**Parent-to Parent Orientation**

(Everything we could think of that we needed to know as a new swim parent and had to either have someone tell us or figure out for ourselves the hard way!)

**Short Course vs. Long Course**

* Short Course season runs from early September to mid-March. Short Course refers to competitions in a 25-yard pool. Long Course season runs from April-early August. These competitions are held in a 50-meter pool.
* Swimmer’s long course times are almost always slower than their short course times. This is due to the difference in distance between meters and yards. There are approximately 54.6 yards in 50 meters. In a Short Course pool there are twice as many opportunities to turn and push off the wall. As swimmers become more proficient at turns and underwaters, this will almost always be faster than swimming a stroke will be.

**MSA Team Website-www.msaswim.org**

* A login should be emailed to you when you register.
* Make sure you enter a valid email that you check often. Coach Ethan sends out a lot of information in email. PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL OFTEN FOR UPDATES!
* This is where you can see up-coming meets and events, sign up for meets, and pay your bill. There is always lots of information. You will need to be logged in to access most of this information.
* Remember to register monthly. This helps with billing.
* “My Account” link-left hand side of home page-access your invoices (monthly dues/meet fess) can set up auto pay or one-time credit/debit card payments.
* “Meets” tab**-probably the most important tab-**
* “Meet schedule and info”-a general list of meets include dates and location of meets
* Meet Sign ups-If you click the blue link of a particular meet it will take you to more detailed information about the meet. PLEASE READ this meet information. Included in the information is the dates of the meet, time warm up begin, number of allowed events per session/day, parking information, awards, schedule of events, and rules for that particular facility and more.
* Attend/Decline link-This is where you declare if your swimmer will be attending the meet or not. Click on your swimmer’s name, then declare yes or no. If you select yes, you may see a list of events your swimmer could swim at the meet. IF you see the list of events and IF you chose to select events, please remember anything you select is a suggestion and your swimmers’ coach may change the events. The coaches have the final say on the events. If you are not attending the entire meet, please list the days you are planning to attend in the comments section. This helps the coaches know what days/events to sign your swimmer up for. If you sign up for a meet and chose not to attend (for whatever reason) you are still responsible for the meet fees. MSA has to pay fees to the host club. These fees are paid based on entries. Meet fees in the Missouri Valley are typically $5 per event. MSA charges a $15 coaching fee. Some meets charge a facility fee usually between $5-$20. Fess can vary based on the meet. Information about fees for a specific meet can be found in the meet information packet. Fees are automatically charged to your MSA account.
* Some meets have time standards that must be met in order to compete. Time standards for a meet are listed in the meet information. District, Championships, Sectionals, and above have time standards for all swimmers.

**Time Standards**

* Time standards are times that have to be met in order to compete at different meets. The time standards are published in the meet information.
* There are Missouri Valley Swimming time standards and National Time Standards. MVS time standards can change each year/season. Sectional standards can change every year.
* National Time Standards-B. BB, A, AA, AAA, AAAA. B is the slowest and AAAA is the fastest. AAA is a Zone meet standard. There are also different standards for National level meets. Time standards are listed in the meet information.
* There are different time standards for Short Course and Long Course.
* Most meets with time standards are set up so swimmers can qualify for the Long Course meet with a Short Course or Long Course time. For example, the Short Course Champs meet has Long Course and Short Course standards to qualify to enter the meet.
* **** Some meets also have Bonus standards. Check the meet information to know if Bonus events are allowed.

**On-Deck App**

* You will need to create an account. Your user name/password will be the same as for the MSA team unify website. This app loads directly from the MSA website.
* Account home-This is where you can find your swimmer and a list of their best time for each event, they have competed in. You can also see your account balance.
* If you click on one of the times, you can see more detailed information about that particular event. It will give you a list of all the times they have swam that event and the name of the meet where they swam,
* Time Standards-This is where you can see the time standrds for each particular event, broken down by gender, stroke, distance, course, and age. You will have to load the standards you want to be able to look at (MVS standards and 21-24 Nat Ag Motivs). If you click on a specific standard you will be able to see if your swimmer has met that standard.
* Job Manager-This link is active only when MSA hosts a meet. You will see a list of jobs that need to be filled so the meet can run smoothly. You can see who has signed up for which job and jobs that still need to be filled.
* Events-This is a list of upcoming swim meets. Once the declaration time is closed and events have been approved, you can see a list of swimmers from MSA who are signed up to attend the meet and what events your swimmer is signed up to swim.



**Meet Mobile App**

* Cost is $6.99/year- and it’s worth it
* Shows results during swim meets. You can look up results by swimmer, team, or event. Times are loaded to Meet Mobile as the meet goes on.
* Results include entry time, final time, time added/dropped, and rank with all other swimmers in their age group in that particular event at that meet.
* You can “favorite”/star your swimmer and other swimmers and you will get push notifications when those swimmers swim.

**Remind App**

* Use the code to sign up to get reminders for your child’s group and other messages from your swimmer’s coach.
* No phone numbers are exchanged
* Pandas-@msapanda
* Cubs-@msacubs
* Grizzlies-@msagrizzly
* Bruins/Senior Bears-@bruinbears
* You can use the remind app to let your coach know if you are going to be late to a meet, get sick or won’t be attending a meet, etc.

**Social Media**

* MSA Swim Parent Facebook page-All MSA parents are welcome to join. There a couple of questions to answer when joining. Ask questions, share photos, arrange to stay at the same hotel as other MSA families when traveling to meets.
* MSA also has an Instagram (mostaquatics) and Twitter (@mostaquatics) accounts you can follow.
* When posting pictures of swimmers on social media, please be aware of other swimmers in the picture. Not all parents are okay with pictures of their children in swim suits being posted online.

**General Meet Info**

* You are responsible to make sure your swimmer knows their events, heats, lanes, etc. The older swimmers tend to not use this as much.

E H L

* You get this information heat sheet. Heat sheet are sold at meets for between $5-$20 depending on the meet. Some meets will sale a psych sheet (a list of all swimmers in each event listed fastest to slowest) and include a slip for a heat sheet for each session.
* Look through the heat sheet and find/highlight your swimmer’s event/heat/lane. You can also see when other MSA swimmers are swimming.
* Grid-use sharpie to write event/heat/lane on swimmer’s arm or

leg so they know when they swim. Double check your numbers. Girls events are odd numbered events and Boys events are even numbered events.

* This is important because only Coaches, swimmers, officials and other volunteers are allowed on the pool deck during a meet. Parents are not allowed behind the blocks unless volunteering during the meet. This can be difficult for younger swimmers. Prepare them for this before the meet.
* It is the swimmer’s responsibility to get behind the blocks on time. The meet will not stop because a swimmer is missing. The swimmer will miss their race. Some meets have consequences for missing a race. This can be forfeiting a future event or a monetary fine.
* Swimmers should check in with the MSA coach on deck before and after their race. Checking in before the race allows the coach to give any last-minute tips or advice. Checking in after the races allows the swimmer to get feedback after the race. When you send your swimmer to the pool deck before a race, remind them to check in with their coach. When they come back after a race ask them if they talked to a coach after their race.
* Warm ups at the beginning of each session of a meet are mandatory. Ethan sends out an on-deck time along with warm up times before the meet. On deck time is the time your swimmer should be on the pool deck. They should check in with the coach and get ready for warm ups. If your swimmer is not at warm ups, they can be scratched from the meet. (IF you run into traffic or some other unexpected delay, contact the coach through the Remind app.)
* The swimmers are used to swimming extended periods of time. They will not be too tired to swim after a short (usually 20-30 minutes) warm up session. In fact, they will race better if they are adequately warmed up.
* Swimmers should warm up and cool down after each event. If they are unsure what to do for warm up/cool down, they should talk to their coach for suggestions.
* Some meets have crash areas, usually a gym where swimmers and parents can set up chair and spread out blankets as a place to hang out between events.
* Some meets only have bleacher seating. Some of these pools will allow bleacher seats and others will not. This information will be in the meet information.
* DQ’s-swimmers will get disqualified. Usually, the coach will get a copy of the DQ slip. The coach can let your swimmer know what they did to get disqualified so they can know what they did incorrectly. Sometimes an official will come and talk to the swimmer and notify them of the DQ. Use the DQ as a learning experience.

**MSA Hosted Meets**

* MSA currently hosts a couple of multi-session meets a year. We are also looking forward to hosting 1 session “League” meets. MSA cannot host meets without volunteers. All officials are volunteers.
* To host a single session of a meet, we need: 1 deck ref, 1 starter, 1 admin official, at least 3 stroke and turn officials, 1 timing system operator, 1 safety marshal, 1 announcer, 1 head timer, 1 meet director, 1-2 meet runners, 16 timers.
* MSA currently has 5 parents that volunteer as Stroke and Turn Judges, 1 Admin Official, 2 timing operators, 2 safety marshals, 1 Meet Director, 1 Starter, and 1 Referee. Stroke and Turn Official is the first step for all wet side positions. An Official must be a Stroke and Turn Official before becoming a Starter or Referee.
* There are online sign ups for some of these volunteer opportunities. Some of these opportunities require training, back ground checks, etc. If you are interested in volunteering at our home meets, please let Sally, Jodie, or one of the coaches know.
* Positions we currently need filled:
	+ Stroke and Turn Officials (This is always a needed position. It is always good to have as many as possible.)
	+ Admin Official-

**Stroke and turn official/ Starter/ Referee:** Assures the legality of swimmer’s strokes to ensure a level playing field with swimmers. Yearly recertification is required.

**Administrative Official:** Takes times from timing system and adjusts times if needed. Submits times to MVS. Yearly recertification is required.

**Timers:** Manually records times for each race using a stop watch. MSA needs at least 16 timers for a meet to run at the MSA pool!

There are occasions when teams are asked to provide timers when we are at out of town meets. These sessions can be split between several parents.

**Snack/Drink Suggestions for Meets**

* The food you bring to a meet is important. They are athletes and need to have adequate fuel to perform their best at a meet.
* Don’t sugar them up
* Drinks-Water, Gatorade, Powerade
* Snacks-Fruit, Protein (beef jerky, deli meat, cheese, peanut butter), carbs (crackers, mini bagels)
* Bring food your swimmer will eat.

**Practice Groups and Equipment**

* Practice schedules are different for each group. Practice days/times are on the MSA website and are emailed out. CHECK YOUR EMAIL OFTEN.
* All swimmers need a practice suit and goggles. Swimmers can choose to wear a swim cap at practice. MSA caps are usually available in the office. Talk to your swimmer’s coach. We order caps with names on them a few times a year. Watch your email for when an order will be placed.
* Bring your swim equipment to each practice. Each swimmer is responsible to have their own equipment.
* Pandas-fins, kickboard, water bottle, swimming snorkel, equipment bag
* Cubs-Fins, kickboard, swimming snorkel, buoy, water bottle, equipment bag
* Grizzlies-Fins, kickboard, swimming snorkel, buoy, paddles, water bottle equipment bag
* Bruins/Senior Bears-Fins, kickboard, snorkel, buoy, paddles, water bottle, equipment bag.
* **MSA is sponsored by TYR.** You are encouraged to use TYR gear.
* Swim Outlet- a great website to purchase anything swim related. [swimoutlet.com](MSA%20Parent%20Orientation%20.pdf)

If you are on the MSA team unify website, there is an affiliate link to Swim Outlet on the left side of the page. IF you use this link, MSA receives a 10% back on all orders. You should see a message “You are shopping through the MSA Booster Club Affiliate Account”

**Swim Caps and Suits**

* We order name caps a couple of times per year. There will be an email to place an order. Check your email.
* Swimsuits should fit snuggly. Practice suits may have bit more room in them. Race suits should fit tight.
* Race suits tend to be a size smaller than a practice suit. If your swimmer will not wear a suit that tight, get the same size as their practice suit. The swimmer must be comfortable to swim their best. USA Swimming has banned tech suits for 12 and under swimmers.
* Don’t let a pushy sales person convince you to buy a suit your swimmer does not like/feel comfortable in.
* Boys-jammers should fit sung around the legs and waist and should stay up, when tied, on starts and flip turns. Remember-If you swimmer pulls his suit up in the middle of a race (other than freestyle) he can be DQ’d.
* Girls-Suits should be tight enough so that when you pull on the shoulder straps, the straps do not go past the bottom of the ears (middle of the neck is ideal when the suit is new). For race suits, you should not be able to pull the straps up more than an inch or so.

**MAAPP**

* Pictures/Videos **CAN NOT** be taken from behind the blocks. If you are at practice or a meet and would like to take photos and videos, please stand on the side of the pool. This applies to all USA Swimming meets/practices.
* Phones and other recording devices are not allowed in the locker rooms
* Parents are not allowed in the locker rooms, **at practice or at meets**. There are bathrooms through the lobby for adult use.
* Deck changes are not allowed. Please report any deck changes.

**General Swim Parent Info**

* Let the coaches coach. That’s what we pay them for.
* At swim meets, first encourage your swimmer to get a valid, legal time. Then they can work on improving their time.
* Each swimmer will progress at their own rate. Making District and Champ cuts can take a while.
* There will be times when your swimmer will add time to their events. This is normal.
* Encourage you swimmer to have fun. Swimming is a lifetime activity, regardless if they continue to swim competitively.
* **Check your email often.** Ethan sends a lot of information out in the **Weekly Minutes**.

**Questions**

* If you have questions or would like to become an official, please email Jodie mrsfriebe@gmail.com or Sally sallyjean@live.com