

# Insider's Guide to Swim Team

Welcome to the Lucas Valley Lightning Swim Team! The next few months will be some of the most rewarding and active months of your kids' lives. As part of the team and in addition to swim practice and meets, your family will also find many fun activities and social events aimed at the entire family. You and your children will receive as much support and guidance as you want, so please don't hesitate to ask for it. Our goal as a team is to offer your children a swim team for those experienced swimmers eager to compete, and young swimmers just starting out in the sport. Take part in as much or as little as fits your lifestyle. The LVST Parent Board and coaches are available to answer any questions and concerns, so please call or email us. In addition you will find many other seasoned swim team parents more than willing to share their insights and enthusiasm. And, just for you, we've developed this "Insider's Guide" to help you understand the inner workings of the "LVST experience" and make the most of it. Welcome aboard!

Like so many things in life, your satisfaction with your child's involvement with swim team is closely tied to your own involvement. We'll provide you with PLENTY of opportunities for involvement; in fact, we require all families to help out during the season in order to run the team successfully! Don't worry, it will be fun, we promise.

So let's take a look inside LVST...

## TEAM COMMUNICATION

**Email** It is very important that you register for the LVST group email list. This is now our main form of communication with swim team families (multiple email addresses for a family are good). The list is completely private and confidential-no access except by specified moderators of LVST board members and coaches. You will receive emails of upcoming events, coaches' reports and such. A weekly update is sent from the LVST Parent Board, and a weekly coaches report, along with updates on upcoming events. We try very hard to keep the number of emails down so when you do see one, know it's full of good information!

**Mailboxes** The team has file boxes that are brought out to the pool area every day during practice and home meets. These file boxes are the individual family mailboxes. Each family has a file with their name on it. Periodically you'll find flyers for different events, notes from the coaches, ribbons awarded after the meets, etc. It is very important that you check your family mailbox at least once a week or you may miss out on important information.

**Website** The Lucas Valley Lightning website, [www.lvst.org](http://www.lvst.org) is your source for all team information. The website includes meet schedules, calendar of events, heat sheets, results, team news and more.

## **PARENTAL SUPPORT-MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!**

Swim team would not exist without the help of parents, especially during the meets. There are hundreds of jobs that must be performed throughout the season that make our team run smoothly and contribute to the success and enjoyment of all the swimmers on the team. There are work assignments for every interest and time frame, ranging from setting up a swim meet to working in the snack bar, to updating the website. Every Lightning family must work at some capacity this season. You can choose your jobs online.

## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Throughout the season LVST organizes a wide range of social activities in which you and your child may participate, ranging from a family Pasta Feed to Bowling Night and Family Camping. These activities are a great way for your child to build new friendships and enjoy being part of the team. Each activity is designed for the whole family, so those younger siblings will surely find other future swimmers to become friends! Please check the website ([lvst.org](http://lvst.org))-for events, times and locations.

## **LVST SEASON**

The Lucas Valley Lightning team is a member of the Marin Swim League (MSL). Our team participates in dual meets with other MSL teams. There are 7 meets, beginning in May and running through July with the MSL Championship meet culminating the season for all ten teams in the league.

### **Practice**

Afternoon practice sessions are offered five days per week, starting in March. Swimmers may attend practice every day, or as many days as they wish. Coaches do encourage swimmers to participate a minimum of three days per week to continue skill development and to maintain conditioning. During Spring Break (Dixie District Schedule) and Summer, practices are held on weekday mornings.

Swimmers wanting additional instruction can contact the coaches about a private lesson. These are offered for a separate fee and are held outside of the regular practice times.

### **Practice Supervision**

The team coaches are responsible for your child's safety in the water during practice. Swimmers are not allowed to remain in the pool area or lawn to play before or after their age group's practice time without parental supervision.

### **Swim Wear**

LVST team suits, sweats, caps, and shirts will be available to order on registration day and will arrive shortly after.

Practice Suits and Meet Suits- All swimmers need to have at least one, preferably two practice suits to be worn during practice. Please, no board shorts or beach swim trunks. These suits dramatically hamper learning and applying good technique. You may wear old suits or loose fitting nylon Speedo style suits. You may wear more than one of these types of suits at practice. Please do not wear your LVST competition suit to practice. The wear and tear of everyday use will fade and lesson the quality of the material. No high school logo team suits or USA swimming suits will be allowed at swim meets. However, you can wear these suits at practice. We only wear our LVST competition suit or a specialized racing suit at the swim meets.

***Swim Caps*** - The same rule applies to swim caps. All swimmers with shoulder length hair are required to wear a swim cap at practice and meets. Long hair with no cap reduces the efficiency of an individual to concentrate on proper technique and drills. LVST caps will be worn at swim meets. Again, no high school or USA logo swimming caps are allowed at any MSL swim meets. Please feel free to wear any swim cap with any logo at practice.

***Goggles*** – It is strongly suggested that all swimmers use swim goggles at swim practice and meets. This may take some getting used to for some but will help in the swimmers performance and enjoyment of swimming competitively. The goggles need to be adjusted before practice and tightened appropriately.

***Comfortable Shoes and Clothing*** - On Occasion we will do some group stretching and light dry land work. Please always come prepared.

***Extra Equipment*** - Kick boards, pull buoys, swim stretch bands used during the course of the season at practice will be supplied by LVST.

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REMEMBER HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO COME TO PRACTICE PREPARED AND ON TIME. EVERY PRACTICE BEGINS WITH PROPER PREPARATION.

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TMB Sports will provide all the necessary suits and outerwear that you should need. Find more information on our website about ordering suits, sweats and other equipment.

## **SWIM MEET SPECIFICS**

Each meet follows pretty much the same schedule, outlined below.

A week prior to the first dual meet is Time Trials. The purpose of Time Trials is for swimmers to get a time in each stroke, which the coaches will use to “seed” the swimmers for the dual meets. Time Trials is also a “practice meet” – it runs like a regular swim meet (without the opposing team) and helps new swimmers and parents understand how a meet runs before the real thing.

Swimmers new to the team and younger swimmers (and parents!) may find the swim meet setting chaotic. Arrive at the meets with enough time for your swimmer to get comfortable and for you to set up “camp” before warm ups and the start of the meet. You are responsible for

keeping track of the meet and getting your swimmer to line-ups on time. New swimmers feel more confident swimming if they are not rushed before their events. Parent Volunteers help line up the 8& unders and escort them to the starting area. The starting area is crowded with swimmers, timers and coaches. Unless your child needs you, it's best if you can wish him/her luck at the line up area and watch the race from the side. You can have a warm towel and a hug ready for your child at the end of the pool.

### **Warm-ups**

Warm-up sessions before meets begin at 7:15 a.m. for home (Lucas Valley Community Center) meets and 8 a.m. for away meets. The warm-ups last one half hour and give the swimmers a chance to loosen muscles up and practice starts and turns before their races. (Some children do not like warm-ups, especially when it is still foggy outside or if they went to bed late.) It's a good idea for your swimmer to bring at least three towels, and have some warm sweats to pull on after warm-ups (many bring sleeping bags to crawl into). Try to get a good night's sleep before a meet.

### **Snack Bar**

If your swimmer hasn't had breakfast yet, there will always be a snack bar serving breakfast items such as bagels, fruit, juices, hot chocolate, soup, and of course, donuts and coffee for the parents. **NO DONUTS FOR THE SWIMMERS!** You can always pack a bag with breakfast items as well. The snack bar also serves hot lunch items later on in the meet as well as a variety of beverages. Snack bars will be at all swim meets and are major fund-raisers for the hosting teams.

### **Schedule of Events**

Meets start promptly at 8:30 a.m. The first five events are relays as are the last five events. In between the relays are swim races of different strokes, for the five different age groups

- 8 & Unders
- 9/10's
- 11/12's
- 13/14's
- 15-18's

An announcer will name each event (and sometimes the swimmer's names) before the race begins. A starter will start each race with a horn start system.

### **Distances**

8 & unders swim 1 lap (25 yards) for the freestyle, back, breast and fly races. For the **INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY** (called IM), they swim 1 lap of fly, then 1 lap of back, then 1 lap of breast and finally 1 lap of free for a total of 4 laps or 100 yards.

All other age groups swim 50 yards for the freestyle, back, breaststroke and butterfly races and swim a 100 yard IM. The exception is in the freestyle event for the 15 – 18 age group, when the swimmers swim 100 yards instead of 50 yards.

## **Relays**

There are two kinds of relays: Medley and Freestyle. There are Medley and Freestyle Relay races for each age group. The Medley Relay is made up of two male swimmers and two female swimmers. The first swimmer swims one lap of backstroke (if 8 & Under, otherwise 2 laps), the next swimmer does one lap of breaststroke, the third swimmer does a lap of butterfly and the last swimmer swims one lap of freestyle. As mentioned above, the medley relays are the first events at a swim meet. The Freestyle relays are the last event. All the swimmers swim freestyle. Two male swimmers and two female swimmers from each group swim 25 to 50 yards depending on which age group they are in. Each swimmer is allowed to swim up to two relays. The coaches make up the relay teams and post them the morning of the meet. A winning relay team contributes 7 points for their team score.

## **Individual Races**

Each swimmer is allowed to swim up to three individual events. They have five to choose from: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and individual medley. The coaches will determine which events are best for your swimmer and will seed them according to their best times. An event can have many heats. A heat is six swimmers (three from Lucas Valley, and three from the opposing team) that race at the same time. The swimmers with the fastest seeding times swim in the earlier heats. The top three best times in each event score points for the team score. The winner receives 5 points for his/her team, the 2nd place finisher earns 3 points for his/her team and the third gets 1 point. However, if all three top swimmers are from one team, that team gets 8 points and the other team gets 1 point (“no sweep” rule). Swimmers can score from any heat.

## **Swim Meet Awards**

Your child will receive a ribbon for each individual race he/she swims. Ribbons are given for 1st through 6th place for each heat, so the type of ribbon depends on how your child placed in the heat. A label on the back of the ribbon will give the swimmer’s time in the event.

If your swimmer is in one or both of the relays (medley and/or free) they will not receive a ribbon unless they win the relay event.

If your swimmer improves his/her times in three individual events, they will also receive the prestigious Triple and Double Best Time Ribbons, which are awarded at practice the Monday after the meet. All other ribbons are filed in the family mailboxes and are usually available the Monday after a meet.

## Time Schedule

The following is an event and approximate time schedule. When the visiting team is large, the meet can run longer. Away meets may start later; some pools have only 5 lanes, so meets run longer.

Event 1	8 & under 100 yd. Medley Relay – 8:30 a.m.
Event 2	9/10 200 yd. Medley Relay – 8:35 a.m.
Event 3	11/12 200 yd. Medley Relay – 8:38 a.m.
Event 4	13/14 200 yd. Medley Relay – 8:42 a.m.
Event 5	15-18 200 yd. Medley Relay – 8:45 a.m.
Event 6	Girls 8 & under 25 yd. Freestyle – 8:48 a.m. <i>All girls in this age group that are swimming free will not swim before the next event begins. Girls are seeded according to times. Before this event, timers move to the shallow end of the pool.</i>
Event 7	Boys 8 & under 25 yd. Freestyle – 9:00 a.m. <i>This event is run just like event 6 and all other individual events. After this event, timers move back to the deep end of the pool.</i>
Event 8	Girls 9-10 Freestyle 9:10 a.m.
Event 9	Boys 9-10 Free 9:20 a.m.
Event 10	Girls 11-12 Free 9:30 a.m.
Event 11	Boys 11-12 Free 9:40 a.m.
Event 12	Girls 13-14 Free 9:50 a.m.
Event 13	Boys 13-14 Free 9:55 a.m.
Event 14	Girls 15-18 Free 10:00 a.m.
Event 15	Boys 15-18 Free 10:05 a.m.
Events 16-25	<i>These events are run like freestyle above, but now the stroke is backstroke. Approximate timing is from 10:05-10:45</i>
Events 26-35	<i>These events are run like free and back, but now the stroke is breaststroke. They usually start around 10:45 a.m. and finish at 11:15.</i>
Events 36-45	<i>These events are as above, and the stroke is butterfly. Not as many swimmers swim in these events so they go by much faster. Start at about 11:15 and end 11:35 a.m.</i>
Events 46-55	<i>The Individual Medley races-usually one or two heats of each age group. Start at 11:35 a.m. and end about noon</i>
Events 55-68	FREE RELAYS 12:00 p.m.-12:15 p.m.

## Special Notes

If your swimmer will not be able to attend a meet, please let one of the coaches know by Tuesday, before the meet. This is because Saturday meets are seeded by the coach days before

by computer and it saves time and avoids confusion if we do not enter your child in an event. (This way we don't have a lot of empty lanes during the races.)

You will know what your child is swimming by Thursday night before the meet. The heat sheet will be posted on the team web site and posted on the wall by the restrooms. The event number, heat number and lane information will be available for you to write down. It is a good idea for your child to make a habit of reading these heat sheets, so they know what to expect on Saturday morning.

On the day of the meet, we have special workers to make sure that our 8&under swimmers line up in the proper heat and lanes. If your swimmer is in an older swim group, please have them check with the coaches or older swimmers if they are not sure what or when they are swimming. It is the responsibility of the parents and their swimmers (not the line-up volunteers) to make sure the children line up on time, so you need to pay attention to the progress of the meet.

### **Age-Ups**

If, during the swim season, a swimmer has a birthday that will move him/her up to the next age group, Marin Swim League rules state that the child must compete in that age group starting at the next swim meet. For example, if your child is 10 years old at the start of the season and has a birthday in June, then your child will "age-up" to the 11 – 12 age group for the swim meet following the birthday and swim in that age group's practices and meets for the remainder of the season.

### **Other Meets**

There are two Marin Swim League meets that are run differently than dual meets. They are ALLSTARS and CHAMPIONSHIPS. Both the All Star and Championship Meets are held at the Indian Valley College Pool in Ignacio. Each team in the league takes turns hosting the meets, but all teams provide volunteers to work the meets. ALL STARS- All Stars swimmers are selected from the 10 Marin Swim League teams and meet qualifying times that will select the fastest 16 (approximately) swimmers for each age group and event. These times are posted on the Marin Swim League website ([www.lvst.org](http://www.lvst.org)). It is considered quite an honor to qualify for All Stars. CHAMPIONSHIPS is a meet for the entire league. It is open to all swimmers on every team. The morning meet (about 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) is just for 8&unders, running through all the usual swim events in the usual order. The afternoon meet (about 12:00 to 6:00 p.m.) is for all other age groups. This is a very important end of the season event for our team and everyone should plan on attending.

### **Awards Night**

Awards Night is a terrific end of the season event. Your child will receive his/her participant trophy and any other awards. Each age group has special awards. One is called High Point and is given to the girl and boy swimmer in each age group who accumulated the most points for the team. There is also High Point runner-up and Most Improved awards. For this year, team awards include the Most Valuable Swimmer (one girl or boy). The coaches' contributions are

recognized. Parent volunteer contributions that have gone above and beyond the mandatory jobs are also recognized. After the awards, the team traditionally enjoys a dessert and everyone is treated to a (historically awesome) slide show of pictures taken throughout the swim season. A great finale, for a great season.

IT IS A LOT TO TAKE IN, BUT YOU'LL FIND THE REWARDS ARE NUMEROUS.  
WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO ANOTHER FANTASTIC SEASON THIS YEAR! IF  
YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS OR JUST WANT TO GET  
MORE INVOLVED, CONTACT THE COACHES OR ANY BOARD MEMBER.

LVST PARENT BOARD