

VAST Team Handbook

(updated 09/2022)



The Vermillion Area Swim Team (VAST) is a member of USA Swimming & the South Dakota Local Swim Club (SDLSC). It exists for the primary purpose of instructing and training its member athletes in the sport of competitive swimming in a positive educational environment.

COMMUNICATION

The primary source of communication will be through emails (vastswimteamsd@gmail.com) and the VAST website (www.vastsd.com). The website contains swimmer and parent information, meet information, practice schedules, etc. Swimmers/parents should utilize this website to check account balances, education and see schedules. Upon registration, each family will need to provide a current email address to insure communication exchange. They will also receive a login and password to the site. Updates & reminders are also posted to our facebook group that can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/208011003442059/>.

If you have questions related to workouts, meets, events, goal setting, or other swimming related needs, please contact one of the coaches.

For all questions related to administration, such as fees, safety, or policy issues, please contact one of the board members.

SWIM SEASONS

VAST is a year round swim club that participates in two swim seasons: short course & long course.

The short course season (fall/winter) is 5-6 months in length. The regular season begins mid-September & concludes with the "B" State Meet each season (usually the second to last weekend in February). If a swimmer qualifies for a championship meet (state A, regionals, sectionals, or beyond), they will continue to swim until the conclusion of their last qualifying meet. The short course season is indoors, competing in a 25-meter (SCM) or 25-yard (SCY) pool.

The long course season (summer) is shorter, typically 3 months. The regular season begins in May & concludes with the "B" State Meet (usually the second to last weekend in July). If a swimmer qualifies for a championship meet (state A, futures, zones, or beyond), they will continue to swim until the conclusion of their last qualifying meet. The long course season is typically outdoors, although some indoor venues can accommodate the 50-meter (LCM) pool.

Athletes can elect to swim in either season or both. It is not mandatory to swim in both seasons, nor is it a requirement to compete at swim meets.

SWIM GROUPS

Swimmers are placed into groups by the coaching staff based on the swimmer's ability. Any movement of a swimmer between groups will be discussed with a parent beforehand.

White (Beginner) - A developmental program for new swimmers. This program is designed to develop both swim techniques and endurance. Swimmers must be able to swim one length of the pool.

Red (Intermediate) - Developed swimmers working on basic technique, endurance and technical skills.

Black (Advanced) - Advanced swimmers practice for longer periods and may include dry-land warm-up.

Masters (Adults 18+) - This program will provide organized workouts and skill improvement for all abilities. Participants should have an understanding of the basic strokes and be able to swim approximately 45 minutes.

REGISTRATION & FEES

Registration through the VAST website is required for all swimmers. Returning swimmers must register before the season begins & new swimmers must register after their two week trial. Swimmers will not be allowed in the pool if they are not registered. Registration is where you choose your payment option & update your contact information for each season.

Monthly Fees:

	<u>Short Course (fall/winter)</u>	<u>Long Course (summer)</u>
White	\$60	\$70
Red	\$65	\$75
Black	\$75	\$85
Masters*	\$35	\$55
Family (3+)	\$160	\$180

**Masters swimmers are included in the family rate.*

Fee payments are due on the first of the month. VAST bills for the following months for the short course season: October, November, December, January, and February and for these months for the long course season: May, June, and July. If your swimmer will not be swimming every month during a season & you do not want to be billed for the month(s) they are not swimming, please let VAST know before the month begins that your child will not be swimming that month. **Please note: Since there is no requirement or limit to the number of practices a swimmer may attend, you will be responsible for the full fee for that month if your swimmer attends even one practice during that month. We also do not offer partial payments for February or July for a swimmer that does not advance beyond "B" State.**

Each family is required to enroll in ACH billing through the website. This will be utilized for the

payment of all fees.

*To sign up for ACH billing, simply visit our team website and click on the **Sign In** button to sign into your private, secure account.*

Once logged in:

- *Click on **My Account***
- *Then **Setup Auto Pay***
- *Click the **Add New** button*
- *Enter your information and click **Save***
- *You are now ready to pay electronically!*

*Privately, in your account, in the **\$My Invoice/Payment** section under **My Account**, you can review what you currently owe, what will be charged to your method of payment on file, and past billing histories.*

USA Swimming Fees:

Each swimmer must maintain an active membership to USA Swimming. This membership covers liability insurance for each swimmer and every swimmer is required to have an active membership in order to practice with VAST after their initial two week trial.

Age group swimmers: Parents are required to sign up, pay for, and maintain their swimmers USA Swimming membership each year. Please use the following link to the VAST club portal to register your swimmer: <https://omr.usaswimming.org/omr/welcome/C93C17787DF54A>. Memberships are for the calendar year. There are 2 types of memberships available to swimmers:

- (1) **Premium** is \$73 per year. The premium membership is required for swimmers age 13 & over, any swimmer who will participate in more than two meets per year, and any swimmer who will participate in a championship meet.
- (2) **Flex** is \$30 per year. The flex membership may be used if the swimmer is 12 years of age or younger at the time of registration. A swimmer can only participate in two USA Swimming sanctioned meets from September to August each year & cannot participate in a championship meet if they are on the flex membership. This membership can be upgraded to a premium membership at any time during the year by paying the difference between the memberships.

Masters: The registration fee is \$60 for the calendar year & is paid directly through the U.S. Masters website www.usms.org.

****All memberships processed on or after Sept. 1st are valid through Dec. 31st of the following year.**

Meet fees:

The season fees and the USA Swimming fee do not cover the expenses to enter and participate in competitive swim meets. Meet fees vary by meet & are the responsibility of the parents. Meet fees billed will include a \$5 coaching surcharge per swimmer per meet from VAST. Please consult the meet information that is posted on the website for the entry fees for each meet. Meet fees are paid through VAST & are billed on the 1st of the next month.

A swimmer new to VAST may practice with the team for a trial period of up to two weeks with no obligations. Upon completion of the trial, the swimmer must register on the VAST website & with USA Swimming in order to continue to practice with the team. Anyone who has already had a trial period or has swam for VAST previously is not eligible for another trial period & will be billed for attending practice.

If you are in need of financial assistance, please talk to a Board Member.

PRACTICES, APPAREL, & GEAR

Practices: Please have your swimmer there & ready to swim before the start time.

During the school year, practices are held Sunday through Thursday at 7 pm at the Dakota Dome. During the summer months, practices are held Monday through Friday at 7am at Prentis Plunge. The practice calendar on the website is updated weekly or monthly with any known changes. Last minute changes are sent via email & text. Please check the calendar on a regular basis. There is no requirement or limit to how many practices your swimmer attends.

Apparel: VAST team custom apparel, suits, towels, and gear is available for order year round through our team store on SwimOutlet. The website is <http://www.swimoutlet.com/vermswimteam>. The team also usually does one group order per year and you will receive information via email when that occurs.

Gear: Your swimmer will need a suit, goggles, & a swim cap. It is also recommended that you provide your swimmer with fins, a kick board, a pull buoy, & a gear bag (to haul it all). There is very limited access to training gear during practices, so it helps if your swimmer has their own that fits them. If you are in need of something, you can ask around the team as often other parents still have gear or suits in good condition that their child(ren) outgrew. Gear can also be purchased through our team store (website above).

SWIM MEETS

Participation at swim meets is encouraged but it is not mandatory. We place emphasis on the child competing against themselves to try to improve on their past performance. Swim meets place swimmers with similar abilities together so every child has a chance to win their heat.

Registration: Meet information is posted on the VAST website. The Board will determine which meets the team will be sending a coach to at the beginning of each season and this list will be emailed to each family. The deadlines to sign up are typically one to two weeks prior to the meet. This date will also be posted. There will be a document posted for each meet on the website that will contain all information for that meet, including entry fees, location, and rules. You can choose the events you wish to sign your swimmer up for or you can request the coach to select the swimmer's events. If you wish to attend a meet that VAST is not sending a coach to, please talk to the head coach. They will assist you in signing up and finding a coach for warm-ups, etc. **Championship meets require a qualifying time to swim. Please see the team website for the current qualifying times for the SD State A Meets & the Midwest Regional Meet.

Parents are responsible for all entry fees, for a \$5 VAST coaching surcharge per swimmer per meet, and for their own transportation to & from meets and hotel costs for overnight stays.

Before the Meet:

Arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled warm-ups. This time is needed to set up your "camp" and get your swimmer dressed and ready for warm-ups. Every pool is different. Be sure to check with experienced parents to get an idea of a specific pool's setup. Sometimes there will be bleacher seating

while sometimes it is necessary to bring chairs.

Purchase a program or heat sheet. This will provide you with the events, heats, lanes and approximate times that your swimmer will swim. Many parents find it helpful to highlight their swimmer's events in the programs. Many swimmers also choose to write their lane assignments on their arms/legs.

The coach will let the swimmers know what time and what lane to meet in for warm-ups.

During the Meet:

Each family is responsible for having their swimmer to the blocks at the right time and in the right lane. Be sure your swimmer knows where they should be.

Parents are not allowed on deck at anytime during the meet so swimmers need to be aware of their lane assignments.

All swimmers need to check in with their coach before and after each race. The coaches will be on deck.

Items to bring to a Meet:

- Swimsuit, swim cap and goggles (tinted goggles for outdoor meets)
- Towels
- Highlighter, Sharpie, Pen
- Cash
- Camping chairs and blankets
- Canopies/tents are used for outdoor meets
- Entertainment for swimmers/parents (there can be a lot of time in between events)
- Food and drink. At most meets, small coolers are allowed. There are usually concessions available as well. Check the meet information sheet for specific details.
- Sunscreen for outdoor meets.
- Appropriate clothing - temps at indoor meets can vary depending on whether you are camping in the pool area (warm) or in a gym (cool) & outdoor meets vary with the weather.

SWIMMERS

Training sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed. It is important that each swimmer attends as many practices as possible in order to fully benefit from the program. We recognize swimming is one of many activities that kids may be involved in. VAST asks that swimming be given the same priority/respect as other sports in terms of participation and attendance.

Each VAST swimmer shall:

- At all VAST functions, whether it be practice, meets or other team sponsored activities, display proper respect and good sportsmanship towards all coaches, officials, fellow teammates, competitors and the public.
- Comply with bullying policy set forth by the Vermillion Public School system. VAST adopts a zero-tolerance bullying policy.
- Do their best to continue to improve their skills and increase their knowledge of swimming.

- Not argue with coaches or officials.
- Represent themselves, the team, their family and community with honor and dignity.
- Not use profanity or any language interpreted to be degrading.
- Win with honor and lose with dignity and decorum.

Student/Athlete Letter of Recognition: Swimming in South Dakota is not a high-school sanctioned sport; however, VAST swimmers in grades 7-12 can letter in swimming. The requirements are:

- Must Attend 75% of Practices
- Participate in 2 (two) Swim Meets
- Obtain 1 (one) State Qualifying Time

PARENTS

A parent's primary responsibility is to support their child. The second responsibility is to support the team. To have a successful program, there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coaches. The progress of your child and the team depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship.

The swimmers are instructed to listen to their coach. If they are hearing conflicting direction from the home, it can cause confusion for the swimmer. If you have a question, complaint or concern, please contact the coach directly, away from your swimmer. If you think that your concern has not been adequately responded to, please contact any member of the board.

Parents are vital to the growth and success of the team. All parents are expected to volunteer. There are many opportunities to step up and support VAST. Become a board member, join a committee, or become an official. All parents are expected to help with fundraisers. We welcome all fundraising ideas from the parents.

All parents are expected to time at meets, if needed. Some regular season meets that the team attends will ask for volunteer timers and all state meets require each team to provide timers.

COACHES

Head Coach	David Lind
Assistant Coaches	Melanie Mahowald
	Christian Fossum
	Zach Kopp
	Anna Van Holland

Coaching responsibilities and expectations

- The coach will maintain an active USA Swimming membership & complete all necessary training.
- Responsible for all levels of swimming in the program and place each registered swimmer into practice groups based on age and ability of the swimmer. They will also decide which swimmers meet the criteria to participate in dry-land exercises.
- The coach will set workout schedules, groups and criteria for advancement

- The coach will recruit new swimmers for the team.
- The coach will work with the board to select which swim meets to attend
- The coach will see that all meets are covered and have prompt attendance on scheduled meet days as well as workouts.
- The coach will design and oversee season training plans for all groups and provide stroke instruction and training.
- The coach has authority to dismiss any swimmer (at least temporarily) followed by a phone call to the Board President after practice to explain the situation
- The coach will set team performance goals and facilitate individual goal setting with swimmers in the Black Group.
- The coach will establish an environment that fosters an exceptionally positive attitude, positive team attitudes, encourages self-discipline, sportsmanship, and responsibility.
- The coach will recommend individual's meet schedule and events and talk with the swimmer and parents when needed.
- The coach will make all relay assignments
- The coach will supervise meet warm-ups and prepare swimmers, to ensure safety and to comply with USA Swimming warm-up procedures
- The coach will attend all pertinent meetings at meets
- The Head coach will educate and supervise all coaches. He will work with the board on the need for new coach recruitment and training.
- The coach will have current knowledge of USA Swimming and local LSC rules and regulations. He will abide by the Code of United States Swimming and adhere to the USA Swimming and local LSC rules and regulations. He will keep abreast of current swimming techniques, maintain active file programs on swimmers to include a current roster, swimmer's times, and attendance records.
- The coach will have working knowledge of the HyTek system and be responsible for entries into swim meets and work to upgrade the system as needed.
- The coach will update the Board monthly with a written summary of any problems, questions, or concerns.
- The coach will act as liaison between VAST and Vermillion Public High School with names of eligible letter recipients each season.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VAST is governed by a parent-elected Board of Directors. The office positions on the board include:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Board Member
- Head Coach (non-voting)

Officers are elected for a two year term. The VAST parent organization nominates and votes on board members during the parent meeting at the beginning of the fall season. The current Board of Directors officers are listed on the website.

Board Responsibilities and Expectations

- To maintain an active USA Swimming membership & complete all required training.
- To hold Parent Meetings at the Start of each season and as needed during the season.
- To make and carry out the policies/Bylaws of VAST and perform necessary business and legal acts on behalf of VAST
- To regularly attend Board meetings -or when unable to, they will review the minutes from the meeting providing input.
- To keep the custody and care of the corporate records of VAST.
- To uphold the financial records and bank account for VAST in good standings and make the financial status available to VAST members at any Membership meeting.
- To act as a liaison between swimmers, parents and coaches as needed.

**VAST follows USA Swimming's Safe Sport Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP).
The full policy can be viewed on both the VAST website & the USA Swimming website.**