**PENN LBSL SUMMER SWIM TEAM**

**AT OXFORD VALLEY POOL**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**LOWER BUCKS SWIM LEAGUE**

The Lower Bucks Swim League (LBSL) consists of 23 teams broken down into 3 divisions; the Red Division, the White Division, and the Blue Division. The Penn Aquatics LBSL Summer Swim Team (PENN LBSL) at Oxford Valley Pool is currently in the Blue Division. Clubs throughout Lower Bucks County along with some pools located in Central Bucks County, Montgomery County and NE Philadelphia are included in these leagues.

The aim of this Lower Bucks Swim League is to develop a high standard of integrity, honesty and all around good fellowship and sportsmanship.  The LBSL is to aid the teams in furthering aquatic interest in league participation within Lower Bucks County and near vicinity, and to bring into closer relationship the parents, so that they may cooperate more intelligently in assisting with their children as team members.

**The Parent’s Role**

As the parent of a competitive swimmer, your main responsibility is to provide a caring environment for your swimmer. This support will encourage your swimmer to feel good about his or her interest in competitive age-group swimming. Show your support by ensuring your swimmer’s attendance at practices and swim meets.

Parents are not participants on their child’s team but contribute to the success experienced by the swimmer and his or her team. Parents serve as role models, and children often emulate their attitudes. Strive to be a positive role model. Most important, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents, and teammates.  
  
Be enthusiastic, but remember that your child is the swimmer. Swimmers need to establish realistic goals. Parents should not impose their own standards. It is far better to set goals of improvement than goals of winning. Please do not coach your child; leave that to the coaching staff. Your coaching may lead to conflicting instructions and confusion for the swimmer. Please do not undermine the coach’s authority. Parents are not permitted on the pool deck during any swim team practice or swim meets (unless fulfilling certain pre-assigned positions). Please encourage your children from the stands.

In order to run an efficient swim club, parent involvement is necessary. Parent interest and reliability are the only qualifications for most meet jobs. Each parent is expected to participate. We appreciate your involvement and hope that you will find this a unique opportunity to be involved in a meaningful working relationship with the swimmers, coaches and other members of the PENN LBSL Swim Team.

Please let the coaches know in advance if you cannot attend a swim meet due to vacation, etc. **Unless you tell the coach that your child will not be attending the swim meet, the coach will presume your child is coming and schedule him/her for events.**  If illness or other issues prevent a swimmer from attending, please notify the coaches ASAP. Scheduling swimmers for more than 50 events and numerous heats is quite an undertaking. If a swimmer does not show, the coaches must scramble to fill that slot with an available swimmer and fill out the appropriate paperwork. If there are not sufficient swimmers for a relay, it must be scratched disappointing three other swimmers. Please be considerate to your fellow swimmer.

**Children who are not swimming must be supervised at all times during practice and at meets.**

**Parent Committees**  
The parent committees shall be intent upon helping to foster the enjoyment of a competitive swimming environment. They shall administer the swim team program so that the coaches can devote their full attention to the teaching and coaching.

***PENN LBSL SWIM TEAM COMMITTEES***

**FUNDRAISING-** The LBSL team raises money primarily from its concession stands during home meets and any championship meets. While these are a great source of funds, the team always needs extra money to replace watches, pay for the picnic, team gift for the swimmers, etc. Numerous fundraisers could be done to help the team. For instance, Morrisville Swim Team used to sell Joe Corbi pizzas. It was a very popular fundraiser. We need people to explore the possibilities.

**TEAM GEAR SALES**- Looking like a team helps to promote team unity. Having a t-shirt, sweatshirt, etc. will not only readily identify your child as a team member, but may help them feel connected. Team apparel can be ordered prior to the season starting in May/ early June so that it arrives prior to the first meet. A secondary order can be made for those that join the team or decide to order after the initial order deadline. Team gear does not need to be a fundraiser, thus lowering the costs for everyone.

**CONCESSIONS** – Overseeing and organizing the sales of drinks and foods is an essential job. Those that are not able to attend a meet can still help out by purchasing snack items, obtaining change, making pricing signs or soliciting donations from swim team families or businesses. Coordinating the workers to staff, the concession stand is also an essential job.

**OFFICIALS**- Our team needs a minimum of four officials for a properly officiated swim meet: a starter/referee, two stroke and turn judges and a head table worker. Anyone with knowledge of the swimming strokes, or an interest in learning, can attend a clinic to be certified as a stroke and turn official. Once you have taken the clinic, you need to walk a meet with a certified stroke and turn judge to complete your certification.

**Table Workers**- It is also essential that we have several people attend the table worker clinic to learn the mechanics of scoring. Scoring is a great job. You usually get to sit, in the shade and can get up to watch your child swim. These clinics are held generally in June prior to the start of meets. Dates, times and locations are posted on the Lower Bucks Swim League website. [www.lbsl.org](http://www.lbsl.org).

**SETUP FOR HOME MEETS**- Before the first buzzer sounds much goes on behind the scenes to set up for the swim meet. (Tables and chairs must be set up for workers and spectators, score table tent raised, starting blocks installed, flags, speaker system setup, etc.) Several people are needed to help in this process. This will allow the coaches to focus on the swimmers and the upcoming meet.

**CLEAN UP/BREAKDOWN FOR HOME MEETS-** Likewise, what goes up, must come down. People are needed to remove all the equipment, tables, chairs, etc.

**TEAM SPIRIT/ACTIVITIES**- While the kid have lots of fun in the pool during practice and meets and fun Fridays, who says we can’t have other team bonding events during the season? Perhaps a bowling event, movie, arts and crafts for the younger ones. It is up to you to plan events.

**TEAM PICNIC** – Someone is needed to coordinate the end of the year picnic. Make sure we have a date and time cleared by the Parks and Recreation department. Paper products, tablecloths, drinks, etc. need to be purchased and food donations from the swimmers and their families need to be coordinated.

**Safety and Behavior**

We want all practices, swim meets and social events to be safe for swimmers, coaches, families, and spectators. To this end, we ask that all members follow the rules of the facility being used, listen to coaches, and follow directions.

Practice is not a time for fooling around. Swimming can be one of the safest sports available to youth. Yet, just one incident can turn it into a dangerous or deadly activity. Swimmers must act responsibly for their own safety and for the safety of others. Disruptive behavior and not following protocol set forth by the coaches are detrimental to the swimmer and the team.

**Accidents or Injuries**

In the event of an accident or injury, no matter how minor, please contact the lifeguard and immediately fill out an accident report. If you have concerns about safety in the swim club, please contact the pool manager.

**Attendance**

PENN LBSL Summer Swim Team sets no requirement regarding a minimum number of practices, although coaches may suggest a practice guideline for individual swimmers. The more practices your swimmer attends, the more proficient he or she becomes. Practice is a time for building endurance, honing skills and building team camaraderie.

**Practice Hints:**

* Attend only your designated practice time unless instructed by the coach.
* Be on deck at least 5 minutes early and be ready to get in the water.
* Have goggles adjusted & ready to go prior to practice.
* While waiting to practice please show courtesy to the group that is already in the water.
* Bring to each practice any equipment (fins & goggles). Please have your equipment labeled.
* Use sunscreen (especially on the face, back and shoulders) preferably at home but at least prior to practice.
* Team suits last longer if you wear a training suit to practice.
* Swimmer should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after practice.
* For the swimmer’s protection, parents should make sure a coach is at practice and that there is practice before leaving their child at the pool.

**What to Bring to Practice**

* Practice bathing suit
* Goggles
* Towel
* Water, Juice or Gatorade in plastic containers only (mark all bottles with child’s name to avoid confusion)
* Wear sunscreen
* Sneakers for dry land in beginning of season
* Swim cap for those with long hair
* Flip flops or crocs

**Attendance & Attitude –** Swim practice is the most important facet of the program.  Although competition is the test of a swimmer’s ability, practice is where the potential and foundation for achievement is established.  Practice schedules vary by group.  Swimmers must attend practice on a regular basis in order to give themselves a chance to achieve their potential as a swimmer.

Swim practice provides the swimmer the opportunity to improve and “fine tune” stroke and turn technique and to increase endurance.  The swimmer’s attitude towards practice will determine to what extent he or she will benefit.  Attitude is also important when it comes to competition.  Some swimmers may be intimidated when competing against faster swimmers.  They may also react adversely to the psychological stress of competing in a major meet or traveling to unfamiliar facilities.  Communicate concerns with your swimmer’s coach.

Swimmers can expect to have “plateaus” or periods during which their times may not improve or even regress.  These plateaus can be discouraging at best and lead to a swimmer wanting to quit swimming.  Plateaus in performance are common and talking with other parents and swimmers on the pool deck may help. Once again, communication between parent, swimmer, and coach is very important.

**SWIM MEETS**

**Calendar**

Our meet schedule can be found online at this link <http://www.lbsl.org/cal.html?OVP>

Please let the coaches know as soon as possible if your child will not be attending a meet due to vacation, camp, etc. Please e-mail or place a note in the coach’s mailbox.

**Meets**

**NOTE:** **If a swimmer is attending a meet, that swimmer must have a parent or guardian in attendance; it is not acceptable to drop off a swimmer at a meet and leave him or her unsupervised.**

**Dual meets** take place between two clubs. Coaches will decide in what event or events each swimmer will compete. A list will be posted, by age group and sex, on the fence before the swim meet. Please have your swimmer check to see their events.

An **invitational meet** is for any swimmer. Unlike, regular dual meets, the swimmer gets to select the events he or she wants to swim within the appropriate age group. Swimmers are placed in heats according to their seed times, swimming slowest to fastest. Parents must pay per event to swim. (Usually $3/event) Deadlines and more information will be available.

A **championship meet** is for any swimmer. Unlike, regular dual meets, the swimmer gets to select the events he or she wants to swim within the appropriate age group. Swimmers are placed in heats according to their seed times, swimming slowest to fastest. Parents must pay per event to swim. (Usually $3/event) Deadlines and more information will be available. The swimmer will be swimming against all teams in the division. Ribbon and medal awards will be given to those placing in certain order. If the swimmer places high enough in an event, he or she may be eligible to swim in the League finals, with teams from all three divisions.

Entry forms for invitationals and championship meets need to be turned in by the deadline to the head coach’s mailbox, along with the appropriate entry fee. Swim meet entries that are given to the head coach after the deadline will not be accepted. Parents and swimmers should check the entries carefully to be sure the information is correct. Results of all meets are posted on the Lower Bucks Swim League web site, [www.lbsl.org](http://www.lbsl.org) .

Coaches, not parents, sign swimmers up for relays. **Relays** consist of four swimmers of the same age group. There is a box on the meet entry form to indicate interest in relays. The coaches will determine the swimmers for each relay, submit the entry form, and the club will pay the fee. When swimmers are chosen for relays, they need to plan to stay for the event. Swimmers who do not stay for relays may be excluded from subsequent team relays. It is very difficult for the other swimmers when one leg of their relay departs from the meet, leaving them unable to participate.

**What to Bring** **to Swim Meets**

* Team suit
* Goggles—well-adjusted and leak-proof
* Extra goggles just in case
* Team swim cap—or two in case one rips
* Sweatshirt and sweatpants—it gets chilly as the night goes on or after being wet, no matter how hot it is at the start of the meet
* Towels—two or three are needed because the swimmer dries off after warm-ups, between events, and when changing to go home
* Extra towel or blanket to sit on
* Plastic water bottle and/or drinks in containers (NO GLASS CONTAINERS)
* Folding lawn chair for parent
* Quiet activities: books, playing cards, and so on
* sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, sunglasses
* Flip flops or Crocs. For safety, children need shoes, especially in the grassy areas and those areas away from the pool deck.

Some of these items may seem unnecessary, but when you arrive at your first meet, you will soon understand the value of each and be glad you brought them.

**When to Arrive for a Swim Meet**

* Arrive early- at least 15 minutes prior to warm-up time.
* Warm-up times are 5:45 p.m. unless otherwise noted on the calendar
* All dual meets start promptly at 6:30 pm.
* Times for the invitational meets and champs will be posted toward the end of the season.

**At the Meet**

* When you arrive, please have swimmers check in with a coach.
* Find a spot for your child to sit in the designated area for our team. At home, we are in the grassy area on the side of the snack bar all the way down by the fence.
* Parents should make sure their swimmer warms up when the announcement is made. The swimmer should go to the assigned lanes and listen for the coach’s instruction. There are two warm up times depending upon the age of the swimmer.
* After warm-ups, your swimmer should dry off and keep warm. Younger swimmers should report to their Mouse Mom or Rat Dad to know when to line up for events. Swimmers should always have their cap and goggles handy.
* Swimmers should stay in or close to team area. Listen for your event and be ready to go.
* It is ultimately the swimmer's responsibility to get to the blocks on time.
* Make sure you check with the coach before you leave the meet. You may be on a relay!
* Please use trashcans for your garbage. We are a clean team!

**Swim Meet Job Descriptions**

It takes a lot to make a swim meet happen! Unlike other sports that may have a coach and an assistant coach, swimming needs a large number of parent participants. Working at the swim meet makes the time go by faster. We provide on-the-job training with excellent benefits! Most jobs allow for excellent viewing of your child’s races.

* [Meet Director](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#MeetCoordinator)
* [Starter\*#](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#Starter)
* [Timers](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#Timers)
* [Stroke Judges#](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#StrokeJudges)
* Place Judges
* [Runner](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#Runner)
* [Scorers](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#Scorers)
* [Concession Stand\*](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#Concession)
* [50/50 Raffle Sales\*](http://www.belchertownstingrays.com/job_descriptions.html#50/50 Raffle)
* Setup/Breakdown

\* These jobs are only required for our home meets. Other jobs are required at all meets.   
  
# These jobs require a bit (or more) of training.

**Detailed Meet Job descriptions**

**Meet Director/Assistant**: The overseer who makes sure all jobs are filled and that things run as smoothly as possible. Must be willing to approach people at the meet to help fill jobs at the last minute. This would be a person who knows many of the faces around the pool, and has often been a season-long position. The Meet/Director needs to be familiar with all the positions, the potential problems, and be able to draft helpers and give rapid on-the-job training.

**Starter\***: Runs the meet. Operates the "Start System" to make announcements; calls the swimmers up for their events, combining events when possible to expedite the meet. Starts each event. Judges false starts and makes sure backstrokers’ feet are underwater before the start of the race. Requires training.

**Timers/Head Timer**: Using a stopwatch provided by the team, the timer starts the watch using the strobe light of the starting machine as the starting signal and stops the watch when any part of the swimmer touches the wall. There are three timers working each lane. For PENN LBSL lanes, there will be two timers from the other team and one PENN LBSL timer. The reverse will be in the lanes for the opposing team swimmers. One of the three timers in each lane also writes all three times down on the time sheet, circles the intermediate time and then gives it to the runner. The head timer starts the watch at the beginning of the race and helps any timer whose stopwatch did not start correctly. Brief training for the start of the meet is all that is required for the timer jobs.

**Stroke Judge**: The Stroke Judge watches the swimmer's form and must disqualify the swimmer if the stroke does not meet stated criteria. There are four stroke judges, 2 from each team, located diagonally across the pool from each other. The stroke judges are primarily responsible for the three lanes on their side and at their end of the pool. The swim league holds stroke-judging clinics. If you are focused and decisive, this is your position. The swim team and league are always badly in need good stroke judges. Requires training.

**Place Judge**: Stands at the finishing end of the pool and marks who finishes in what place. Place is usually determined by the swimmer’s time, but if two swimmers tie according to the stopwatches, the place judge results may be used to overrule the time clock. One is needed from each team.

**Scorers**: Two scorers work the entire meet. They take the time sheets from the runners and tabulate swimmers’ times and team scores. This job requires attention to detail, organization, and ability to work with numbers. Training is required for the head table worker. The league holds a clinic for training.

**Runner:** Collects time slips from each of the six lanes plus the place-order slips from the two finish judges (and anyway DQ slips from the Stroke and Turn judges) and delivers them to the scorer’s table.

**Concession Stand\*:** Sells concessions and team gear at the home meets. Collects parent donations and checks family names off for each donation. Several people are needed, so that you can take a break and watch your swimmer when he/she is up for an event.

**50/50 Raffle Sales\*:** Sells 50/50 Raffle tickets to the parents and other spectators during the meet until a drawing is held near the end of the meet.

**Mouse Mom/Rat Dad:** Checks the swim meet schedule and makes sure our youngest swimmers get to the right lane at the right time doing the right stroke! For anyone who likes to corral children, this is your job! There are separate parents that each handle 8 & under children and the 10& under children. You will be given a meet sheet so you can organize the children. This will also allow you to see your children swim.

**Setup/Breakdown:** We need parents at home meets only to help setup the tables for the snack bar and scoring, the popup tent, flags, chairs for spectators, etc. We will also need people to help break it down at the end of the meet.

**Officials**

All swim meets have swim officials on deck. These are the people you see wearing white shirts and blue shorts. They start the events and are on the sides of the pool watching the swimmers. They are all volunteers, trained by and registered with Lower Bucks Swim League. Most of them are parents just like you. If you are interested, the procedure for becoming an official is simple. See Diane Rice, Debbie Barlow or the coaches as soon as possible.

* Swimmers are occasionally disqualified (DQed) during their event. Reasons for a DQ range from false starts to performing strokes, turns, or finishes incorrectly. DQs are judgments made by the Lower Bucks Swimming officials. The official will explain to the swimmer or the coach the reason for the DQ. The coach will reinforce this judgment. Parents should not question the judgment of an official. DQs can be difficult for swimmers and parents to accept, but they do happen to every swimmer eventually. It is helpful if the parent accepts the fact that Lower Bucks Swimming has high standards and that, the same standards apply to every swimmer. Performing the skills of swimming in accordance with Lower Bucks Swimming standards is part of the discipline process that makes swimming a character-building sport. The motto for officials is “the swimmer always gets the benefit of the doubt.” Accordingly, only clear violations of the rules result in a DQ.

**Writing on a Swimmer’s Hand**

The information on the hand represents the swimmer’s individual events at the meet the swimmer is attending. By writing information in waterproof ink on the back of the swimmer’s hand, the swimmer can watch and listen for his or her events to be called and remember what the events are. This also allows the swimmer to check whether he or she is in the correct heat and lane.