



# Team Handbook

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# CONTENTS

<b>ADMINISTRATION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Mission Statement</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Board of Directors</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Parents Meeting [Kick-Off]</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>New Members</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Registration Fees</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Insurance</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Lost and Found</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Communication</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Sponsorship</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Team Social Events</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Team Photos</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Team Meet / Weekly Awards</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Team Season Awards</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>End of Season Celebration</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>DV SHARKS SWIM CLINICS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>SWIMMERS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Swimmers Training Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Swim Practice Safety Rules</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Practice Absences</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Swimmers Health, Nutrition and Hydration</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Swimmers Ear</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Meet Deck Coaching</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Meet Absences</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Swim Meet ‘No-Show’ Policy – Absence</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Team Meet Eligibility</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Divisional Championship Meet Eligibility</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Team Competition Suit</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Team Gear</b> .....	<b>10</b>

**PARENTS ..... 10**

Parent’s Role in Competitive Swimming..... 10

Volunteering..... 11

Swim Meet Officials Training..... 11

**COACHING ..... 11**

Understanding Coaches ..... 11

Lessons ..... 12

**SWIM MEETS ..... 12**

**Meet Types and Information..... 13**

*Time Trials*..... 13

*DVST Developmental Team Meets* ..... 13

*Divisional Championships* ..... 14

*Swim Meet Information*..... 14

*PWSL Meet Format*..... 19

*Swim Meet Terminology* ..... 20

# ADMINISTRATION

## Mission Statement

The Dominion Valley Swim Team (DVST) is dedicated to the emotional and physical growth of our swimmers and to the morale of the community in which we live. The coaches, the parents, and all involved with the DVST strive to make swimming a fun experience. The team provides a positive nurturing environment in hopes that each child will develop into an accomplished life-long swimmer. At the same time, we will foster in both parents and swimmers alike, the benefits of hard work and sacrifice, the traits of good sportsmanship, the value of self-discipline, leadership, the exhilaration of competitive zeal, and the joy of community spirit.

## Board of Directors

To ensure continuity, a staggered portion of the Board of Directors is elected to two year terms by the team's general membership on an annual basis (normally occurring at the end of the summer season). All Board Members are unpaid volunteers. The Board welcomes your inputs and comments. Please feel free to stop a Board Member at practice, give them a call or send them an email to discuss any issues, concerns, and/or suggestions. We encourage you to think about becoming a Board Member. New thoughts and ideas are always welcome and provide a wonderful balance to our team. Current Board Members are listed on the DVST website.

## Parents Meeting [Kick-Off]

A swim parents' meeting will be held prior to the beginning of the season. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information regarding the upcoming season, announce changes and/or new programs, meet the coaches, and address questions or concerns. Everyone is strongly encouraged to attend.

## New Members

Your first season on a swim team and your first swim meet of the season can be an overwhelming experience. To the untrained eye, a swim meet looks chaotic, and that's if everything is going as planned. Board Members, the Head Coach and the Volunteer Coordinator will be on call throughout the season to answer questions. The Board Members will assist in orienting new families by explaining swim team procedures, activities, and philosophy, volunteering positions and event operations. Feel free to contact our Board Members, Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Head Coach via the contact information provided on the DVST website.

## Registration Fees

Registration fees for the current Summer Swim Season are available on the DVST website and include all practices and meets as well as one t-shirt and one competition cap per swimmer. Registration fees are non-refundable.

## Insurance

The DVST maintains insurance coverage for all swimmers on the team. All swimmer injuries should be reported immediately to the coaching staff. Please direct all insurance coverage questions to any Board member.

## Lost and Found

We attempt to collect items left behind after practices and meets. All items are stored in/near the lifeguard station until the end of the swim season. Unclaimed items will be donated or disposed of the day following the end of the season celebration.

## Communication

The team website and email are the primary means of swim team communication. Our website, found at [www.dvsharks.com](http://www.dvsharks.com), is a source for a vast amount of information and knowledge about our swim team. Point of contact names, phone numbers, and email addresses are also listed. Visit the website early and often for the latest team news and information.

## Sponsorship

In our two-month season, we believe the focus must be on our swimmers learning, improving, and having fun. As a swim team, we always need to improve/upgrade our equipment, plan for capital expenditures, and provide more team sponsored jobs and activities for our swimmers.

The Board asks for your help attracting team sponsors. Most likely, each of you has a friend or family member in a business that could help us. Everyone realizes the value of good will and exposure for local businesses sponsoring a youth sports team. Team sponsorship information and forms are available on our website under Sponsors. Additional details are available from our Sponsor Chair, by emailing [sponsorshipchair@dvsharks.com](mailto:sponsorshipchair@dvsharks.com).

## Team Social Events

Social events are fun times when swimmers can relax and get to know each other. We have planned numerous events for different age groups throughout the summer swim season. Scheduled events are posted on the Team Calendar on the Sharks website. If you would like more information or would be interested in volunteering to help at an event, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Social Committee Chair.

## Team Photos

The team will be photographed on a specified date (typically the last week of June or the first week of July). Team pictures will be first (no obligation to purchase a copy), followed by individual swimmer photos. Siblings may be photographed together. Please wear your team suit. Detailed information will be distributed at a later date.

## Team Meet / Weekly Awards

**Heat Ribbon:** Awarded to the fastest swimmer immediately after each heat.

**Weekly Swim Meet Ribbons:** Will be presented during the next week during swim practice (usually the following Monday). If you miss this practice, your ribbons will be located in the DVST file box located at the DVCC pool (9 and over swimmers) or the Gaines Mill Pool on the Battlefield High School side of the community (8 and under swimmers). Ribbons are filed under the swimmer's last name.

**Place Ribbon:** awarded to the twelve fastest swimmers overall in each event within a meet, and the 16 fastest 6 and under swimmers.

**Time Improvement Ribbon:** awarded when a swimmer's time for an event is faster than previously recorded in a meet. (Please note that these may be distributed a few days later than the place ribbons, which are prepared during the swim meets.)

**Bag Tags:** presented to swimmers who attend each Saturday meet to hang on their swim bags.

**Sharky Awards:** presented to 8U swimmers when they achieve a legal time in all four competitive strokes.

## Team Season Awards

Season awards are presented at our end-of-season celebration. All swimmers receive a participation medal. In addition, there are some special awards (subject to change):

- **Biggest Time Dropper:** awarded to one boy and one girl in each age group based on time improvements during regular season meets
- **Most Improved:** awarded to one boy and one girl in each age group based on time improvements, stroke improvement, attitude/effort in practices and attendance at meets and practices
- **Team Spirit Award:** one male and one female who best demonstrate team spirit & enthusiasm at all practices, meets, and team events.
- **Coaches Award:** awarded to one boy and one girl in each age group based on attitude and effort in practices and meets, attendance at practices and meets, and time improvements
- **Age Group High Point:** awarded to one boy and one girl in each age group who earned the most individual event points this season, for their age group, during regular season meets
- **Overall High Point:** awarded to one boy and one girl from the team who earned the most individual event points for the team during regular season meets (Note: the Overall High Point swimmer will not win the Age Group High Point award too.)

## End of Season Celebration

Subject to venue availability, the team will host an End of Season Celebration after Divisionals. This is an exciting year-end event that you don't want to miss! Additional details will be available on the DVST website.

# DV SHARKS SWIM CLINICS

The DVST conducts Swim Clinics throughout the fall, winter and spring months which offer a cycle of working on all four competitive strokes. The clinics are primarily designed for developmental swimmers (ages 5-8) who need to learn stroke basics, or for the more experienced non-year-round swimmers (ages 9-13) who wish to improve stroke technique and prepare for summer swim. This is meant to be a fun environment where swimmers can benefit from a low swimmer to coach ratio.

The program will develop all four competitive strokes. The clinics are not intended to take the place of a year round program. However, if your goal is improved technique, increased endurance, and/or better physical shape, the DVST swim clinics are for you! The program is open to all swimmers in the Dominion Valley neighborhood in good standing with the HOA. Program and registration information are posted on the DVST website.

## SWIMMERS

Please take a moment to review the swimmers responsibilities with your swimmers. Thank you!

### Swimmers Training Responsibilities

The [Swimmers' Code of Conduct](#) is available on the DVST website. As a swimmer's level of ability increases, so does the level of responsibility. As swimmers improve, there is a deep commitment that requires great effort on all parts. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, their parents, and most importantly to herself/himself. Swimmers are expected to support their teammates at practice as well as in competition. Working together as a team benefits all individuals in the group. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for a 100% effort each time they come to practice. Challenge yourself on a daily basis. Don't be afraid of the competition in practice and in meets. Practice consistency, become a team leader, and motivate everyone around you. As a Dominion Valley Shark, we expect you to:

- Be prepared and be on time.
- Listen and follow instructions.
- Ask questions if you don't understand.
- Don't interrupt the Coach or disrupt practice.
- Focus, work hard and commit to being the best you can.

### Swim Practice Safety Rules

Basic rules of behavior:

- No pushing others into the pool
- No dunking or holding someone under
- No pushing or hitting
- No running on deck

- No pulling on swimmers body
- No towel snapping
- No refusing swimmer to pass
- No diving (unless instructed by coach)
- No foul language

If you need to pass the swimmer in front of you during practice, tap that swimmer on the foot and swim freestyle around, then resume the stroke you were doing. Swim to the wall (do not stop short) and move over to allow room for the next swimmer.

Failure to follow the Swimmers Code of Conduct and/or failure to follow proper safety rules may result in swimmer removal from practice or meets.

Per Prince William Swim League (PWSL) and DVST rules, body paint or markers—temporary or semi-permanent markings to the body—is not permitted. Various clubs have received damage to deck chairs and property due to ink transference and colored hair spray. Swimmers MAY still mark the top of their hand, wrist, forearm or leg (only) with event numbers for the swim meet.

## Practice Absences

Swimmers are expected to attend swim team practices. We understand that other sports and activities will conflict, especially during the first few weeks of evening practice. If, however, you expect to miss several practices in a row due to other commitments, please mention this to a coach. Advance notice should also be given to a coach for the following obligations such as vacations, camps, club swimming, etc.

## Swimmers Health, Nutrition and Hydration

Before and during swim meets, nutrition plays an important role in a swimmer's performance. Swimmers should eat a light breakfast prior to entering the pool. Fresh fruit and cereal are good choices. The coaches request that you provide healthy foods and snacks that are high in complex carbohydrates and low in fat and sugar the day before and the morning of swim meets. Examples of good, complex carbohydrate snacks are fruits, bagels, pretzels, pasta, and whole-grain and multi-grain breads.

Yes, swimmers do sweat during training. Swimmers can lose more than three liters (about 3 quarts) of fluid each day through breathing, urination, and sweating. Therefore, it is important for swimmers to consume adequate amounts of fluid daily. Do not rely on thirst as a gauge to maintain adequate hydration! Body fluid levels are already low when you feel thirsty. As an athlete, hydrating before training and re-hydrating after training is a top nutritional priority. Make it a daily habit to carry a water bottle to encourage steady fluid intake. Remember that juices, milk, yogurt and fresh fruit are hydrating. Clear urine during the day is a sign of adequate hydration (urine is more concentrated in the morning so check it during the day). Important note: You can go too far. Over-hydration is a real condition called hyponatremia that can lead to serious health problems.

## Swimmers Ear

If you have had swimmers ear, you know how painful it can be. It can put a damper on summer fun, make swimming difficult, and cause you to miss swim meets. Swimmers ear (Otitis Externa) is caused by the



presence of bacteria and fungus that thrive in the dark, warm and moist environment of the outer ear and ear canal. If untreated, the organisms will cause a terribly painful infection that will require medical attention. We encourage swimmers to consult their physicians for any ear pain.

## Meet Deck Coaching

Once a swimmer's heat is closed by the Referee, with a long whistle blow during a swim meet, they shall receive no coaching or assistance. This includes holding or releasing relay swimmers, directing or guiding backstroke swimmers, reminders for two hand touches, etc. Any swimmer so coached or assisted may be disqualified at the discretion of the Referee. It is not considered coaching when a backstroke swimmer secures a handhold on teammates' ankles at the start. This has NOT been an area of concern in the past; however, it may become an issue as we swim against more competitive teams.

## Meet Absences

Once part of the team, all Sharks are expected to attend both home and away meets. Failure to commit to both may result in changes to event participation and relay teams, as decided by the Sharks Head Coach.

## Swim Meet 'No-Show' Policy – Absence

After a swimmer is entered for a swim meet, the swimmer should not miss the swim meet except for illness or family emergency. Thursday at 6:00pm is the deadline for the team to make changes to meet entries. If you know your swimmer will be absent from a swim meet in which they are entered, please email [headcoach@dvsharks.com](mailto:headcoach@dvsharks.com) with as much notice as possible. Notifications are expected prior to the start of the meet, or in case of emergency, at your earliest convenience.

If a swimmer misses a meet without an excused absence and/or does not attempt to contact the team, the swimmer may be suspended from the next swim meet at the discretion of the head coach. The team has adopted this policy because no-show swimmers are extremely disruptive to the meet, both for our team (especially our coaches and Clerk of Course) and for our opponents.

## Team Meet Eligibility

Due to the size of the team, the limit of individual meet entries, and to ensure an efficient meet for the team and our opponent, all swimmers are required to complete a 25 meter freestyle swim unassisted and without stopping this must be demonstrated prior to the start of the season. Additionally, all swimmers will be required to obtain a qualifying swim in a stroke prior to swimming the stroke in a meet. 8 and under swimmers may also be asked to meet the minimum qualifying 25 meter freestyle time of 45 seconds. This policy will go into effect if our team surpasses a reasonable number of swimmers. In accordance with PWSL rules:

- Swimmers are limited to 3 individual and 2 relay entries.
- The team is limited to 600 total individual entries (splashes) so as the team grows some procedures may need to be activated in order to keep within our 600 splash requirement.

## Divisional Championship Meet Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the Divisional meet:

- A swimmer must have competed in two (2) League sponsored meets.
- A swimmer must have a valid entry time (no “DQ”) from a League sponsored meet in the event(s) in which he or she is swimming.

## Team Competition Suit

Team suits are required, and technical suits are permitted. Please also keep in mind that competition suits are designed for performance in the pool, not for rough and tumble play and dragging along the pool deck that our younger swimmers sometimes do. We encourage you to keep the team suits for competition, and have a sturdy separate practice suit.

A swimsuit fitting and sale will take place on prearranged dates. Please see website for specific dates. If you miss the swimsuit sale, please call Riptide Swim and Tri to place an order.

## Team Gear

A competitive swim cap and team t-shirt is provided to each team member and is included in the registration fee. Extra team apparel such as t-shirts, swim caps, hats, polo shirts, and car magnets, etc. are available for purchase. Additional details and ordering options are available on the DVST website.

# PARENTS

## Parent’s Role in Competitive Swimming

We have a wonderful group of energetic children who want to learn how to become better competitive swimmers. Parents play a large part in the success of a child’s swimming career by helping them set personal goals and by teaching them to abide by the DVST rules.

The coaches are very dedicated to your children. Please, do not tell your child how they should swim a race; instead, leave that to the coaches. Please, do support your child no matter how they perform. Teach your child to be humble when they win and gracious when they lose. Though their competitors might beat them sometimes, if they know their parents are there to help them feel good about what they have tried to achieve, they will not give up.

It is the coaches’ job to help swimmers achieve their goals. Please trust them to do their job by standing back and allowing them to coach. Failure to follow the [Parent’s Code of Conduct](#) may result in the swimmer’s removal from practice and/or a meet.

## Volunteering

The sport of swimming requires parents to be participants, NOT spectators. It takes over 150 volunteers to host a successful meet. For a swimmer to participate on the team, parents are required to donate time and services to help in various aspects of team operations. The team's success is directly dependent of the commitment of its members. Please be considerate of others and do your fair share to ensure that our meets run smoothly.

Most positions are divided into two shifts lasting approximately two and a half hours each. Meet jobs that aren't right next to the action are often flexible enough for you to take a break and watch your child swim. You will be expected to fulfill ALL of the duties for your volunteer assignment. You will also be expected to cover the shift for the entire period of time. Parents are strongly encouraged to sign up for several different work positions for swim meets. Families that have not signed up to work will be assigned where needed. The volunteer position descriptions can be found on the Sharks' website

Once assignments have been made, a work schedule will be posted on the team website and sent via email. It is the volunteer's responsibility to switch or find a replacement if you are unable to work your shift. Please report all changes to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Once you arrive to work at a meet, please sign in at the volunteer check-in table (at home meet by the starter's tent) and report to your assignment at least five (5) minutes before your shift is scheduled to begin. Changes and adjustments made to volunteer assignments before and even during the meet are inevitable. All job assignments are at the discretion of the Meet Coordinator. Please be courteous if you are asked to switch jobs. If a parent fails to fulfill his/her volunteer assignment, his/her swimmer may be suspended from the next swim meet.

If you would like try other volunteer positions, if both parents are unable to volunteer, or you need assistance switching a shift or finding a replacement please contact Volunteer Coordinator by emailing [volunteers@dvsharks.com](mailto:volunteers@dvsharks.com).

## Swim Meet Officials Training

PWSL officials training clinics are mandatory for the following meet operations positions: Referee, Starter, Stroke and Turn Judge, and Clerk of Course. Clinics are free of charge and normally last two hours. Separate Referee/Starter, Stroke and Turn Judge, and Clerk of Course clinic sessions are conducted concurrently. If you would like additional info please contact a Board member or team lead meet official. A list of this year's clinics is listed on the DVST website.

# COACHING

## Understanding Coaches

A key component to an athlete's healthy swimming experience is the building of a positive relationship between a parent and a coach. Both the parent and the coach have important roles in supporting a swimmer. A coach is there to teach and judge a swimmer's performance and technique while a parent

should love and support the child regardless of the outcome. It is helpful for a parent to realize some key things about a coach.

A lot more comes with coaching than the athlete's, practice and competition. Beyond the initial hours at the pool, a coach's time is spent planning for workouts, understanding the long-term nature of the sport and each individual swimmer's performance, doing key administrative duties, and providing emotional support for many athletes.

Ultimately a coach loves the sport and is willing to make countless sacrifices to foster swimming and its athletes in and out of the pool. Keeping this in mind, there are key things a parent can do to support their child's coach and ultimately help their child achieve swimming success. Coaches are also held to certain standards. Failure of coaches to adhere to the Coaches Code of Conduct available on the Sharks' website, may result in removal from the coaching staff.

What your swimmer can expect to receive from the coaches:

- A great introduction to competitive swimming
- Development of skills, confidence and fitness
- Celebration of achievements, including personal bests
- Learning about healthy competition
- A sense of team unity
- Structured practices and competitions
- Organized leadership
- Communication
- Fair and consistent treatment

## Lessons

DVST coaches are NOT permitted to provide individual lessons to swimmers during non-working hours at the Dominion Valley Country Club or HOA pools, in accordance with contract agreements. Dominion Valley Country Club (DVCC) offers individual lessons through the Sports Pavilion for a fee during the summer months via Let's Swim. The Sharks also offer structured clinics with groups of swimmers in the fall, winter and spring months.

## SWIM MEETS

Dominion Valley families take a lot of pride in our swim team and being successful among the top teams in the Prince William County Swim League. The Sharks also support participation in summer swimming as an entry level, fun competitive experience for every swimmer. To these ends we determine the meet line-ups for each meet and provide competitive experiences for all.

As a basic summary, here is what you can expect for options for competition:

## Meet Types and Information

### ***Time Trials***

Time trials are critical to the coaches, swimmers, and parents. This is when everyone gets “trained” and ready for the first dual meet. Everyone is encouraged to attend time trials; however, *all new swimmers are required to attend*. Swimmers must be able to complete a 25 meter freestyle swim unassisted and without stopping in order to be placed on the swim team. Additionally, all swimmers new to a distance will need a qualifying swim prior to being entered in the event in a meet. Time trials are an excellent opportunity to obtain a qualifying swim for the upcoming PWSL swim meets.

Unlike meets, where swimmers can only be entered for a maximum of three individual events, at time trials a swimmer may swim all five individual events (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley.) Coaches use these times to select swimmers’ individual and relay events at meets. The times also serve as a reference for time improvement awards. Since time trials are run very much like a real meet, it’s a great chance to warm up for the season. Place ribbons are not awarded at time trials, but swimmers will learn about reporting to the Clerk of Course and other basic meet rules and procedures. Parents can try different volunteers, such as timer or recorder. Everyone gets “meet practice” before the season officially begins.

The Prince William Swim League (PWSL) swim meets are dual meets with one other PWSL team. Some meets are held at home at DVCC, while other meets are “away” meets. Each meet limits the Sharks to entering 600 splashes for the entire meet. This means that we may not be able to accommodate all swimmers that enter a particular swim meet. So to provide a system for qualification, there will be three levels of eligibility that the head coach will consider when approving who gets to swim which events. In addition, please note there are a number of other factors that are used to determine the optimal line up for a specific meet.

- ‘A’ time – a time standard for each event and age/gender will be established that will provide for at least 6 swimmers in every event – this will provide automatic eligibility to enter a meet in the particular event. (Notable: Swimmers may be placed in other events based on the head coach’s directive).
- ‘B’ time – a second tier of achievement will provide opportunities to qualified swimmers into the meets based on openings after ‘A’ qualified swimmers are placed.
- ‘C’ time – swimmers that have completed the events legally but have not achieved the ‘B’ time standard yet will be considered for opportunities that may be open in the event limitations for each meet.

All swimmers, regardless of length of experience, are encouraged to sign up for swim meets.

### ***DVST Developmental Team Meets***

Developmental meets will be provided to offer the opportunity to earn a place on the PWSL meet team. These are fun, short meets for all swimmers “legal or not” to have a competitive experience. Complete details for developmental meets will be provided prior to the start of the season.

## **Divisional Championships**

The final meet of the season is the Divisional Championship. At this meet, two teams will compete with DVST for the Divisional Crown. To be eligible for this meet, swimmers will be required to swim in two (2) PWSL Dual meets, plus must have swum the events they intend to swim at the Divisional Champs in at least one PWSL Dual meet. Swims at time trials and at DVST Developmental Meets do not count toward these requirements.

## **Swim Meet Information**

**Procedures:** Governed by the PWSL and outlined in its By-Laws. Meets are generally held on Saturdays during June and July. At the end of the season, a Divisional Championship meet is held, usually the last Saturday in July. Complete PWSL division and team listing is available on the Prince William Swim League website.

**Age Group:** Swimmers will compete the entire season in one of the following age groups: 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18, as determined by their age as of June 1 of the current year.

**Attendance:** DVST policy is that all eligible swimmers must register for the meet online via the team website. If your swimmer will be able to attend a meet please register them as a “committed” swimmer and they will be placed in events. If your swimmer will not be able to attend a meet please register them as a “not committed” swimmer and they will not be entered in an event. Registration for a meet closes at midnight the Tuesday night prior to the meet, with limited openings for meets, there will not be ANY exceptions to the deadline.

**Participation:** PWSL rules dictate each swimmer may compete in a maximum of three individual events and two relays.

- The coaches determine the individual and relay events in which each swimmer is entered.
- Relays are a team event. They include the Medley Relay (four swimmers each swimming a different stroke), and the Freestyle Relay (all four swimming freestyle). The A, B & C (possibly D) relay teams will be determined by the fastest possible combination of swimmers that benefits the team, at the discretion of the coaches. As swimmers improve their times, the relay teams may also change.
- Event entries will be available on the team website and be sent via email to all registered swimmers. An e-mail and web site will provide details of warm-up and start times when that info becomes available.

**Directions:** Directions to the away meets can be found on the Sharks’ website.

**Required Equipment:** If a cap is worn during a meet it is required to be a DVST cap. This is how judges, coaches, and Dominion Valley fans identify our swimmers once they are in the water.

**What to Bring:** Swim meets can last several hours, with lots of down time between events. Swimmers are encouraged to bring cards, games and other toys to help pass the time. Some swimmers bring tents, tarps and/or a large umbrella to get out of the sun or just to have a place to hang out. Since many swimmers have the same or similar equipment/clothing, please write your swimmer’s name on EVERYTHING. The lost and found gets very full.

The following is a sample swim meet packing list:

- Swim bag to hold all the gear, recommended
- Sharks swimsuit and cap
- Goggles (several pairs)
- Warm-up suit, sweatshirt and/or pajama pants for the cool mornings
- T-shirt and shorts for hot afternoons
- Sun block
- Towels (two or more)
- Cooler packed with water and healthy snacks
- Cards, books, etc.
- Tent, tarp, umbrella, etc.
- Lawn chairs
- Sharpie (put event # on swimmers hand only)
- Money for concessions
- Heat sheets
- Patience and good humor!

**What to Expect:** If you've never attended a swim meet before, here are a few things you can expect:

- Parents, officials, towels, and kids everywhere!
- Lots of noise!
- Chilly early mornings and hot late mornings (even on the same day!)
- Extremely limited viewing space (except for deck volunteers)
- Boredom between your kid's events if you don't volunteer for a shift (or two!) timing, recording, working the Clerk of Course
- New friends and a great time if you get involved with the team!

**Arrival:** Plan to arrive 15 minutes before warm-ups start. This way you can stake out your area, check in with Dominion Valley team officials, find your goggles, and swimmers report to coaches to receive any last minute instructions or changes when the announcer calls for warm-ups.

**Check-in:** Immediately upon arriving, each swimmer must check-in with the appropriate DV Shark coach or Clerk of Course. Individual event and/or relay team assignments may be changed or scratched at the last minute if the coaches are not aware of the swimmer's presence. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE YOUR SWIMMER CHECK IN WITH THEIR COACH.**

**Camp Areas:** Each family will need to locate a spot to "camp out" and get settled. For swimmers, each team will be assigned a specific area for "camping." Staying together as a team not only fosters team unity, but also makes it easier for coaches to locate swimmers.

**Home Meet Shark Tank:** This year, all swimmers are encouraged to stay together as a team in the "Shark Tank" area on deck. There will be no family tents allowed on deck.

**Warm Ups:** Each team gets a twenty-minute warm-up. The home team always warms-up first (normally at 6:00am for dual meets). Our entire team warms up all at once, so it is very crowded on the pool deck. The team gathers around the coaches after warm-ups to cheer and get psyched up for the meet.

**Meet Times:** Meets start precisely at 7:00 AM and finish approximately 12:00 PM. The meet begins after both teams complete their warm-ups and the national anthem is played.

**Heat Sheets:** During home meets and most away meets heat (AKA psych/meet program) sheets will be available on the DVST website and sometimes on sale at the concession stand. They will include the individual events, the swimmers entered in each event, and their fastest time. Swimmers will be listed fastest to slowest using their best time for each event. Events are swum from slowest to fastest. Swimmers who have never competed in an event before will be listed after swimmers with times. The notation NT for “no time” will be typed next to their names. It also helps you determine how long your swimmer can rest before they have to get ready to swim again.

**Event Number:** Each event is identified by its number! Write down the event numbers that your child is swimming. It helps to write the numbers on your swimmer’s hand (Sharpie markers work best) so they can remember them too.

**Clerk of Course:** When the announcer calls your individual event, your swimmer should report to the Clerk of Course ready to swim (i.e., with goggles, cap and a recent restroom visit). The Clerk of Course is the person who gets the swimmers in order for their event.

**Parents:** It’s important to allow your child to remain at the Clerk of Course staging area alone! Your swimmer will have supervision and direction from parent volunteers and coaches who assist the Clerk of Course.

**Heats:** If there are more swimmers in an event than there are lanes in the pool, swimmers will be placed in separate “heats” according to their seed time. Swimmers are seeded in heats based upon their fastest times attained in prior competition. Heats are swum from slowest to fastest for an event. After the race, the swimmers’ times from all heats are then compared to determine 1, 2, 3, etc. place. Therefore, if a swimmer comes in first in his or her heat, this does not necessarily mean he or she will win first place in that event.

At the Clerk of Course, your swimmer will be handed a card for individual events. This card has the swimmer’s heat and lane assignment for that event. When it is time to go on deck for that event, the Clerk of Course will direct the swimmers where to go. Just before each heat begins, someone will take the card from the swimmer. The starter will announce each heat and get the race started. The finishing time for the swimmer goes on the card before it is taken to the scoring table.

*Remember: Lane #1 is always on the right side as you stand facing the pool at the starting end.*

**Check-out:** We ask swimmer, whose scheduled events are complete, to check-out with the Dominion Valley Clerk of Course personnel as well as their coaches, if they need to leave prior to the end of the swim meet. BEFORE leaving a meet, swimmers need to check out with the coach because he or she may have been assigned to a relay! All relays are assigned by the coaches and DO NOT go through Clerk of Course.

**Scoring:** Swimmers earn points for their teams by competing in relay events and by being one of the six fastest finishers on their team in individual events. Complete scoring information is available on the [PWSL website](#).



- In individual events, the same team cannot score points for more than six places
- In relay events, the same team cannot score points for more than one place

*What's My Time?* Swimmers learn to ask the recorder for their time as soon as they get out of the pool at the end of the race. The official results are posted approximately an hour after completion of the event. All event results are computerized and retained for each swimmer all season. Complete PWSL time standards are available on the PWSL website.

**Relays:** Relays are the first and last events. On Friday morning, the meet entries are posted online. The program lists swimmers' individual events and identifies who is swimming in the medley relays (events 1 to 10) and free relays (events 58 to 65).

*Reminder: For 8 & Under, 9-10 and 11-12 Swimmers, 1 & 3 will be next to the timers, 2 & 4 opposite end of pool from the timers.*

### **Medley Relays [Event # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9]**

- The swimmer should check with the coach on Thursday or Friday to find out which stroke they will be swimming (the medley includes all four strokes). There are normally three relay teams (A, B, C), but additional teams may be added depending on pool size. Your swimmer should know the other medley relay members he/she is swimming the event with and which stroke they are swimming.
- Medleys start at 7:00 AM. Don't be late. The meet waits for no one and if you are late the coaches will substitute someone else.
- Directly after the warm up, the coaches will hand out the medley relay cards (swimmer 1 gets the card). We ask parents to help get the 8 and under to the correct side of the pool. All other swimmers should know where they should be for the relays. (The 8 and under is a mixed relay, girls and boys.)
- Relays should be lined up before the national anthem.

### **Free Relays [Event #66, 67, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64 and 65]**

If for any reason you are scheduled to swim a free relay event and have to leave the meet early, the swimmer MUST notify the coaches.

- Freestyle relay role call starts after the completion of event 53 (11-12 butterfly is out of the pool). The coach will be standing at an announced rallying point. *At home meets, the Clerk of Course steps will be the rallying point.* If a swimmer is missing, the coach will assign someone else to swim. The coach will hand out the relay cards (swimmer #1 gets the event entry card).
- The coaches may reassign free relays depending on how the swimmers are performing that day. If a swimmer had a great freestyle at the beginning of the meet, he or she may be asked to swim this event even if they were not originally scheduled. Some swimmers will be asked to swim up (swim the event in the next-oldest age bracket). If you are not there the coach will reassign someone else to swim.
- We ask coaches and parents to help get the 8 and under kids to the correct end of the pool. All other swimmers should know where they should be for the relays. There are normally three relay teams (A, B, C), but additional teams may be added depending on pool size. Your swimmer should know the other free relay members and lane number he./she is swimming the event with.

**Disqualification [DQ]:** A disqualification (DQ) is any violation of the rules observed by any appropriate official. PWSL complies with USA Swimming rules, which are the same rules used at all national meets.

To ensure fair competition for all swimmers, these rules are equally applied to all swimmers, regardless of age or experience.

Remember that DQ's are meant to be instructional! Swimmer's need to be encouraged and reminded to learn from their mistakes. Challenges or questions regarding DQ's must be done immediately after the event and should be directed to the Head Coach – DO NOT approach an official in this regard. The Head Coach will take care of any discrepancies or challenges.

Some of the more common swimmer DQ's are as follows:

*Freestyle:*

- Failure to touch the wall at the turning end of the pool
- Walking on the bottom or pulling on the lane lines
- Exiting the pool before swimming the specified distance

*Backstroke:*

- Past vertical towards the breast at any time except during a flip turn
- Leaving the wall after a turn past vertical towards the breast
- Improper flip turn (older swimmers)

*Breaststroke:*

- Incorrect kick, such as a Scissors kick or Flutter kick
- Non-Simultaneous two hand touch or one hand touch at turn or finish
- Toes not pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick
- No more than one stroke underwater with arms fully extended at start or turn
- Arm recovery past waist except on first stroke after start or turn
- Head didn't break surface by conclusion of second arm pull underwater after a start or turn

*Butterfly:*

- Non-Simultaneous or one handed wall touch at the turn or finish
- Non-Simultaneous leg movement during kicks
- Arms don't break water surface during recovery (judged at the elbows)
- Non-Simultaneous arm movement during recovery

*Relay Races:*

A swimmer leaves the deck before the previous swimmer touches the wall or deck.

*False Starts:*

A swimmer starts the race early for a second time. A false start occurs whenever a swimmer moves towards the pool after having assumed a still position (taking his/her mark) and before the Starter has started the race. If the false start is detected the race will be stopped and a resounded. PWSL rules permit a swimmer one unintentional false start without disqualification.

*How will I know a DQ occurred?*

- Stroke Infraction: Unlike football, we don't blow a whistle and announce to the world that a rules violation occurred. During the competition, if a swimmer fails to comply with the stroke and turn rules, a Stroke and Turn Judge will raise their hand and fill out a DQ slip explaining the reason for the disqualification. Another clue that a DQ has occurred is a Stroke and Turn Judge writing and a longer than normal pause between events.
- Relay Takeoff: Disqualifications for early relay takeoffs are done differently. The referee receives all the take-off slips from all the judges. If both judges on a lane agree that an early takeoff occurred, the Referee will stand over the DQ'd team lane and raise his/her hand.
- DQ slips are given to the computer people and entered into the scoring software. A swimmer who is disqualified will not have a time entered into the results for that event and the infraction will be noted on the scoring print out (the scores are typically posted in the kiddie pool area at DVST). The slips will then be placed in the coaches' box; the coach will be able to offer advice at practice for future events or in a stroke and turn clinic. This can be upsetting for swimmers, but it is necessary to maintain the fairness and quality of the competition and is part of the learning process of competitive swimming.

**PWSL Meet Format**

The following is a list of the events swum at all PWSL meets. The events are swum in the order listed.

BOYS(OR MIXED) EVENT #	AGE GROUP	EVENT STROKE	GIRLS EVENT #
66	15-18	200 meter Free Relay	67
1	8&Under	100 meter Mixed Medley Relay	
2	9-10	100 meter Medley Relay	3
4	11-12	100 meter Medley Relay	5
6	13-14	200 meter Medley Relay	7
8	15-18	200 meter Medley Relay	9
10	8&Under	25 meter Free	11
12	9-10	50 meter Free	13
14	11-12	50 meter Free	15
16	13-14	50 meter Free	17
18	15-18	50 meter Free	19
20	10&Under	100 meter IM	21
22	11-12	100 meter IM	23
24	13-14	100 meter IM	25
26	15-18	100 meter IM	27
28	8&Under	25 meter Back	29
30	9-10	50 meter Back	31
32	11-12	50 meter Back	33
34	13-14	50 meter Back	35
36	15-18	50 meter Back	37
38	8&Under	25 meter Breast	39
40	9-10	50 meter Breast	41

42	11-12	50 meter Breast	43
44	13-14	50 meter Breast	45
46	15-18	50 meter Breast	47
48	8&Under	25 meter Fly	49
50	9-10	25 meter Fly	51
52	11-12	50 meter Fly	53
54	13-14	50 meter Fly	55
56	15-18	50 meter Fly	57
58	8&Under	100 meter Free Relay	59
60	9-10	100 meter Free Relay	61
62	11-12	100 meter Free Relay	63
64	13-14	200 meter Free Relay	65

### **Swim Meet Terminology**

**Age Groups:** division of swimmers by age that determines the events in which they are eligible to participate. PWSL rules specify the following age groups: 8 & under; 9-10; 11-12; 13-14; 15-18.

**Deck:** the area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches

**Competitive Strokes:** the four competitive strokes are (1) freestyle, (2) backstroke, (3) breaststroke, and (4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age group of the swimmer.

**Course:** designated distance over which the competition is conducted. The standard is 25 meters for summer league meets, 50 meters for Olympic competition, and 25 Yards for regular year-round and college competition. PWSL courses are 25 Meters.

**Event:** any race or series of races in a given stroke and distance for a specific age group and sex. For example, the following are three different events: 1. Girls 8 & under 25 meter freestyle, 2. Boys 8 & under 25 meter freestyle, 3. Girls 9-10 50-meter breaststroke. (See also heats.)

**False Start:** When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. PWSL rules permit a swimmer one unintentional false start without disqualification. At the referee's discretion, a false start may be disallowed due to unusual circumstances.

**Forward Start:** a forward entry facing the course.

**Heats:** the division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time. For example, an event with thirty swimmers in a six-lane pool would require five heats.

**Individual Medley (IM):** four laps of the pool swam in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle.

**Lane:** a specific area in which the swimmer is assigned to swim (lane 1, lane 2, etc.).

**Lane Line:** continuous floating markers attached to a line stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane.

**Lane Markings:** guidelines at the bottom of the pool in the center of each lane, running from the starting end to the turning end.

**Leg:** (relay) the part of the relay event swum by one swimmer.

**Manual Start:** the start of a timing device by an individual in response to the same starting signal given to the swimmers.

**Mark:** (take your) the swimmer's starting position. PWSL rules require at least one foot at the front of the coping when a forward start is required.

**Meet:** the complete series of events between two or more teams. PWSL meets are conducted on Saturdays, competed between two and four teams, and usually completed in a single day. Dual Competition (Dual Meet) - competition between two teams. Tri Competition (Tri Meet) - competition between three teams. Quad Competition (Quad Meet) - competition between four teams.

**On Line:** the swimmer's position immediately prior to taking their mark. PWSL rules specify the swimmer must have both feet placed so their toes are at the back of the coping.

**Referee:** the official in charge of the meet. The referee is the final authority in all matters concerning the conduct of the meet.

**Relay:** A race consisting of four legs, each swum by one swimmer. Swimmers age thirteen and older swim two laps each. There are two types of relays: 1) Medley – each swimmer swims a different stroke. The order is backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle. 2) Freestyle – each swimmer swims a freestyle leg.

**Scratch:** withdraw from an event.

**Seed:** distribute the swimmers among the heats and lanes according to their times.

**Seeding (Seeded On Deck):** swimmers are called to report to the clerk of course for their event. After scratches are determined, they are seeded in the proper heats.

**Split Time:** time from a start to some part of the distance within a longer event.

**Stroke and Turn Judge:** trained, certified swim officials, assigned by and working for the referee to judge swimmers' conformance with the rules for the event being swum. Nonconformance (a.k.a. disqualification or DQ) is reported to the referee. The swimmer is not disqualified until the referee accepts the stroke and turn judge's rep.