

# **Moraga Ranch Swim Team**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Welcome to Moraga Ranch Swim Team!! This document is intended as a guide to the season: what's involved in swim team, what you can expect, and what will be expected of you and your swimmers. Other than coaches, MRSC is managed entirely by volunteers, and running a swim team requires a lot of hands. So, it's important to understand your volunteer obligations and responsibilities. Thank you for being part of this amazing community!

### **Overview**

MRSC is one of nine teams in the Orinda Moraga Pool Association (OMPA). The season starts with three weeks of optional spring clinics (beginning April 11), followed by spring practice throughout the month of May and summer swim starting the first week of June. Dates and tentative times for practices are in [Team Unify](#).

[Team Unify](#) is a great source of information about all things related to Moraga Ranch swim team! We also have a very active Facebook page, so please reach out to the directors if you need an invitation to join. To learn more about OMPA and find the OMPA rules and a database of swim times, check out [www.ompaswim.com](http://www.ompaswim.com).

Meets start the first week of June (see more info on meets below) and culminate in the OMPA championship meet, which takes place the last week of July, where all nine teams compete over three days at Campolindo's Soda Center.

Our team is led by three fantastic coaches: Head Coach Marc Cavallero, Assistant Head Coach John Studebaker, and Senior Swim Coach Andie Nishimi. They are assisted by a group of Junior Coaches and Coaches in Training (CITs), many of whom are Ranch swimmers.

Additional key contacts are:

- *Swim Team Directors* - oversee and coordinate all aspects of the swim team - [swimteamdirectors@moragaranch.com](mailto:swimteamdirectors@moragaranch.com)
- *Meet Directors* - oversee swim meet job assignment for all meets and are responsible for meet equipment - [meetchair@moragaranch.com](mailto:meetchair@moragaranch.com)
- *Invitational Directors* - oversee swim meet job assignments and equipment for invitational meets (Meadow Mini, Bottoms Up, Sleepy Hollow B, OMPA, etc.). Contact: [invitationals@moragaranch.com](mailto:invitationals@moragaranch.com)
- *New Family Liaison* - helps new families get up to speed and manage the swim season. Contact: [familyliaison@moragaranch.com](mailto:familyliaison@moragaranch.com)

## **Swim Program Components and Guidance for Practice**

**Minis Program** - This program for our newest swimmers starts the first week after the school year ends (this year, May 31, 2022) and includes four days per week of practice. Minis is not a learn-to-swim program - it is designed for swimmers who can swim 6 feet unassisted and safely get to the pool wall. Minis do not participate in swim team meets but have their own AMAZING meet in July.

- **Note** - there will be evaluations in May to assess whether kids are ready for minis.

**Spring Clinics** - The season begins with optional clinics, which typically begin after spring break and are held Monday-Thursday in the afternoons. Registration is separate from swim team itself. To participate in spring clinics, you must have been on swim team before (here or elsewhere) or obtain clearance from the coaches. There will be an evaluation date.

**Swim Team Practice** - Swim team begins with spring practices, which are held in the afternoons, four days a week: Monday through Thursday. Spring practices typically begin in early May and extend until school lets out in Moraga. Summer practices and Minis begin after school gets out (May 31, 2022). Practices are 5 days per week 8-1:30 pm.

**Lessons** - Throughout the summer coaches will provide private lessons to work with swimmers one-on-one on whatever they're working to improve on. Lessons are purchased through our Team Unify site on a weekly basis. These are on a first come, first served basis. Due to the limited nature of these lessons, cancellations are not accepted. Trades are often made through our Facebook page if a conflict arises. This year we are also adding spring lessons for kids who are borderline ready for swim team.

### **What should I bring to swim practice?**

Every swimmer, including Minis, needs an appropriate-fitting practice suit (jammers or speedo for boys, single piece for girls), fins, a kickboard, and goggles - all of these items can be purchased on the team's Swim Outlet site. Any swimmer with hair past his or her shoulders should wear a cap for practices. Swimmers participating in meets should order a team suit and team cap. Suits, backpacks, swim parkas, and other gear are available through [Agon](#). Caps are for sale on the [MoragaRanch.com](#) store site.

### **Are parents required to stay for the whole practice?**

A parent or other "designated adult" must be present for minis and 8 and under practices.

**When can my swimmer use the blocks?**

The diving blocks are for swim team practice use ONLY. No swimmer should be using the blocks unless they are in a lesson or swim practice. Blocks left up after team use are closed and should have a cone placed on top.

## **Meets**

### **Type of Meets - Time Trials, Dual Meets, Invitationals, OMPA**

**\*Yes, there are a lot of meets on the calendar! You are not required to participate in all of them - the commitment varies by family.**

**Time trials** is the first “meet” of the summer and is scheduled for May 15, 2022. This is an intrasquad meet at Ranch that is designed to allow every swimmer to set an initial time in each stroke to build upon throughout the rest of the summer.

**Dual meets** are meets with Ranch and one other team. Dual meets are held on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings, June 1 through July 20. **NOTE** - this year, the first week of the season is a “split meet,” with the 11 and up age groups swimming Wednesday and the 10 and under age groups swimming Saturday. See the “Dual Meets” section under the “Meets & Social” tab on Team Unify for more information, including expected arrival times for warmups.

There are a few different formats for dual meets. Typically, due to limited time, not all swimmers participate in Wednesday evening meets, while our Saturday meets tend to be A/B (everyone swims). The descriptions below will help you determine if your swimmer is *likely* to swim in a meet.

- **“A” Meet** - Generally for the 3 fastest swimmers in each event for each age group. There is only one heat per event.
- **“A+2” Meet** - Like an “A” meet but with 2 additional heats, meaning that the 9 fastest Ranch swimmers are entered in each event for each age group.
- **“A/B” Meet** - Entire team participates without limiting the number of entries.
- **“B” Meet** - a “B” meet consists of kids that do not swim in an “A” or “A+2” meet. Any swimmer without multiple silver times is considered a “B” swimmer. A gold time precludes a swimmer from participating in a “B” meet.

**Invitationals** are special meets involving many swim clubs held throughout the summer, typically on Sundays. There are eligibility rules unique to each one. For example, the “Meadow Mini Meet” is for only 8 and unders, and the “Bottom’s Up” meet is for only those swimmers who are at the bottom of their age groups. Invitations are totally optional, but if you do sign up for an invitational, the team plays a “splash fee” for you, so please don’t sign

up for an invitational unless you intend to swim! See the “Invitational Meets” section under the “Meets & Social” tab on Team Unify. [Team Unify](#)

## **Meet Logistics**

### **How do I sign up for meets?**

You must log into [Team Unify](#) and opt into or opt out of every meet. The deadline to opt into meets is typical three days prior to the meet.

### **When/how will I know what my child is swimming for a meet?**

A day or two before each home meet, you will receive a “meet sheet” via email from the Moraga Ranch desk. It’s a good idea to print this document and highlight what strokes your child is swimming, as well as his/her heat and lane assignments, and bring that document to the pool on meet day. The meet schedule for away meets are distributed to Ranch families as soon as the team obtains them from the hosting club.

### **What if I need to cancel my meet sign up but registration has closed on Team Unify?**

While we ask for parents and swimmers to be as accurate as they can when signing up for meets, we understand that sometimes cancellations cannot be avoided. If a swimmer is ill or otherwise unable to swim, please email [coaches@moragaranch.com](mailto:coaches@moragaranch.com). Please understand that late cancellations cause a hardship on our coaches and could result in a relay team being unable to race.

### **Where do I sit at a swim meet?**

At Moraga Ranch, swimmers and spectators can put blankets and tents on the grass (or grab a table if you are early enough). Spectators can stand on the pool deck to cheer on swimmers, but please stay away from the starting blocks and the coaches’ area, and please leave room for the stroke and turn judges to walk the length of the pool.

For away meets, our areas to sit will vary. Look for an email a few days before the meet for more specific information or contact the meet manager.

### **What should I bring to a swim meet?**

At a minimum, your swimmer will need a team suit, team cap, goggles, sunscreen and towel. Other highly recommended items are parkas/sweats, blankets, sun shade (tents, umbrellas, etc.), camping chairs, sharpies (for writing race information on your swimmer), games/toys for young children, slip on shoes/sandals with good traction, meet sheet (printed or downloaded to your phone).

**Is there food at swim meets?**

Moraga Ranch home meets will have food at the Snack Shack. The Snack Shack is cashless. Order your world famous Ranch Tri-Tip! (salads, sandwiches, nachos, or just a bowl o' tri-tip) early in the meet, before it sells out.

Food availability at away meets will vary. Look for an email a few days before the meet for more specific information or contact the meet manager. When in doubt, bring your own food and cash!

**Is my swimmer required to stay for the whole swim meet?**

Your swimmer is not required to stay for the whole meet, but all are encouraged to cheer on fellow team members until the end. There is always the possibility of a last-minute relay request for those who may not have expected it.

**Ribbons**

Your swimmer will love earning ribbons! Ribbons are prepared during the meets and placed into hanging "family folders" located outside the coaches' office.

**OMPA Championship Meet**

The OMPA Championship Meet is a three-day meet scheduled for July 29-31, 2022, where all nine teams compete for points to determine the Team champion for the season. OMPA is one of the largest recreational swim meets in the country and an incredibly fun experience for the swimmers and families. Swimmers are required to participate in two swim meets during the regular season in order to participate in the championship meet.

**Challenge Week and Taper Week** - Two weeks before OMPA, the coaches ask swimmers to push their bodies through more rigorous and challenging workouts, hence Challenge Week! Practices are much more focused on training and conditioning as opposed to the normal focus on technique. These challenging workouts prepare swimmers to push themselves to reach new best times at OMPA. The week before OMPA is "taper week," during which the coaches expect swimmers to rest their bodies and carefully manage their nutrition in order to get ready for the big event.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities - Meet Jobs and Social Jobs**

Every swim team family is required to (a) take on a designated number of “meet jobs” at home and away swim meets and (b) work a social job (i.e. it’s not at a swim meet).

### **What is a “Meet Job”?**

Every family on the swim team will be required to take on a designated number of “meet jobs,” which include all the roles necessary to run home and away meets. This may include being a timer, labeling and distributing ribbons, meet setup or takedown, acting as a “runner” or “floater,” or working in the snack shack. ([Meet Job descriptions](#))

Every meet has a “meet manager” who will reach out to you with instructions for your meet job, including when you need to arrive and when you can leave. When you arrive for your meet job, you need to check in with the meet manager. It is absolutely critical to the operation of the team that every family shows up on time and follows through with all elements of their meet jobs.

Meet job sign ups typically happen in late April. You’ll be sent notice of when the meet jobs will open for signups, and it’s advisable to sign up quickly to ensure you can get jobs on dates that work for your schedule.

### **What do I do if my plans change and I can no longer fulfill one of my meet jobs?**

- You can swap jobs with another Ranch family – Moraga Ranch Facebook Group is the best place for this
- Arrange a buy out if available for the job
- If you do not cover your job or arrange for a buy out, you will get charged the **\$150** no-show fee - again, we can’t run meets without all hands on deck!

### **What jobs can be bought out?**

You can use a “buy out” if you cannot or do not want to do your meet job and can find a qualified substitute. The following are the **ONLY** meet jobs that can be bought out.

- Timer
- Runner
- Ribbons
- Floater
- Snack Shack
- Set-up and take-down (but **NOT** set-up or take-down supervisor)

### **Who can work my job for me?**

- A pre-arranged/pre-paid sub from the Ranch buy-out list. YOU are responsible for paying the sub and making sure the sub shows up.
- A family member - 15+ years
- Live-in nannies/au pairs - 15+ years
- Another Ranch family member - 15+ years

### **What is a “Social Job”?**

In addition to practices and meets, Moraga Ranch summers are full of awesome social events for the kids and families. Each family is required to fulfill one “social job,” which could include helping to plan or staff a social event or assisting with OMPA plans and setup. You can also fulfill this requirement by joining our Swim Team Committee, taking on a more central role in fundraising, social planning, coach management, or OMPA. ([Social Job Descriptions.](#))

Social job sign ups typically happen in April. You’ll be sent notice of when the social jobs will open for signups, and it’s advisable to sign up quickly to ensure you can get jobs on dates that work for your schedule. And if you have a special skill set - (e.g., photography, art, graphic design, A/V, woodworking, bookkeeping) please let us know! We might have a job that’s just right for you.

If you want to get more involved, consider joining our Swim Team Committee! It’s a wonderful community and a great way to get to know all our Moraga Ranch families. If you are interested, please reach out to [swimteamdirectors@moragaranch.com](mailto:swimteamdirectors@moragaranch.com).

## **Social and Team Events**

There are many social events throughout the summer for swimmers and families. The Ranch Round Up emails will generally contain the best information on social events, so check those first. The Ranch store is where you can purchase tickets for most social events. ([www.moragaranch.com](http://www.moragaranch.com))

## **Key Dates During the Season**

- **Adult Social (May 14)** - a night out for Piranha Parents! Location TBD but it's always a blast.
- **Pancake Breakfast (May 31)** - We kick off the summer with pancakes at the pool the first day of summer practice (May 31)
- **Summer Celebration (June 11)** - Summer kick-off party at the pool for all swim team families. Great music, food, and entertainment provided!
- **Buddy Night (June 16)** - This is a "themed" event night for swim team kids.
- **Secret Pal Week (week of June 20)**- your swimmer will have the option to sign up to be a secret pal. During that week, each participant will leave give three anonymous gifts to his/her secret pal, either delivered at home or left at the pool.
- **Photo Day** - Ranch will arrange for professional team and individual photos.
- **Age Group Socials (week of July 11)** - The team will throw a small social event for each age group this week.
- **Pasta Skit Night (July 28)** - The Wednesday of OMPA week, we host a team event at the pool where the coaches and swimmers perform skits and pasta is served for swimmers and families.
- **Post-OMPA Party (July 31)** - The BEST party of the year!
- **Awards Night (TBD weekend evening in August)** - Post-season celebration and recognition of all of our swimmers. Coaches will give awards in a variety of categories.

## **Sponsorship Opportunities**

Both Moraga Ranch and OMPA rely heavily on corporate and individual sponsorships to keep costs per swimmer reasonable. If you run a local business, this is a great way to get some exposure in the community. Sponsors' names will be prominently displayed at the pool and on the team t-shirt. Please reach out to the swim team directors if you are interested in a sponsorship opportunity.