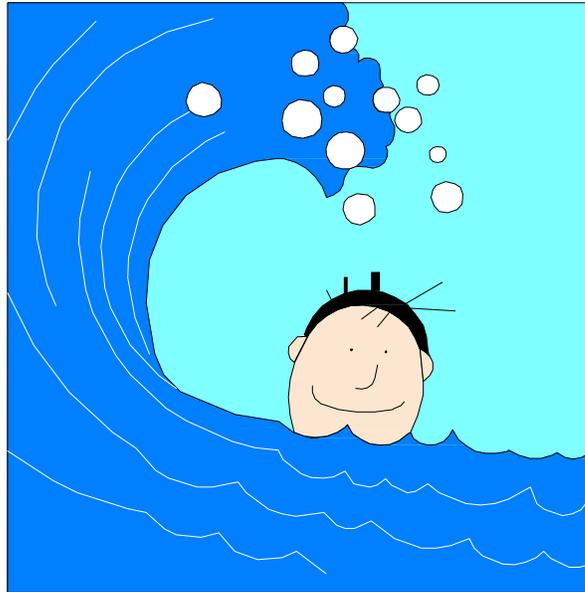


**MY KID WANTS TO JOIN THE SWIM TEAM
AND I HAVE NO IDEA
AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON**



A Guide for the bewildered parents of new members of the
Hiddenbrook Hurricanes Swim Team

2018 Edition

INTRODUCTION

Every swimmer's parent has experienced that first day of swim practice or that first swim meet where they wonder "why am I here and what's going on?" We've all been there before and will be glad to enlighten you in your quest to understand the world of Summer Swimming.

Although this pamphlet is explicitly written for use by parents of new Hiddenbrook Swim Team swimmers, the fundamentals are true for any area swim team. It will (hopefully) provide some information which will help you understand what is happening while your child swims.

Please remember that the only stupid question is the one which is unasked. Your Team Reps, Coaches and fellow swim parents all want you to understand and enjoy our summer swim program.

Welcome to Hiddenbrook. We're glad to have you with us.

Chapter 1: About the Swim Team

Our Philosophy

The Philosophy of the Hiddenbrook swim team is that having fun is the most important thing we can do. Most of the kids don't care if we're in a top division or a bottom division. We'd all like to be division champions, which usually means going undefeated, but only one team out of six can usually claim this honor. Personal development is what is most important and for a swimmer that means improving your times. We believe that by establishing a healthy environment that encourages the kids to do their best, recognizes their contributions and is fun for both them and the entire family, we will have met our goals.

We've all taken our kids to soccer or other sports and probably stood by as two or three parents ran the team. Swimming isn't like that. You can't run a swim program without parental help. In fact, it takes over 40 parents to time, officiate and score a typical swim meet, and that doesn't include pool set up and tear down or running the Snack Shack or non-swimming team activities. We have a paid coaching staff, but it's the parents that run everything else.

Swimming is unique in that there's a place on the team for anyone eighteen or younger who can swim across the pool. With our Waterspouts program, we even have a place for the kids who aren't ready to make it across the pool (yet). How many other sports have kids four years old to eighteen years old all participating on the same team in the same competition?

Expectations

Although swimming is considered an individual sport, our summer league is structured with an emphasis on the team. Any team is only as good as the people on it. In keeping with our philosophy articulated above, our expectations are simple:

1. The Hiddenbrook Hurricanes Swim Team is not a swim lesson program. A swimmer should be able to swim a length of the pool to join the team. We don't care how fast or how ugly or how legal the stroke is or how long it takes to swim that length. We'll help your swimmer become a better swimmer, but in fairness to the other 140 plus swimmers on the team, we must insist that all swimmers be able to swim. Your child will feel better about his/her being on the team if he/she is competitive with most of the other kids of the same age.
2. Keep your commitments: We're planning on you being available for all swim meets unless you tell us you're not available, preferably at least a week in advance.
3. Pay attention to the coaches: With over 140 swimmers, disruptions aren't fair to the other swimmers.
4. Do your best- it's a lot more important than being the best.
5. Have fun.

Chapter 2: Important Basic Stuff

Practices

Practice times are posted on the Hiddenbrook website, www.hiddenbrookswimteam.com and on the Swim Team Bulletin Board and are in the Parent Handbook (the handbook is also available on the website). Swimmers should come to practice regularly and be prepared to do their best.

Swimmer Apparel

Swimmers should wear a swimsuit that will be comfortable for racing. The Hurricanes, like every other swim team, have a team suit for the meets. There is often reluctance for some boys to wear the skin-tight suits known as jammers. Usually, when they realize that this type of suit is good for racing and everyone else is wearing one, their opposition breaks down.

You should also consider buying at least one practice suit for your swimmer. Cassel's in Herndon and other area swimsuit retailers frequently sell suits discontinued by manufacturers at a reduced price as practice suits.

Accessories for the well dressed swimmer

Every swimmer needs a towel, the bigger and thicker the better. Other accessories you should consider are goggles, a sweat suit (for cool days), a swim cap (especially for girls with long hair), a hat or other sun protection, and a bag to carry everything. You should also have liquid refreshment (water or sports drink, no caffeine) and a light snack for during the meet such as fruit, granola bars or other healthy foods. Save the sweets at the concession stand for after swimming a great swim.

Parents Handbook

Our complete Parent's Handbook, which provides information on schedules, social events, and points of contact, can also be found on our website, along with other useful information.

Communication

Website

We have a terrific web site at www.hiddenbrookswimteam.com.

Email

We primarily use email to communicate with our swimming families. The email addresses that you entered on your registration will be used.

Facebook Page

We have a team page! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1591974414407394/>

Chapter 3: Organizational Stuff

Let's cover a few organizational items, just to make sure we're in sync.

Steering Committee and Coaches

The people you'll run into the most in your swim team dealings are the Steering Committee and the Coaches. The Steering Committee members are volunteer parents who were new to swimming at one time just like you are today. In addition to running the team, its members have all committed to taking on the most demanding jobs needed to run a successful team. Our paid coaching staff is responsible for everything related to the swimming part of the swim team. Details, including description of each of the committee jobs, as well as contact information for committee members and coaching staff, is available in our team handbook.

Northern Virginia Swimming League (NVSL)

In 1956, 8 Northern Virginia Pools founded the NVSL. Today, the NVSL has over 15,000 swimmers on 102 teams and is one of the largest summer swim league in the United States. Obviously, with this many teams, there has to be some division of teams. During the offseason, the NVSL ranks each team from 1 to 102 based primarily on swimmers times, and then divides the teams, based on these rankings, into 17 divisions of six teams. This means that the fastest teams are in the lower numbered divisions and the less competitive teams are in the higher numbered divisions. More information is available about the league at www.mynvsl.com.

Dual Meets

The six teams in each division swim the other five teams, one at a time on five consecutive Saturdays, in a series of Dual Meets, so called because there are two teams competing. Based upon the results of these five meets, a division champion will be named.

Relay Carnivals

Another NVSL event is the Division Relay Carnival, which takes place on the Wednesday between the third and fourth weeks of the season. All six teams in each division converge on one pool for an evening of relay races. These include both Freestyle relays (each swimmer swims the Freestyle) and Medley relays (each swimmer swims a different stroke). The 18 fastest times for each event from across all divisions swim at the All-Star Relay Carnival the following week.

Divisionals

The sixth week, each Division has an Individual Championship meet, commonly referred to as "Divisionals". Each team is allowed to enter two swimmers in each event and a swimmer can enter no

more than two events. If a team does not have two swimmers for an event, the other teams can bid in other swimmers to fill the empty lanes. This is an individual meet and is not scored.

All Stars

After the Divisionals, the eighteen fastest times swum in Divisional meets qualify for the league All Star Meet. All Stars can be overwhelming for a first time swimmer as approximately 600 swimmers plus parents, coaches, and officials converge on a pool for a meet that takes about six hours. If your swimmer is fast enough to be named an All Star, it is a thrill they will never forget.

Herndon Developmental (B) League

The Hiddenbrook, Fox Mill Woods, Pinecrest, Fox Mill Estates and Herndon pools have joined together for the conduct of un-scored swim meets on Monday nights. Every swimmer is eligible to participate in these meets. Swimmers who have swum two individual events in the previous Saturday's meet can swim one stroke "unofficially" other than the same two strokes that they swam on Saturday and a swimmer who swam one event in the previous Saturday's meet can swim two events "officially" other than the one event that they swam on Saturday. Swimmers may also swim an Individual Medley, because these are not swum in Saturday meets.

Special Meets

During the season we may participate in a number of special meets. These include the Herndon Olympics and an Invitational Relay Carnival. Information will be disseminated during the season on these meets.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming is the governing body for swimming in the United States. USA Swimming establishes rules for the strokes and for the conduct of competition. The NVSL swimming rules are USA Swimming rules with minor changes to accommodate the facilities and skill levels found in our league.

Potomac Valley Swimming

Potomac Valley Swimming (PVS) is the local "branch" of USA Swimming. It consists of year round swim clubs in the Washington area. PVS conducts "Short Course" competitions (25 yard pools) from October to March and "Long Course" competitions (Olympic sized 50 meter pools) from May thru July. Their website is www.pvswim.org. Information about swimming clubs that offer year round programs can be found there.

Chapter 4: My Kid Says He's Supposed to Swim Like a Butterfly

If you're not a former swimmer, the strokes and their rules can be a cause of bewilderment. While the stroke rules are simple enough for a six year old to understand, most people do not have a copy of the USA Swimming Rules, so we'll briefly describe the strokes below. The rules below are the USA Swimming rules as modified for use in the NVSL. Teams in other leagues may have slightly different rules.

Freestyle

The freestyle is defined as any means of swimming across the pool. Any stroke and kick are acceptable. There are, however, a few don'ts associated with this stroke, specifically: (1) You cannot walk on the bottom or pull yourself along using the lane lines and (2) In a 50 Meter race (two pool lengths) you must touch the wall at the 25 meter end before touching the wall at the 50 meter end (This may seem obvious, but sometimes swimmers miss the wall at the turning end of the pool)

Backstroke

Like the freestyle, almost anything goes on the backstroke as long as you stay on your back. Backstroke starts are different from all others because the swimmer is in the water feet planted against the wall, and hanging on to either another swimmer's legs or the lip on the pool awaiting the starter's signal. "Legs" must be grabbed below the knee. If your swimmer is a backstroker, he or she will eventually learn the backstroke flip turn. This is the one exception to staying on your back and can be used only as part of a turn (not a finish) at the pool wall.

Breaststroke

The Breaststroke has two components, the kick and the arm pull. The pull and its recovery must both be under the breast and cannot extend further back than the waist area. The kick is a "frog" kick and the toes must be pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick. The arm pull and kick must be in an alternating sequence and the elbows must stay below the water except for tagging the wall at the finish. Breaststroke turns and finishes require a simultaneous two hand touch.

Butterfly

There are two components of the fly; the arm pull and the kick. The arm pull must be an over the water recovery (elbows breaking the surface of the water) with the arms moving simultaneously. The kick is a dolphin style kick with both legs moving simultaneously. Unlike the Breaststroke, there is no requirement to alternate the kick and pull. Turns and finishes require a simultaneous two hand touch at the wall.

Individual Medley

The individual medley (or IM) is when an individual swims each of the four strokes in the sequence Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. We swim a 100 Meter IM, which means that 25 Meters, or one pool length, of each stroke is swum. In a 100 Meter IM, every turn is a stroke change and stroke finish rules apply. This means no Backstroke Flip Turns.

Relays

There are two kinds of Relays, the freestyle relay and the medley relay. Both involve a team of four swimmers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance. In the freestyle relay, each swimmer swims the freestyle. In the medley relay, the sequence is Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle. In all relays, each swimmer must wait until the previous swimmer touches the wall prior to leaving the deck. Running starts or pushes from teammates are not allowed.

Chapter 5: Swim Meets

There are two basic meets you will encounter as a parent: Saturday A Meets, which are scored dual meets and Monday B Meets, which are un-scored dual meets.

Saturday A Meets

Saturday Meets consist of 40 Individual events and 12 Relays. The events swum for each stroke and age group are shown below. Remember, each pool length is 25 meters.

Saturday A Meet Events and Distances

#

Age group	Freestyle	Backstroke	Breaststroke	Butterfly	Freestyle Relay	Medley Relay
8 & Under Boys	25 M	25 M	25 M	25 M	100M	#
8 & Under Girls	25 M	25 M	25 M	25 M	100M	#
9-10 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	25 M	#	100 M
9-10 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	25 M	#	100 M
11-12 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M	#	100 M
11-12 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M	#	100 M
13-14 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M	#	100 M
13-14 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M	#	100 M
15-18 Boys	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M	#	200 M
15-18 Girls	50 M	50 M	50 M	50 M	#	200 M
Mixed Age Boys	#	#	#	#	200 M	#
Mixed Age Girls	#	#	#	#	200 M	#

NOTES:

1. The order of events is to go down each column starting on the left side except that the mixed age relays are the last two events. To make it easier, print a meet sheet.
2. The Mixed Age Relays are swum by, in order, an 11-12 year old, a 10 & under, a 13-14 year old, and a 15-18 year old.

Who Swims?

These meets are to see who can score the most points, so the fastest swimmers get to swim. Three swimmers can be entered in each individual event and no swimmer can swim more than two individual events. Typically 6 swimmers for each age group will be in the A meet, sometimes 7. Who swims an event may seem to be a mystery. However, after the first meet both teams know the other's swimmers times and we try to position our swimmers to optimize our points and win.

Disqualifications (DQs) and False Starts

A swimmer will be disqualified (or DQd) if he/she does not follow the rules of the stroke or false starts. These are covered in more detail in chapter 7.

Seeding

In Saturday meets, the home team has lanes 1, 3, and 5 while the visiting team has lanes 2, 4, and 6. The fastest swimmers swim in lanes 3 and 4, the next fastest in lanes 1 and 2, and the next fastest in lanes 5 and 6. Swimmers are seeded based upon their fastest times attained in prior competition. Lane 1 is always on the right side as you stand facing the pool at the starting end.

Meet Sheets

While all NVSL meets have an announcer, the best way to follow the meet is with a meet sheet, which lists all the events, swimmers, and seed times. Meet Sheets are sent out via email prior to the meet.

Scoring

In the individual events, a first place finish earns 5 points for the team, a second place 3 points and a third place finish 1 point. Relays are scored as 5 points for the winner and 0 points for the loser. There are 420 points up for grabs in a Saturday meet. Unless there are one or more places not awarded in an event due to DQs or lack of swimmers, you need 211 points to win. In the event of a tie, the points for the places involved are equally split among the swimmers. For example, a two way tie for second place, each swimmer earns 2 points (3 points for second plus 1 point for third equals 4 points, half for each swimmer). No third place would be awarded because the next swimmer is fourth. For a third place tie, each swimmer is awarded 1/2 point.

Herndon Developmental League, Monday B Meets

Monday meets are basically the same as Saturday meets except as follows:

In the Freestyle and Backstroke, a 6 & Under age group is added.

IM events are added for 10 & Unders, 11-12s, 13-14s and 15-18s

There are usually multiple heats of each event for younger swimmers

Relay Carnivals

In Relay Carnivals, teams are not seeded. Each team's lane assignment for the first event is based upon luck of the draw and the teams then rotate one lane to the left after each event. The meet sheet lists only the team swimming in each lane in each event (except for All Star Relay Carnival).

Chapter 6: Who Are All These People in White Shirts?

Your first swim meet can be a bewildering experience as you encounter a vast horde of adults dressed in white shirts and blue shorts. NVSL rules require all deck officials to wear this fashionable combination.

Clerk of Course

The Clerk of Course is the "gatekeeper" for all swimmers in our meets. The people who perform this function get the swimmers to the right lanes for the correct race. You can't run a race without swimmers and the clerk of course makes sure the right swimmer gets to the right place at the right time.

Referee

The Referee is the chief official for each swim meet. He or she is responsible for the conduct of the meets and is the final authority on the interpretation and enforcement of all swimming rules. Prior to the start of each race, the referee sounds two or three short blasts to advise the participants to get ready. After the event is announced by the announcer or starter, the Referee sounds one long blast as a signal for swimmers to get into position for the start or to jump feet first into the water for a backstroke event. For Backstroke events, a second long blast is given to bring the swimmers to the wall for the start. When the referee sees that all the swimmers are ready, he extends his arm pointing towards the starter. At this point, the starter takes control.

Starter

The Starter is responsible for insuring that all swimmers are given a fair and equitable start. The starter will instruct the swimmers to "Take your mark". After all swimmers are ready and still, the starter will start the race, using a "Colorado System" (so called because it is built by Colorado Timing Systems). This system consists of a public address system, a horn, and a strobe light.

Stroke and Turn Judges

Once the race has started, the Stroke & Turn Judges are responsible for insuring that all swimmers obey all the rules for the stroke that they are swimming. These people are always at the ends of the pool for starts and finishes and walk the sides of the pool as best they can within the physical constraints of the pool. If a Stroke and Turn Judge sees a violation of the rules, he raises his hand to signify that an infraction has occurred. A Disqualification is recorded on a DQ slip, which the referee reviews and approves and forwards copies to the Table workers and the Team Rep.

Marshals

Marshals are responsible for ensuring that warm-ups are conducted safely and that order is maintained during the warm-ups. Duties include insuring that diving starts are used in warm-ups only when a lane is "one way" away from the starting end, stopping any horse play and making sure swimmers aren't hanging or sitting on the lane lines.

Relay Take-off Judges

During relays, you'll see four Relay Take-off Judges at each end of the pool (two per lane). Their job is to insure that each swimmer touches the wall prior to the next swimmer in the relay leaving the deck. Each Judge notes on a slip of paper whether each swimmer in his lane left before or after the swimmer in the water touched the wall. Relay Take-off Judges do not raise their hands when they observe an early take-off because a disqualification occurs only if both Relay Take-off Judges observed an early takeoff.

Timers

The timers are the most important people to every swimmer. They are the people who determine each swimmer's official time for each race. Being a timer is a good entry level position for new parents to help out in. Some parents have been timers for years and wouldn't want to see a swim meet from any other viewpoint. If you can start and stop a stopwatch, you can be a timer. We'll even provide the stopwatch. Timers start their watches on the strobe light from the Colorado system and stop their watches when the swimmer touches the wall. There are three timers per lane and all three times are recorded. The middle time is the official time. The Chief Timer collects the time cards from the timers, reviews them for accuracy and completeness, and forwards them on to the table workers.

Table Workers

The time cards from the timers and any DQ slips go to the Table Workers who determine the order of finish for each event, score the meet, and prepare ribbons for the participants. Several people from each team perform these functions to insure that errors are caught before the results are announced.

Team Rep

The Team Rep is the designated recipient of all DQ slips for his team and is the only person with any official standing to challenge any decisions made by the referee. It sounds like an easy job, but remember, most of the Team Rep's job is done before the meet starts.

Coaches

During the meet, the Coaches primary responsibility is to encourage and praise the swimmers and to make sure that they get to the Clerk of the Course in time to swim. After each event, swimmers should report back to their coaches to get feedback on their performance. Immediate feedback helps the kids improve.

Volunteering

You can sign up for volunteer positions using our online signup sheet. Information will be sent out at the beginning of the season about where to find the sign up page.

Chapter 7: What Do You Mean, My Kid DQ'd

In swimming, the rules must be followed in total or a disqualification, or DQ, is committed. This can be traumatic the first time a swimmer is DQ'd for just one mistake, but it isn't fair to other swimmers who swim the entire race per the rules to do otherwise.

What is a DQ?

A DQ (short for disqualification) is any violation of the rules observed by any appropriate official. Some of the more common reasons for DQing 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
 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 Start: A swimmer starts the race early (more details below)

How will I know a DQ occurred?

Unlike football, we don't blow a whistle and announce to the world that a rules violation occurred. When a Stroke and Turn Judge observes a violation, he raises his hand to signify that he has observed a violation then writes it up on a DQ slip. The judge then takes the slip to the referee, who verifies that rule has been broken and can question the stroke and turn judge to insure that he was able to see the violation that was cited. The referee then gives one copy of the DQ slip to the Team Rep and another copy to the

Table Workers. Another clue that a DQ has occurred is a Stroke and Turn Judge writing and a longer than normal pause between events.

Disqualifications for early relay takeoffs are done slightly 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 lane that the team being DQ'd swam in and raise his hand.

False Starts

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. When this occurs, a swimmer is usually trying to anticipate the starting signal and beat the other swimmers into the water.

If the false start is detected before the starting signal is sounded, the offending swimmer will be removed from the race prior to it starting. If a false start occurs but the starting signal has sounded, the race will not be stopped. Instead the false starting swimmer(s) will be notified of their false start at the conclusion of the race. The use of a recall signal is now limited to a bad start (i.e. not all swimmers were ready) or for a safety reason.

How do I know if My Kid DQ'd

Your kid will probably know before you do since the Team Rep tells the coach, who tells the swimmer. You'll probably find out if you saw your swimmer finish with one of the top three times but he isn't announced later in the top three places. Similarly, someone else DQ'd if your swimmer finished in 4th, 5th or 6th yet is announced as one of the top three finishers. Saturday meet results are posted on the NVSL web site, www.mynvsl.com.

A Word about Officials and DQs

Every Official on the deck will always give the benefit of the doubt to the swimmer. Although the difference between legal but ugly vs illegal is sometimes too close to call, any violation called by an official is an "I saw" not an "I think I saw".

Protesting Disqualifications

The Team Rep is the only person who can officially question a disqualification or any other call by an official. If something happens involving your swimmer which you do not think is right, talk to the coach or the Team Rep. The Team Rep will initiate action in accordance with NVSL rules if thought to be appropriate.

