



# PARENT HANDBOOK



**NEW JERSEY  
SWIMMING**

This handbook has been developed as a reference for members of the Raritan Valley YMCA Riptide Swim Team. We hope it will help answer many of your questions.

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Introduction to the Raritan Valley YMCA</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction to the RVY Riptide Swim Team &amp; Coaching Staff</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction to the RVY Riptide Swim Team Parents Association (RSTPA)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>RSTPA Board Positions &amp; Descriptions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Riptide Tryouts</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Program Fees</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Swim Practice &amp; Practice Groups</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Practice Attendance &amp; Commitment</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Facilities &amp; Locker Room Etiquette</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Practice Helpful Hints</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>YMCA Dual &amp; Championship Meets</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Invitational Meets</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Mini Meets</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Nationals (Sunkissed Invitational- Charlotte, NC)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Nationals Sample Qualifying Times &amp; Estimated Costs</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Communications &amp; Web Site</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Your Team Web Site Account</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Entering Invitational Meets</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>"On Deck Parent" Mobile App</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Parents &amp; Swim Meets</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Hosted Meets Pool Set Up &amp; Clean Up</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Parent Job Sign-Up for Dual Meets</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Swim Meet Helpful Hints</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Parents Officials - A Critical Part of the Team</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Team Suits &amp; Apparel</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Social Events</b>	<b>13</b>

## **THE RARITAN VALLEY YMCA**

The Raritan Valley YMCA was founded in New Brunswick, NJ in 1867 and incorporated in 1871 as a non-profit, tax exempt organization. Demographic shifts have brought program and facility changes throughout the Y's history. New construction in 2005 brought the Raritan Valley YMCA to 144 Tices Lane in East Brunswick.

The 25,000 square foot existing building includes a day care center, wellness and fitness center, aerobics studio, and mini gym. Outdoor facilities include a picnic grove, playgrounds, field space, day camp site, and outdoor teaching pool. Facilities are designed to provide typical YMCA youth and family programs, instructional sports, fitness and exercise, classes and meeting space. Swim team and instructional aquatic programs are offered throughout the community in local colleges and schools.

The YMCA provides after school care and wrap-around kindergarten care. The day care provides full day child care for 3-5 year olds, infants and toddlers. Additionally, the YMCA provides exercise, wellness, sports instruction, day camp, and cultural programs for over 2,000 members and community wide special events. For more information on our YMCA, please visit [www.raritanvalleyymca.org](http://www.raritanvalleyymca.org).

## **RVY RIPTIDE SWIM TEAM**

Riptide is a YMCA and USA Swimming Team sponsored by the Raritan Valley YMCA in East Brunswick, N.J. The team participates in the Northern New Jersey YMCA League for dual meets and participates in numerous invitational & championship meets. Riptide operates in a "team first" atmosphere, which means that we are all here to work together for the team's success, while supporting each individual swimmer and coach.

Our philosophy and purpose is to provide all participating athletes with the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential, and each athlete's success will be directly proportional to their level of commitment and motivation. The team provides an atmosphere of spirited competition, promotes a positive attitude and self-image, and expects superior sportsmanship. Winning is not the ultimate goal, but achieving personal bests and reaching the other side of the pool in the shortest time possible are. The simple goal of beating the clock makes it easy for even the youngest swimmer to measure his/her progress.

The practice of setting goals, achieving them and resetting new goals is a skill that will last a lifetime. Swimmers learn perseverance as they fail to reach their goals at first, confidence as they overcome their limitations, and the value of hard work and focus as their times drop. These lessons undoubtedly play a large role in the fact that swimmers typically do well in school and in fact hold the highest national average GPA of college team sports. The Riptide coaches want all swimmers to reach their highest potential as both swimmers and people. Great attitudes and hard work are a terrific mix and will help your swimmer go far in this sport, and in life in general.

## **COACHING STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

Riptide has a dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced coaching staff that is committed to helping your child be the best they can be. Our coaching staff has many years of swimming & coaching experience, including six with head coaching experience and three assistant coaches that were formerly head coaches of Riptide. Please take a moment to read the bios of our coaches at [www.rvyriptide.org/Contact.jsp?team=njrvyr](http://www.rvyriptide.org/Contact.jsp?team=njrvyr). You will be impressed at the experience, skills and character they bring to our team.

### **Head Coach**

Brian Rose [coachbrian@rvyriptide.org](mailto:coachbrian@rvyriptide.org)

**By Phone:** 732-440-SWIM (7946)

**Website:** [www.rvyriptide.org](http://www.rvyriptide.org)

Assistant Coaches' emails can be found on the coach's web page at [www.rvyriptide.org](http://www.rvyriptide.org).

## **RVY RIPTIDE SWIM TEAM PARENTS ASSOCIATION (RSTPA)**

All swim team member parents are part of the Riptide Swim Team Parents Association. The purpose of the Riptide Swim Team Parents Association is to work in conjunction with the Raritan Valley YMCA and the head swim team coach to develop, and facilitate the effective and efficient management of the Raritan Valley YMCA Riptide Swim Team, including management of team rosters, facilities, finance support, meet organization and to plan strategically for the future.

The Association provides a structure by which parents contribute to the success and growth of the team and the coaching staff and supports the YMCA's mission for the purpose of youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. The Association guides and encourages team members to achieve sportsman-like conduct, a high level of competitive effort, personal satisfaction and fun, with a sense of responsibility to the team and the coaching staff.

The Parents Association consists of three divisions, the General Association, the General Board & the Executive Board. The RVY RSTPA Executive Board consists of the President, Vice President At-Large, Vice President Treasurer, Vice President Secretary and Vice President Facilities. The RVY RSTPA General Board consists of the following positions: Officials, Invitational Meets Coordinator, Teams Coordinator, Communications, Nationals, Apparel, Publicity/Recruitment, Social, Fundraising, Database Management, Historian, Y Liaison & At-Large. The RVY RSTPA Board meets monthly during the season at a place and time to be determined. The beginning of each meeting is set aside as open for all parents to ask questions, or to bring forth any issues to the Board. The open session will then be closed and the Board will proceed with agenda items.

**Board job descriptions are listed below.**

**President:** Responsible for parent support of the swim team, parent organization policies and procedures, board positions, and will act as spokesman and representative for the RVY RSTPA in dealings with the coaching staff and the Raritan Valley YMCA. The President shall preside at all meetings and ensure that all swim team parent accountabilities are met.

**VP Treasurer:** Work in conjunction with the YMCA staff in the management of team finances, team accounts, budgets, team fees, expense statements, etc.

**VP Facilities:** Responsible for facility relationships, including pool and other facility scheduling for practices, meets, and events.

**VP At-Large:** Will assist the President in support of the swim team and will perform the duties of the President in his/her absence. Will be assigned specific core functions of the swim team by the President.

**VP Recording Secretary:** Recording and disseminating all board meeting minutes and board correspondence. Inspector of Election for all Board positions.

**Officials:** Recruiting, and providing league information regarding required training for officials. Creating master officials list per team each season, and planning initial dual meet officiating assignments for all meets.

**Invitational Meets Coordinator:** Coordination and dissemination of all invitational meet info. Managing entries for all invitational meets.

**Dual Meet Teams Coordinator:** Electing and organizing parent assignment coordinators for each competitive dual meet team.

**Communications:** Website; development, enhancement, and maintenance of the team website and other communication vehicles.

**Nationals:** Responsible for the creation of a committee that coordinates and facilitates all National Team related planning.

**Apparel:** Organizing and developing the order form, obtaining the vendor, distributing the items, communicating with the treasurer for collections and payments.

**Publicity/Recruitment:** Communicating and organizing team tryout, Spring Fling, and Summer Splash information, including but not limited to schools, summer clubs, etc.

**Social:** The coordination of all social events, team banquet, parties, cocktail party, sunshine, ribbons .

**Fundraising:** Responsible for the coordination of various fundraisers throughout the season.

**Database Management:** Maintaining; Team Manager and applicable data, e-mail lists, updating database, and reposting the database to the Riptide site, keeping track of "Y" memberships.

**At-Large:** To be designated by the president for special team events, or as needed.

**Historian:** Maintain team history, team records, development of handbook.

**YMCA Liaison:** Present and disseminate RVY Riptide swim team information at "Y" Board meetings.

As all parents are members of the RVY RSTPA, they will often become closely associated and involved with the team and can assist the team in many ways. Parents should consider becoming more involved by becoming part of a committee, or volunteering for open Board positions. It is extremely important for all parents to attend the first parent meeting of the year, normally held in September.

### **Over the course of the season all parents should:**

- > Encourage swimmers to attend appropriate practices and meets, and provide transportation to the workouts and meets as necessary.
- > Encourage their child to work diligently, and assist their younger child to set realistic goals; offer support to the child throughout the season.
- > Let the coaches do the coaching.
- > Take an active part in fundraising projects and **consider becoming a certified swim meet official.**
- > Assist at dual meets and any other team-hosted competitions: timing, concessions, and help in the setup and breakdown for home meets.
- > Address any swim team issues that may arise with the coach directly, or with an RSTPA Executive Board member to avoid creating an undertone of negative dissent within the parent association and team.

### **TEAM TRYOUTS**

Tryouts are conducted each Summer for all new swimmers interested in joining Riptide for the coming Fall-Winter season. All returning team members are required to pay the new season registration fee by the required date (generally around June 15th) in order to reserve their place on the roster for the new season. This is required to ensure that the team can meet early season financial obligations, as well as allowing the coaching staff to understand how many open positions can be filled at tryouts. Dates and times for tryouts will be posted on the website and communicated through email and summer swim clubs.

### **PROGRAM FEES**

Each swimmer's program fee is dependent on the practice group of the swimmer and the fees for each group are based on coaching and pool time. Program fees are made of four payments, the summer registration deposit and then payments in October, November and December. It is expected that all swimmers will be on time with all program fee payments. Riptide also manages a meet fee account for each swimmer (set up at the beginning of the season). Meet entry fees are charged when your swimmer participates in any invitational/championship meets that require entry fees. These fees vary depending upon the type of meet. Once your swimmer has signed up for an invitational meet, the fees are deducted from your meet fee account.

### **PRACTICE & PRACTICE GROUPS**

All swimmers are required to be prepared for each practice with an appropriate competitive swim suit, training flippers, competition swim goggles, and towel. Riptide maintains six coed practice groups, which are (with general ages) Tiny Tide (9 & under), Tidal Wave (9-11), Junior 1 (10-13), Junior 2 (11-14), Senior 1 (12-15) & Senior 2 (13-18). Swimmers are assigned their practice group primarily by age, ability and level of commitment. Group mobility may occur (both upwards and downwards) over the course of a season and year to year due to coach' evaluation of the athlete's commitment level, work ethics and overall progress. Special requests for practice groups, or movement between groups, cannot be accommodated.

**Note – Swimmers should only attend practice sessions that pertain to their assigned practice group.**

Generally speaking, coaches are assigned to work with specific practice groups and 2-3 coaches may be working with each practice group over the course of each week. This allows for our swimmers to learn from the knowledge and experience of more than one coach. The coaches will collaborate on group goals (season and monthly) and weekly practice plans for each group.

Riptide practices at three different facilities, Middlesex County College, Perth Amboy YMCA and North Brunswick Township High School. Weekly practices schedules are fairly consistent for each practice group over the course of the season, but may be adjusted occasionally. The practice schedule for each month will be posted to the web site prior to the start of that month.

### **Attendance & Commitment**

Attending practice is the key to a successful season. Children are involved in many activities and it is understandable that they may need to miss practices on occasion. However, it must be understood that **the level of attendance, commitment and motivation in practices will be directly proportional to each swimmer's performance in meets**

**throughout the season.** The greater the attendance and the greater the work ethic in practice, the greater the success that swimmer will achieve.

Swimmers are expected to attend practice, and when they are in attendance, **the expectation is that they are able to swim the entire practice and should not need to sit out of sets, or "just kick" because they are injured or are not feeling well.** Abiding by this policy will allow the coaches to ensure that swimmers are putting forth their best effort in every practice. It is expected for the benefit of the swimmer, and for the other members of the practice group, that each swimmer will always give 100%. Swimmers should always pay close attention to their coach and be on their best behavior during practice, especially during dryland training, stroke instruction, drills and practicing starts & turns.

### **Facilities & Locker Rooms**

As mentioned, Riptide practices at three different facilities, Middlesex County College, Perth Amboy YMCA and North Brunswick Township High School, and many of the same rules need to be followed regardless of the facility. For MCC, it should be noted that as an educational facility, we are asked not to crowd around the entrance area to the Phys Ed building **and to keep noise to an absolute minimum.** In addition, although it is considered OK to drop off swimmers at MCC in front of the building, it is **absolutely prohibited** to sit in front of the building waiting to pick up your swimmer(s). It is highly recommended that you accompany swimmers in and out of all three facilities (especially for 12 & under swimmers). Also, please do not bring valuable items to practice and make certain that your swimmers either lock their belongings in a locker, or bring them out onto the pool deck.

Regarding locker room etiquette and personal behavior on the pool deck, all swimmers and parents must understand that we are guests at each facility that we hold practices and swim meets at, and we expect everyone to follow the facility rules and be on their best behavior. Should there be any behavioral issues, or if we do not clean up after ourselves, we could be jeopardizing the entire team's use of that facility. It is extremely important that we meet the requirements of all of our facility partners. Games should not be played in the locker rooms as injuries will more than likely be a direct result. Also, please remind your children that all swimmers are Riptide swimmers and being a good teammate does not include teasing or bullying, it includes support and sportsmanship. As participants in a YMCA program, our core values are caring, responsibility, honesty & respect. Bullying, or other locker room problems, will not be tolerated and could result in expulsion from the team.

Questions or Concerns – Coaches are happy to address any questions or concerns **before or after practice**, or with an email or phone call. We would prefer to hear from you directly, as opposed to hearing of issues “through the grapevine”.

### **Practice Helpful Hints**

- >Please have all the equipment required by your group at each practice. At a minimum, swimmers will need practice suits, goggles, fins and caps. Caps, goggles and suits break, so always bring a spare.
- >Please arrive at least 10 minutes before practice begins in order to ensure that swimmers are on deck and ready to go when practice begins.
- >Be on time for the start of dryland exercises. This is an important part of a swimmers overall training regimen and missing even parts of it will have a negative impact on a swimmer.
- >Swimmers should use the bathroom before practice. Bathroom breaks will be kept to a minimum during practice.
- > Have goggles and caps adjusted prior to the start of practice
- >Listen to your coach and follow directions. If a coach suggests trying something a little different, it may feel “funny” at first, but with practice your stroke will improve. Remember, even Olympians are constantly tweaking their strokes.
- >Bring water bottles to practice. Breaks to use a water fountain will be avoided. Swimmers sweat during practice. If swimmers wait until they are thirsty before drinking, they are already dehydrated so they should have a water bottle on deck.
- >Swimmers should wear less expensive training suits to practice.
- >Swimmers should attend as many of your group’s practices as possible.
- >Swimmers should be supportive and respectful of their coaches, officials, parents, teammates and opponents in addition to the property of their teammates and the facilities that Riptide uses for practices.

## COMPETITIVE MEET SEASON

The Riptide competitive season consists of dual meets, and invitational meets (inc. mini meets) and championship meets. Dual meets consists of scheduled meets against other YMCAs. Invitational meets are meets that include many teams and typically require swimmers to provide entries by a required date. Championship meets are our end-of-season meets.

### YMCA Dual & Championship Meets

The Riptide Swim Team is divided into four separate competing dual meet teams: two Girls Teams and two Boys Teams. Swimmers will be assigned to a dual meet team based on the intra-squad scrimmage (Lollipop Meet) held in early October. Each dual meet team competes against other YMCAs within its own division of the NJ YMCA Swim League. The YMCA winter swim season consists of 4-6 dual meets beginning in October and ending in January. The regular season ends with the State Championship Meets in February. The State Championship meets consist of the Bronze Meet, the Silver Meet and the State Championship meet. Swimmers compete in the meet(s) in which they qualify for, relative to meeting time standards in each event. For example, a swimmer may have Bronze level times in fly and breast, but may have Silver level times in free and back. In that case, the swimmer would swim fly and breast in Bronze Championships and free and back in Silver Championships. Should that swimmer reach a Silver time in the Bronze Meet for fly and/or breast, they will then add those events to their Silver Meet line-up. The same would be true should swimmers reach State Championship times in the Bronze or Silver Meets.

Dual meets provide an opportunity for Riptide swimmers to compete against another team of similar ranking. Meets are normally held on Saturdays and all home meets are at North Brunswick High School. Starting times for meets vary. A swimmer's age group is determined by his/her **age as of December 1**. Weekly dual meets focus on the TEAM concept. Team spirit, cheering for teammates, positive attitude, and good sportsmanship contribute to the success of the meet, the team, and each of the swimmers. Swimmers are assigned to swim in events that our coaches feel will contribute most to the team's success in winning the meet.

Parental support, too, is essential and required, as all efforts for set-up, running the meet, clean-up, and additional meet activities come from our parents. Historically, we have had a wonderful group of parents at RVY whose willingness to "pitch in" has made season after season productive and successful, as well as pleasant and social. See the "Parents & Swim Meets" section for more information on running swim meets.

### Invitational Swim Meets (Inc. USA Meets)

Besides swimming in the NJ "Y" League, our team is a member of USA Swimming, a national organization that sets up and runs meets in New Jersey and throughout the country, year round. Swimmers must join USA Swimming annually. Each year we collect the necessary fee and register our swimmers. The swimmer receives a USA "number" which allows him/her to enter USA meets.

Registration forms are distributed at tryouts and the parents meeting in September. New swimmers must fill out a registration form while returning swimmers need only pay the renewal fee.

Eligibility in USA meets is usually based on qualifying times and a swimmer's **age is determined as of the first day of the meet**. A swimmer usually must have swum an individual stroke with a certain "qualifying" time to be eligible for a meet (some meets may not have qualifying times). Meet qualifying times are usually based on national "A", "B", or "C" standards. Meets are thus generally called A, B, or C meets. Each age group has national standards for each stroke. Once a swimmer has equaled a stroke standard, he/she may only enter events equal to that standard. For example, if a swimmer makes a "B" breaststroke time, he/she may not swim breaststroke in a "C" meet. However, he/she may swim another stroke in a "C" meet in which he/she has not made a "B" time.

USA meets (and other invitational meets) are INDIVIDUAL swims and are separate from our YMCA dual meets. We will post invitational meet information on the web site as quickly as it becomes available to us. **Generally there is a very quick turn-around** to sign up for these meets, so it is recommended you check the web site regularly. There are separate fees for each event entered, which are paid via each swimmers' meet fee account. The meet entry process is described under the "web site" portion of this handbook.

**Important** - Invitational meets may conflict with the "Y" dual meet schedule; at NO TIME is it permissible to enter an

invitational meet which conflicts with the team schedule. These meets are good opportunities for swimmers to work toward personal goals, to try different strokes and distances, and/or to attempt to make qualifying times for other meets and Nationals. It is strongly recommended that swimmers enter event that they may not normally swim in a YMCA dual meet, especially longer distance events (100s, 200s, 400 IM, 500 free, etc). Please ask a coach for advice on which strokes to try.

## MINI MEETS

Throughout the season, invitational meets are also scheduled specifically for our younger swimmers (usually 9 & under). These mini-meets will be posted along with other meets on the web site. For mini-meets, swimmers will typically enter events for his/her individual age. Swimmers at Mini Meets compete not in groups of ages, but only against swimmers of the same age (for the most part). There are no qualifying times. The meet entry process is described under the "web site" portion of this handbook.

## NATIONALS (SUNKISSED INVITATIONAL - CHARLOTTE, NC)

The final team meet of the season is the Sunkissed Invitational, held in Charlotte, NC. The Sunkissed Meet is a team meet (with qualifying times) that should ultimately be every Riptide swimmer's long or short term goal to participate in. There are challenging qualifying times in Junior (13 & under) and Senior (14 & over) divisions. This meet is usually held in late March or early April at the Mecklenberg County Aquatic Center in Charlotte. Riptide is very proud of the fact that our participation on the National Team has historically involved approximately 30%+ of our swimmers in a given season.

This meet is designed to give the opportunity to compete in a "Nationals" meet to many more swimmers than comparable meets in other organizations (USA, YMCA, etc). In other words, this meet gives swimmers, who otherwise may never encounter this experience, the opportunity to travel to, and compete in, a big four-day meet with a prelims & finals format. The qualifying times are attainable goals for many junior swimmers (at least 10 years of age) as they approach the age of 13, and for senior swimmers from 14 years of age (**age is determined as of the first day of the meet**). Sample times (from 2013) are listed below. these times are subject to change every year.

<u>SENIOR GIRLS – 14 and Over</u>	<u>SENIOR BOYS – 14 and Over</u>	<u>JUNIOR GIRLS – 13 and Under</u>	<u>JUNIOR BOYS – 13 and Under</u>
50 YARD FREESTYLE 26.99	50 YARD FREESTYLE 24.99	50 YARD FREESTYLE 27.99	50 YARD FREESTYLE 27.99
100 YARD FREESTYLE 58.99	100 YARD FREESTYLE 52.99	100 YARD FREESTYLE 1:02.50	100 YARD FREESTYLE 1:01.99
200 YARD FREESTYLE 2:08.99	200 YARD FREESTYLE 1:56.99	200 YARD FREESTYLE 2:17.99	200 YARD FREESTYLE 2:15.99
500 YARD FREESTYLE 5:45.99	500 YARD FREESTYLE 5:13.99	500 YARD FREESTYLE 6:05.99	500 YARD FREESTYLE 5:57.99
1000 YARD FREESTYLE 12:25.50	1000 YARD FREESTYLE 11:58.50	100 YARD BACKSTROKE 1:12.99	100 YARD BACKSTROKE 1:13.99
100 YARD BACKSTROKE 1:08.99	100 YARD BACKSTROKE 1:02.99	200 YARD BACKSTROKE 2:32.99	200 YARD BACKSTROKE 2:35.99
200 YARD BACKSTROKE 2:30.99	200 YARD BACKSTROKE 2:19.99	100 YARD BREASTSTROKE 1:22.99	100 YARD BREASTSTROKE 1:20.99
100 YARD BREASTSTROKE 1:15.99	100 YARD BREASTSTROKE 1:08.99	200 YARD BREASTSTROKE 2:57.50	200 YARD BREASTSTROKE 2:53.50
200 YARD BREASTSTROKE 2:49.99	200 YARD BREASTSTROKE 2:38.99	100 YARD BUTTERFLY 1:14.99	100 YARD BUTTERFLY 1:12.99
100 YARD BUTTERFLY 1:07.99	100 YARD BUTTERFLY 1:00.99	200 YARD BUTTERFLY 2:49.50	200 YARD BUTTERFLY 2:39.50
200 YARD BUTTERFLY 2:47.50	200 YARD BUTTERFLY 2:23.99	100 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 1:13.50	100 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 1:11.99
200 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 2:25.99	200 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 2:15.99	200 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 2:35.99	200 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 2:34.99
400 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 5:25.99	400 YARD INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 4:46.99		

If going to Nationals is one of a swimmer's goals this season, then it is imperative that the swimmer takes the appropriate steps on his/her way toward making the qualifying times. Initially, each swimmer must make the commitment to attend practices and work hard. After making this commitment, swimmers must give themselves every opportunity, over the course of the season, to swim the events in which they are trying to qualify. This means attending as many invitational meets as possible. This is especially important for swimmers in the 10-12 age group, for they are only swimming 50 yard stroke events in dual meets, as opposed to the 100 yard stroke events, 200 IM and 500 free style which are swum at Nationals. Seniors also must give themselves the opportunity to swim in events they may not normally swim in dual meets, such as 200 yard stroke events, 400 IM and 500/1000 yard free styles.

The "Nationals season" begins in early February and after an intense 6-8 week training program, the team travels together and attends the meet together as a team (all prelim & finals sessions). Parents, meanwhile, are assigned to chaperone duties for meals, afternoon and evening patrols at the hotel, as well as timing and officiating duties at the meet. All of these responsibilities are divided evenly among the parents, most of which usually attend the meet.

The following are sample costs so that you can plan for the trip. Expenses will change from year to year and these should only be used as ball park estimates. Travel expenses are **not** included.

**Expenses for swimmers:** \$1,000 (estimated)

**Expenses for parents:** \$300 per parent (single parents requesting a single room, \$600) - parent rooms are booked under the Riptide block and assigned by the team (individual reservations should not be made)

The following items are included in the above expenses for the swimmers:

Hotel room, Pool use fee, Swimmers' breakfast for Fri/Sat/Sun, Swimmers' lunch for Sunday, Swimmers' dinner for Thu/Fri/Sat, Banquet dinner on Sunday, Mandatory team T-shirts, Team Day, Pizza Party, Coaches' expenses

**Additional swimsuit and caps expenses:**

Girls' swimsuits: \$100 - \$140

Boys' swimsuits: \$100 - \$125

Two Team Caps: \$15-\$23

We ask that parents who will not be coming down with a spouse try to and share a room with another parent since we are assigned a limited number of rooms. Requests will be taken on a first come first served basis for individual rooms. The fee also includes provisions for the Hospitality Suite. This is where parents will meet, relax, discuss the day's events, and pick up information on the following: timing assignments, seat saving schedule, team roster and room assignment list for the hall monitors, and any other info we need to get out to the parents.

## **COMMUNICATIONS & WEB SITE**

Communication is the key to a great swimming experience. The coaches and the parents association will be communicating to the team on a frequent basis throughout the season. If you need to speak with a coach regarding a coaching or swimming issue, please feel free to email the coach using the emails listed on our coach's web page. You can also speak to the coaches before or after practice. **The coaches ask, however, that you do not speak to them on deck during meets or practices.** While on deck, our coaches' priority is our children and they want to be able to focus their complete attention on them. If any issue remains unresolved, you can contact the Head Coach with your concerns. **It will benefit the swimmer and the team to address all concerns with the coaches directly, as opposed to allowing issues to fester and permeate throughout the team.**

As we are continually dealing with announcements, events, fees, entries, deadlines, emergency closings/schedule changes, etc. during the season, it is extremely important that information gets to everyone in a timely manner. We have several ways to communicate information to you. The best way to find out about important announcements, team rosters, team schedules, parent assignments for meets, special meet announcements, practice schedule changes, Nationals information, and a whole variety of other items of interest is to check the team web site ([www.rvyriptide.org](http://www.rvyriptide.org)). The home page is kept up to date with the latest information. It is essential that you check the web site regularly.

## **Team Unify Web/Database Platform**

Our team uses an online swim team management platform called Team Unify. Team Unify is used to manage all of our swim team communication vehicles and databases including swimmer/parent contact information, email communication, web site management, swimmer time tracking, meet entries, parent work assignments (see sign up process for parents and meets) and more. Each family will have an account with a primary email address as their login. This secure account is very important, as your contact information and swimmer information will be maintained here. When you first become a member of Riptide, an account will be set up for you. You will need to confirm the account by logging in and completing the set up. It is very important that you maintain an active email address for purposes of team communication. The account is also used during the season for signing up to enter invitational/championship meets. You can update your account as you see fit and add email addresses and mobile phone numbers to enhance your ability to receive team information. Once your account is set up you can sign in as described below. Signing in each time you visit the site is recommended because some information is only visible to registered members of the team.

### **How to Sign Into Your Account:**

>Click the Sign In button at the team website

>After you are logged in please click on My Account button;

>Review/Change the visible account information for accuracy then click save Account Changes button in the lower right of this entry window

>Review "Members Under This Account" (swimmers) box at the bottom of the General Info window. Clicking on the member name will bring you to the Member Profile page where you can edit the information for each swimmer.

>Whenever a change is made please click on Save Changes

>Once you have a Riptide account, you can manage your profile and contact information directly, including adding contact emails, adding profile pictures, telephone & text messaging numbers, among other items. There are also web tutorials that can be accessed under "Help & Training".

### **Entering Invitational Meets**

Invitational meets are communicated via the web site and through email. Each time a meet is available for sign-up, it will be listed under the Events/Swim Meet section on the home page and an email will be generated to all active swim team member accounts. Swimmers & Parents will then have a short window to decide whether to attend the meet (if eligible, based on age and time standards). It is strongly recommended that all swimmers plan to attend as many invitational meets as possible, as part of the overall Riptide experience. To sign up and attend a meet, the sign up process is, as follows:

>Click on the email link or from the meet page click on the link to the meet under "Swim Meet"

>Click on your swimmer

>Click on the Signup Record pull-down and select Yes

>Once yes is selected, you will see the events your child MAY be eligible to swim

>You will also see the best times inserted into the Entry Time field and highlighted in yellow

>Check the Checkbox to the left of the name for those events you would like to swim

>Please take careful notice of the time standards that must be met in the right-side columns

>Once you have finished, click on the Submit Button in the lower right

Repeat the process for additional swimmers

Your coach or team administrator will review your declaration and APPROVE or REJECT your request and once they submit the final choices you will be able to review by signing in and clicking on the Attend This Event button for any events listed on our team website. Look at the Coach Approval column for the events that you have been confirmed to swim.

### **Team Unify On Deck Parent Mobile App**

"On Deck Parent" is a mobile smart phone app that enables you to stay completely connected to all team information. You can experience new-found knowledge at swim meets, tracking attendance, viewing their child's best times and comparing them to local and national time standards, viewing news from our team's web site and viewing and signing up for jobs and all events on the team. All "On Deck" requires is a smart phone or tablet and downloading the app (search for Team Unify On Deck Parent). Additional information on our web site can be found using the Help & Training Tool link on the home page.

### **Facebook & Twitter**

Our Riptide coaches will periodically post updates and messages on Facebook and Twitter. You can "friend" the coaches on Facebook (Riptide Coaches) and/or "follow" them on Twitter(@riptideswimteam) to keep tabs on the coaches and the team.

### **PARENTS & SWIM MEETS**

All parents are required to work at a minimum number of dual meets during our swim season. These responsibilities include officiating, timing, home meet set up and take down, concessions, and scoring & computer table. **Also, when attending an invitational meet, all parents should expect to time for a portion of the meet.** Team coordinators (or the meet entry coordinator for invitational meets) will schedule assignments for each meet. All parents are expected to fulfill their assignments. In the event of a conflict or some other unforeseen circumstance, **it is the responsibility of the assigned parent to find a suitable replacement.** The swim team cannot function without every parent performing his/her assigned duties. Also, It is imperative that as many parents as possible step up to take on the jobs of officiating (see below) and running meet timing systems (Colorado Timing System and Meet Manager Software on PC). These functions are critical to the running of swim meets. Training for the Colorado Timing System and Meet Manager software on a PC can be conducted at any time and will ultimately include having you shadow an "expert" during a meet. These functions are relatively easy to learn and just need you to volunteer! **The Lollipop Meet is a great time to step up and learn!**

Another important aspect of running swim meets is setting up and cleaning up the pool. Generally this involved getting to the pool about 45 minutes prior to the warm-up time and staying about 30 minutes after the meet has ended. See

the tasks associated with set-up and clean-up below.

### **General Home Dual Meet Set-Up**

- >Lane lines are rolled out into pool, placed between each lane and along end of pool (tighten with wrench),
- >Backstroke poles (four) placed along the side of pool, two across from each other near each end of the pool (use holes in deck). Flags hanging on start end wall need to be hooked to poles.
- >Bring out from boys' locker room office, all timing system wiring (beige bucket), scoring sheets, paper, pencils, etc. (blue bucket), printer, PA microphone, starter and extension cord brought out to scorer's table.
- >Turn PA system on using master unit in boys locker room (far left corner).
- >Scoring table near girls' locker room is set up with four chairs.
- >Touch pads (from shelf unit near start end emergency exit) installed in each lane (do not use pads that have a cord marked with red tape)– use plastic brackets to hold pads in place on gutter. Brackets should span two lanes and connect the ends of two touch pads.
- >Pads get plugged into “prime” outlet on cables.
- >Timing system wiring: Short cable goes from timer across all lanes (make sure lane numbers align with plug numbers) (lay out under starting blocks, wrap around 2-3 starting to keep in place; Long cable (with extender) rolls out down spectator wall and across far-end lanes (for 25 yard events). Buttons are laid out across both start end and far-end (one per lane). Start end plungers are plugged into button outlet in cable harness (not prime). Far end is plugged into prime outlet.
- >Start meet with touch pad and one button per lane plugged into cables at start end. For 25 yard events, timers unplug their one button per lane and bring down to shallow end so that there will be two buttons per lane (then bring back after 8u event).
- >Gray touch pad & button cables from both ends end at scoring table and plug into back of Colorado Timer. Scoreboard RCA cable hanging on wall behind scorer's table plugs into Colorado timer. Printer and PC USB cable plug into Colorado Timer (see diagram)
- >Black two-prong plug from starter plugs into gray harness wire outlet (first outlet says "start", remaining outlets are for lanes 1, 2, 3, etc.)
- >Six black mats cover far-end gray cables (one between each lane).

### **General Home Dual Meet Clean-Up**

- >Lane lines rolled up on reel and backstroke flags hung on start end wall. Poles placed in far corner by touch pads (check with custodian, if no other swim programs that day, lanelines and flags can be left up for practice on Sunday, if scheduled).
- >All gray wiring and plungers into beige bucket and brought back to boy's locker room office.
- >Small blue bucket with scoring sheets, paper, pencils, etc. printer, PA microphone and extension cord brought back to boys' locker room. Printer is stored in far right corner of office on shelf (behind bathroom). Blue and beige buckets stored near printer. Extension cord and microphone should be returned to high school equipment crate (gray milk crate).
- >Turn PA system off using master unit in boy's locker room (far left corner).
- >All computer and printer cables coiled and placed in computer bag.
- >Touch pads removed from pool and placed back on shelf unit near start end emergency exit). Make sure touch pad cords are not crimped un pads when placed on shelf unit.
- >Touch pad plastic brackets should be left in the corner by touch pads.
- >Scoreboard turned off (blank) by pressing "Scoreboard" soft key twice on the Colorado timer.
- >Black mats get laid out on benches under windows and long blue mats get laid out on wall in front of bleachers.
- >**Check spectator and swimmer areas and pick up any garbage left behind (leaving the pool area in disarray could affect Riptide's ability to use the facility in the future).**

### **Signing Up for Required Parent Jobs for Dual Meets**

Parents are required to work a minimum number of dual meets for each swimmer they have on the team. Dual meet jobs are listed under each dual meet on the web site, and parents are expected to log into their account and choose the jobs they will perform throughout the season, in order to meet the work requirement. The jobs are filled on a first come-first served basis. The sign up process for parent jobs at dual meets is, as follows:

- >Sign in to your account

>Go to "Events" on the menu bar and then choose the meet you are signing up to work for

>Review the list of jobs available for that particular meet

>Step 1: Find the empty slots shown as "-----"

>Step 2: Click on the checkbox in front of the empty slot that you want to sign up for

>Step 3: Select [Signup] button to sign-up for the slots that you selected.

Note: If your Account name is printed right after the checkbox, you've signed up for that job. You do NOT have to "Signup" again. You, however, can use the "Remove Signup" button to remove the signup if you no longer want to work on that job.

If someone else's name is printed, that job slot is not available for you to sign up (this is a first-come-first-serve system). You can only sign up for the empty slots shown as "-----".

All jobs must be filled in order to run a dual meet and each family must meet the minimum number of jobs required for each swimmer.

### **Meet Types & Being Prepared**

All swimmers are required to wear the team suit at meets and, if a swimmer chooses to wear a cap, it must be a team cap. Although goggles are not required, they are highly recommended. YMCA dual meets consist of Riptide swimming against another YMCA team in a generally consistent event format (all age groups swimming IM, free, breast, back, fly and relays). The home team will swim in lanes 1, 3 & 5 and the visiting team swims in lanes 2, 4 & 6. Points are awarded first thru fifth for individual events and for first thru third place in relay events. At the end of each dual meet, the team that scores the most points is declared the winner. 8 & under swimmers do not score points in dual meets, as the YMCA philosophy is to develop our youngest swimmers in all strokes without a bias toward always swimming in specific (or best) events to score points.

**For dual meets, if you know in advance that you will be missing a meet, you need to contact your dual meet head coach no later than the Tuesday before the meet that you will miss.** Dual meet line-ups are prepared Tuesday or Wednesday of meet week, so it is important to communicate your absence as soon as possible. If an emergency situation or illness occurs after Tuesday, email the dual meet coach to report your absence.

### **Swim Meet Helpful Hints**

Attending invitational meets, such as USA meets, is a very different experience from attending dual meets. These meets host hundreds of swimmers at a time and will typically be split into age group sessions of 3-4 hours in length. We will post invitational meet information on the web site as quickly as it becomes available to us. The meet entry process is described under the "web site" portion of this handbook.

**The following is a list of do's and don'ts to help make attending invitational meets a rewarding one.**

- Arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to the **FIRST** warm-up session for the meet, even if Riptide has a later warm-up, as attendance must be taken and absent swimmers must be scratched.
- Be sure to check the swimmer in with the coach when you get to the meet. Swimmers will be scratched if they aren't sure they are present!
- Find our team area (generally a gym or open area where swimmers wait until it is time to swim).
- Bring your team suit, goggles, team cap, towels (depending on how many swims they may need 2-3 towels - one is frequently not enough), something to sit on (blanket, sleeping bag, chairs), 2-3 T-shirts, sweat shirt, warm-up gear if needed.
- Swimmers do better if they bring something to do while waiting between races. Bring a book, travel games, cards, etc. to keep them occupied. You may want to avoid expensive items, such as a electronic games or smart phones, unless you can secure it while the swimmer is not using it.
- Be sure your swimmer has warm clothes (sweats) to wear, as the team areas are frequently cool and/or drafty.
- Good nutrition is necessary for optimal performance. Ensure that your swimmer eats a healthy breakfast (even though these meets often start EARLY!). Snacks between events should be healthy, such as high energy foods and juice rather than candy and soda. Try to avoid sugary treats and focus on low glycemic carbs (grapes, apples, wheat bran, pasta) prior to the meet. It is very important that your swimmer stay well hydrated before and during a meet. Dehydration contributes to muscle fatigue, cramps and poor recovery. If they wait until they are thirsty to drink, it is too late. Bring healthy snack foods such as bananas, bagels, power bars, cheese and crackers in a cooler.

- Meet programs are available at invitational meets and generally include only a list of swimmers and how they are seeded (1st thru however many swimmers are entered in the event). Swimmers will not know their heat and lane until the scratches are submitted during warm-up and the actual heat sheets are generated. The coaches will advise the swimmers of their heat and lane for each event and the heat sheets are generally posted around the pool or swimmer area. Parents can also download a smart phone app called **MEET MOBILE** (for most meets) where entries, seedings, heat assignments and results will be available in real time.
- Bring highlighters and Sharpies so you can highlight your child's name and the names of other swimmers from the team. For younger or inexperienced swimmers, you might want to write the event numbers, heats and lanes they will swim on their arms or legs as a reminder.
- Swimmers need to pay attention to which events are being swum - nothing is more disappointing than a swimmer missing an event because he/she wasn't paying attention. Coaches will normally be watching the swims in the pool and will not always be able to remind swimmers to get to the block, so it is the swimmer's responsibility to get to the block for his/her heat. Approximately 10-15 minutes prior to their event, your swimmer should report to his/her lane, report in to the timer and line up in heat order. Immediately after the event, the swimmer should speak with the coach about his swim. If a separate "cool down" pool is available, a swimmer should cool down in the pool to allow muscles to stretch and relax.
- Parents are not allowed behind the blocks or on deck. Please stay in the stands to watch your swimmer. Also, there is no flash photography at the start of any heat. Please respect this rule.
- Try to keep your swimmers off their feet. Swimmers can wear tennis shoes on deck during meets to help save their legs. Safety is always a concern at swim meets and there is never any horseplay around the pool
- Swimmers shall be supportive and respectful of their coaches, officials, parents, teammates and opponents in addition to the property of their teammates and all facilities where Riptide competes for meets
- Most of all, encourage your swimmer to put forth his/her best effort. Swimming in the big meets provides a level of competition that usually spurs swimmers to new personal bests. Cheer them on!
- If you know in advance that you will be missing an invitational meet that you signed up for, you need to contact the coach assigned to your first session of the meet as soon as possible, preferably by phone, email or text, so that they know that they should scratch you from the meet.

## **OFFICIALS - A CRITICAL PART OF THE TEAM**

Whenever the team participates in a meet (dual meet or invitational meet), timers and officials are required to help run the meet. Riptide has always had a tradition of meeting our obligations for officiating and for having parents volunteer to officiate at meets. Officials work on deck to implement the YMCA swimming rules for dual meets (and USA rules for invitational meets) so that each swimmer is given the fairest swim possible. In fact, in order to run our dual meets efficiently, officials are required for each of our four teams (2 girls & @ boys). When Riptide children reach college age or leave the program, there is a turnover of officials. So your participation is needed and valued by your children, other swimmers, and the coaches. There are many officiating positions on the YMCA Riptide team, **and the more certified official that we have, the less each will have to work!** Riptide officials exemplify the YMCA values of Caring, Responsibility, Honesty, and Respect in every aspect of their officiating.

### **Why be an official?**

Being an official is an important and rewarding job that enables you to learn stroke technique and the rules governing meets. No prior swimming experience is needed, only a desire to learn and be an integral part of meets and be a minimum of 18 years of age. If you would like to learn more you can contact Riptide's head official, who is the officials' coordinator between our team and the league. You can also speak to any of our officials who would be happy to share their experiences with you.

### **What does an official do?**

Officials hold positions such as: Meet Referee, Starter, Stroke Judge, Turn Judge, Stroke and Turn Judge, Finish Judge (also called Across the Board), and Relay Take-off Judges. In addition, the referee may assign a Chief Judge, Chief Timer/Scorer. Typically a chief judge is assigned at championship meets and USA meets. In addition to officiating at dual meets, you are also requested to volunteer your time at YMCA Championship meets.

In addition to officiating as a YMCA official you may take a separate certification course to become a USA official. USA certification allows you to officiate at USA meets (like Winterfest, Holiday Classic and other invitational meets).

### **How do I become an official?**

YMCA Officials become certified through either a Level I course or a Level II clinic taken at an available location. Volunteers interested in becoming an official take one workshop course and then an online open book test which may be taken at home. At the beginning of the season a list of upcoming course locations will be made available on the website. The course focuses on events, procedures and the duties and responsibilities of the officials prior to, during, and after the meet. A score of 80 percent must be achieved on a take home test in order to achieve certification.

### **Is there a mentoring program for new officials?**

ABSOLUTELY! Riptide encourages new officials to apprentice with an experienced official to get a feel for judging strokes and turns, the responsibilities of the finish judge, starter, and referee. You are welcome to do this at any meet, even an away meet. Let the meet referee know before the beginning of the meet that you'd like to gain more experience in a particular position.

### **Officials Clinics**

New officials, as well as current officials whose certification has expired, are asked to attend the scheduled clinics listed. Only one class (Level I official) is required to become certified as a Level I official. That will allow you to perform stroke & turn, finish, relay takeoff, timer, and scorer duties.

After you have completed one year of officiating as a Level I official and have worked at least 8 meets, you are eligible to enroll in a Level II class. The Level II class will provide you the certification to officiate as a referee, starter, and chief judge.

### **TEAM SUITS & APPAREL**

During a practice night, normally in September, our local swim shop, Ultimate Swim Shop, will come to our facility for a swim suit fitting so that they can take orders for the Riptide team suit. Team suits are required for meets, so it is important to attend and place your order with the swim shop. They will also have available many other items such as goggles, fins, etc.

Riptide also offers team apparel with Riptide logos. An order form will be distributed (via the web site) to all families for the purpose of ordering Riptide logo items, such as t-shirts, sweats, polo shirts, jackets, etc. These items will typically be delivered in November or December and make great holiday gifts! It's also a great way for swimmers and parents to show their team pride. Contact the Riptide Parent Association Board Member(s) in charge of team apparel with any questions.

### **SOCIAL EVENTS**

As part of what we consider to be the "Riptide Family", Riptide swimmers and parents have characteristically been a very sociable group. We have many social events scheduled during the year, for example, the Ice Cream Social, Team Holiday Party and the Annual Swim Team Banquet. Other social events may be conducted over the course of the season. We hope you will participate as part of the Riptide family!

At the end of the season, we celebrate the completion of another successful Riptide swim season at the Annual Awards Banquet, held each year on a specified date in April or May. This family event recognizes all swimmers for their season of accomplishments. Individual times, new team records, special team awards, etc. The Banquet includes good food, music and it never fails to be a fun event for the entire family, so keep in mind siblings, grandparents, and aunts and uncles as well. Watch for details toward the end of the regular season and we'll look forward to seeing everyone there.