers advance to higher groups. These training items are required can be purchased from SkiPro Swim Shop, East Valley Sports or Swim Outlet.com

- a. Black III: Fins, Paddles, buoy, kickboard, equipment bag, snorkel, and tempo trainer
- b. Black II: Fins, buoy, paddles, kickboard, snorkel, equipment bag
- c. Black I: Fins, kickboard, buoy, paddles, snorkel, equipment bag
- d. Silver: Fins, kickboard, buoy, paddles, snorkel equipment bag
- e. Red II, III: Fins and pull buoy
- f. Red I: Fins

All suits and equipment should be marked permanently with the swimmer's name.

TEAM APPAREL

If a swimmer chooses to wear a cap in competition, that cap must be a team cap. The team suit is recommended, but not required. All team apparel can be ordered through our Team Shop on our website. Team hats and shirts can be ordered through Coach Sarah.

SWIMMER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

As a member of VSC you represent yourself, your family, your community, and the team. Therefore, every team member is expected at all times to conduct him/herself with exemplary behavior.

1. Swimmers will follow the direction of any VSC coach at all times.
2. Swimmers should communicate openly with the coaching staff regarding all matters that may affect their personal or team performance.
3. Swimmers will follow the behavioral guidelines set by the coaching staff at all practices, meets, trips, and gatherings.
4. Team spirit is a key ingredient of a successful swim program. Participate in team cheers, wear team clothing, and be proud to be a member of VSC. Black III swimmers are expected to serve as positive role models for all team members.
5. Swimmers should know their best times to assist them in setting goals.
6. At meets swimmers should report to their coaches before and after their events

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

Research in the fields of sports psychology and child psychology reveals that children develop their competitive spirits at different rates. Moreover, young children, below the age of eight, are not naturally competitive. The main attraction of sports for them is fun. That is part of the reason USA Swimming does not recognize the 8 & under age group.

At VSC we are intent on allowing our youngest swimmers to develop at their own rates. The first step is local competitions. As the swimmers progress, travel to meets and championships will figure into their schedules. With a progressive offering such as this, swimmers and parents have a chance to adapt to the increasing commitment of competition.

CLASSIFICATION AND TYPES OF SWIM MEETS

Classified Age Group Program

Swimming in the United States is built around the "age group" concept. Swimmers compete only against those swimmers of their own sex who are at or near their own age. There are five main age groups: 10 & under, 11 - 12, 13 - 14, 15-16, 17-18. The 10 & under age group is sometimes subdivided into categories such as 6 & under, 8 & under, 7-8, and 9-10. In addition, the 15-16 and 17-18 age groups are often combined into a 15-18 or 15 & over category. Open events are sometimes offered in which any swimmer who has attained the time standard, regardless of age, may compete. Senior events usually have a restrictive time standard to ensure a higher level of competition. Either of these last two classifications may be used to offer selected events for swimmers of more than one age group.

Individual events are offered in the four competitive strokes--freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley, a combination of all four. Events in each stroke are offered in multiple distances. Classification by age and sex is insufficient to guarantee fairness of competition. With this in mind, time standards have been developed for each age group. Classification levels are as follows:

B-BB-A-AA (Double A)-AAA (Triple A)-AAAA (Quad A)-Sectional-Junior Nationals (18-U national time standards)-US Open- Senior Nationals (Open national time standards)-Olympic Trials

Swimmers and parents may find the times for their age group on the VSC website.

MEET ENTRY PROCESS

To enter a meet:

Go to our website www.swimvitrass.com

Sign in with your account information

Go to "Swim Meets"

To get info about meets (i.e. warm-up times, which events are which days, relay info, location, etc.) click on the meet icon itself.

To sign up for meets click on "Attend this Meet"

Click on the swimmer you would like to commit

By the “sign up record” click the arrow and select “yes...”

Click “save changes”

PLEASE include in the “note box” if you cannot attend all days provided.

To take your swimmer out of a meet:

If you want to take your swimmer out of the meet BEFORE the online deadline has expired—just go back to “swim meets”, click on “attend this meet”, select swimmer, click arrow again (by “sign up record”) and select “no...”, save changes.

Once I have sent the meet entries to the host team (this usually takes place about 1–2 weeks before the meet itself); you will be charged for those events.

How to look up your swimmer’s events

Once the coaches have assigned events and approved them—then you can look up your swimmers events.

Go to “Swim Meets” and click on “attend this meet” again—all events will appear

In order to help to make sure that your swimmers’ entries are correct—PLEASE review their entries once they are available on–line!!! If there are any corrections/problems with events/entry times please email Coach Sarah (coach@swimvitr.com) It is the parents/swimmers responsibility to make sure that the entries and times are correct.

“Reminder” emails will go out to everyone automatically once the deadline for a meet approaches...if you have already signed up you will still get the email. Do not worry, it does not mean you are not signed up. The “reminder” emails go to everyone, regardless of if your swimmer is signed up or not.

SWIM MEET PROCEDURES & BEHAVIOR

1. VSC will always warm up as a team at all meets. This warm–up will normally take place one hour before the start of the swim session. Swimmers must be ready to enter the water at the start of warm–ups. This is the only way we can be assured of having the necessary space for a proper warm–up. Those reporting more than ten (10) minutes late for warm–up must prepare on their own.
2. All VSC swimmers are expected to wear the VSC cap in competition. It is further suggested that the swimmers wear team suits, warm–ups, T–shirts, etc., while at a swim meet.
3. VSC has a "team area" at all meets. All swimmers are encouraged to sit together as a group; this promotes team unity and spirit.
4. Swimmers are expected to be aware of their event numbers and to report to the promptly when their event number is called. Discussions with the coaching staff regarding races should be done before this time.
5. Swimmers should report to their coach directly following each event to review the race.

6. The coaching staff will determine all relay teams. Sometimes we try to arrange the fastest relay possible. At other times, we are looking at scoring team points, and we may just be interested in maximum participation. Whatever the intent, relay selection and composition is a function of the coaching staff.
7. Know, and adhere to, proper behavior in all public places. Remember that your actions and words reflect not only on VSC, but your family, community, and most importantly, yourself.
8. All swimmers are expected to be courteous at all times to meet officials, workers, and opponents.
9. If swimmers or parents have any questions concerning meet results or an officiating call, these inquiries should be directed to the coaching staff. The coaches will pursue the matter through the proper channels. It is best that parents and swimmers not get involved in these matters.
10. Keep our team area neat and clean by using the trash receptacles provided. A team area full of debris is a bad reflection on our team and members.
11. Team spirit is an important part of swim meets. All swimmers are encouraged to participate in cheering for the team and one another.
12. Swimmers will be expected to rest and conserve energy between events and sessions and to remain in the team area while at the pool.

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents play an important role in the success of any age group swimmer. With the right kind of support and encouragement, your swimmer will progress steadily and enjoy a rewarding experience.

1. Be a supporter and stabilizer through the inevitable ups and downs of victory and defeat. Encourage swimmers to take their swimming-related problems to the coaching staff. They have the training, experience, and perspective needed to deal with these problems.
2. Be patient with your swimmer's progress. Every athlete progresses at a different pace. Keep in mind that long-term improvement is the ultimate goal for a happy, successful career.
3. Leave the coaching to the coaches. Do not pressure or offer swimming advice. It is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help their swimmers feel good about themselves.
4. Parents are welcome to attend swim practice but should not interfere or interrupt the coach. A two-way relationship exists daily at practice, and it is imperative that the coaches have the swimmer's full attention at this time.
5. Nip your coaching concerns in the bud. Arrange a meeting, work it out, and drop it. Never let a disagreement with a coach be known to the swimmer. This may destroy a positive coach/swimmer relationship.

- 6 Help swimmers develop good health habits--pre-training and pre-meet meals, general diet, rest, appropriate dress, and positive attitudes.
- 7 During competition, the deck attitude of parents and family members should be positive and sportsmanlike. Parents, relatives and friends belong in the spectator area, not in team meetings or in the team area.
- 8 Parents are the backbone of age group swimming. Please volunteer to work in our organization, without your support, swimming would cost much more and our program would suffer.
- 9 Stay informed. Check the website, meet information, and other handouts distributed at practice. Have someone in the family check your mailbox and the website regularly.
- 10 Coaches will inform by letter, e-mail or phone, if necessary, the parents of any swimmer who has been subject to disciplinary action.
- 11 All VSC families are encouraged to participate in swim-team related activities. Much can be gained from socializing away from the competitive arena.
- 12 Understand that all coaching decisions are just that. Coaches are not perfect, but will always try to do what they feel is fair and right. Their job is to think of all the swimmers, not just one or a few.

VSC Billing and Fees

All VSC billing is done through the team website: www.swimvitrass.com. Every family will have an account created through the online registration. Billing is done on the 1st of each month. Payments are done through automatic withdrawals; this will require a current debit/credit card to be on file with the club at all times. If the payment does not go through for any reason you will be contacted by Coach Sarah, and if payment is not received by the 10th then a \$20 late charge will be added to the monthly payment. If an account is put on hold for less than 3 months a \$10 monthly fee will be charged per month the swimmers are not swimming.

Annual Fees: USA Swimming Registration – All swimmers on the Vitras Swim Club are required to be registered with USA Swimming. An annual \$100.00 membership fee is due upon registration and will cover the USA membership dues.

Questions: If you have questions regarding your bill, billing, or fees please schedule a time to speak with Coach Sarah. **Please do not speak with the coaches before or during practice about billing.**

SWIMMER WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If a swimmer chooses not to continue swimming, they must submit a 15 day notice to Coach Sarah. If the notice is not submitted, then the family will be responsible for monthly fees until the letter is submitted to Coach Sarah. The notice can be through email. NO EXCEPTIONS. Swimmers in the Red and Silver groups are able to place their accounts on hold ONCE per year for a period of up to 3 months. A \$10 hold fee will be charged during this time. Swimmers on the Black Team may not place accounts on hold, as fees are based on a 12 month period.