



Welcome to the Sea Otters Swim Team!



Joining a new sport can be a confusing and somewhat frustrating time for a participant and parent. We understand how you feel, since each of us has been in your shoes. This handbook will hopefully answer some of your questions as the season progresses, but please don't hesitate to ask a parent who has been on the team before anything you don't understand. We are all here to help!

Things you need to know right away

What is the Chesapeake Potomac Swim League (CPSL)?

The Chesapeake & Potomac (C&P) Swim League (CPSL) is a YMCA winter swim league comprised of 17 YMCA swim teams (13 from Maryland, 3 from Delaware, and 1 from Virginia), within the YMCA East Field South District. The YMCA Competitive Swimming Coordinator for the District is Meredith Griffin, at the Brandywine YMCA. The league website is www.cpsl.info, they have results, team information and meet entry packets. Team information can be found at www.cumberlandymca.org.

What time is practice?

The Sea Otters Swim Team has four different practice groups; Mini Otters, JR Otters, Otters and Senior Otters for the winter (Oct to April). The team generally has two practice groups; Senior Otters & JR Otters for the summer team (May to July).

WINTER PRACTICE TIMES

Senior Otters	Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday 4:30-6:30 pm & Tuesday/ Thursday 3:30-4:30 pm
Otters	Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday 4:30-6:15 pm
JR Otters	Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday 4:30-5:45 pm
Mini Otters	Tuesday/ Thursday 4:30-5:30 pm

SUMMER PRACTICE TIMES:

May to June(TBA) 5-6:30 pm Monday through Friday
 June to end of July 7:30-9:00 am-Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday dryland included Tues/Thurs 5-6:30 pm

The Friday practices bring the entire team together to play water games or do station practices. It gives all of the practice groups a chance to get together and know each other.

What does a swimmer need to bring to practice?

Practice suit- Many swimmers use a practice suit rather than the team suit to prolong the life of the team suit. A lot of swimmers also wear multiple suits for practice to create what swimmers call drag and prolong the life of an older suit. Always rinse suits with tap water after being in the pool to get rid of damaging chlorine.

Goggles- These are a must for the comfort of swimmer's eyes. Buy a decent pair, and be sure to write the swimmer's name on them.

Cap- A necessity for girls at every practice. Recommended for boys with longer hair.

Towel- One to two towels are recommended. Swimmers may participate in dryland activities as well as sit out of the pool to go over information with others swimmers or the coaching staff.



Why should I write my swimmers name on everything?

You might think that a swimmer would recognize his or her own stuff, but team shirts and suits all look alike, and the only way to identify who its belongs to, is by looking for a name. Goggles and caps get laid on the pool deck during practice. Swimmers can only tell which ones are theirs if their name is on it.

What rules need to be followed at practice?



It is assumed that your child will be at practice and swim meets unless the coaching staff is otherwise informed. Specific practice times can be discussed with the coach for new swimmers, those traveling far, and when scheduling conflicts occur. Swimmers are to report to a coach on time for practice. If a swimmer is absent, late, or needs to leave early a coach needs to be notified. Do what is asked. Do not question what is being done during practice, there is a reason for everything and questions will be answered before or after practice. Please don't ask to use the restroom or water fountain, breaks are

provided and other instances should be limited. Lane assignments will be given this year. If you have an issue with your lane please address it with the coaching staff. Have fun! However do the practice and do not distract others from their tasks.

What is the team/ coaches disciplinary policy at practice and/ or meets?

1. Verbal Warning by coaching staff. Swimmer can continue practice/ meet.
2. Second Verbal Warning by coaching staff and parent/ guardian contacted. Swimmer asked to sit out for a "time out" for usually a 10-30 minute time frame.
3. Third Offense; the swimmer is asked to leave practice and the pool area.
4. If behavioral issues continue the swimmer will be benched for 1-5 days of practice depending upon the severity of the offense.
5. If behavioral issues still continue swimmer will be benched from the next dual meet.

How do I know what's going on?

Swim Team Bulletin Board- The bulletin board is located on the far end of the bleachers near the windows at the diving block end of the pool. It will have up to date information about practice changes, swim meets, meet results, volunteer information, qualifying times, and much more.

Swim Team Mailboxes- The plastic file tub located under the bulletin boards has a file folder for each family. Flyer for upcoming events, meets, ribbons from meets and any other correspondence can be found here. It is a good idea to check it daily.

E-mail- If you provide us with an email address, we can put you on the contact list to let you know important information right away.

Phone Tree- Each season you will be provided with a phone tree. Please choose a phone that is most readily available to you or your spouse.

What should I do if I need to talk to the coach?

Please wait until practice is over to talk to the coaches. During practice, they are trying to concentrate on working with the swimmers. You might try talking to other parents or the team rep first. They



probably know the answer to your questions. If every parent spends time asking the coaches questions, there wouldn't be enough time to work with the swimmers.

What is a Team Rep?

The team rep is the person who is the liaison between the C & P Swim League (CPSL) and the Sea Otters Swim Team. This person attends CPSL meetings & Sea Otters Parent Board Meetings.

How can I help the team?

The Sea Otters Swim Team operates solely by volunteers with the exception of the coaches. It is imperative that each family finds ways to help out throughout the swim season. Most of the jobs can be done very easily or with minimum instructions. All of the swimmers benefit from a combined effort of the parents. We understand the desire to watch your child swim at meets which may inhibit you from volunteering for a particular job, however: it takes many people to run meets and we strive not to have the same parents volunteering all the time. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED throughout the season.

The coaches and parents board will be asking you as a parent to volunteer. Volunteering to be a timer is a crucial role within a swim meet. It allows swimmers to obtain their times as well as ensuring a smooth running meet. Volunteer jobs:

Timers- (two to three people in each lane for total of 12-18) Each lane has two to three official stop watches. Each timer starts their watch at the beginning of the race and stops it when the swimmer touches the wall. The two to three times are then recorded on the heat sheet by the swimmers name. The times are then averaged out and that time becomes the "unofficial" watch time for the swimmer. This is just a back up time in case the Colorado timing system does not work. However, it is EXTREMELY important to keep a record of these times.

Back- Up Timer- Is not assigned a lane but will also start his/her watch at the start of each race to ensure that all lanes have a watch time.

Runner-This volunteer takes the DQ slips from the stroke and turn judges to the referee. They also pick up the times for all 25 yard races to the computer table. At some meets they might give out the heat winner ribbons to each swimmer who wins their heat.

Clerk of Course- (two people minimum) These two people are the "gatekeepers" for the swimmers. They get the swimmers lined up in the correct order for each race in a seating area. For our home meets we have to seating or "staging" areas (1) the gymnasium and (2) the pool purple benches. You will notice the numbers above the bench along the wall in the pool area.

Ribbons Writers- Ribbons writers take the labels printed off by the computer rep and place them on the correct place (usually 1st-6th) for each event for each team. They are grouped into piles for each head coach to pick up and distribute at the end of each meet.

What is a practice meet?

The Halloween Meet is a practice meet, where the swimmers can learn how a meet is run. More importantly to calm their nerves about where they need to go and what they need to do before, during and after their swims. Swimmers that have been on the team for several years are a good source of information as well as the coaching staff for the day of this meet.

What are Dual, Invitational, Championship, District, Regional & National Meets?

Dual meets are meets where our team swims against one other team within our league. Invitational meets are meets that have several teams in attendance. Some may and some may not have qualifying times. What is a qualifying time? A time standard set by the host team, league, district or national organization. The swimmers time must be equal to or faster than the qualifying time to participate at the meet. The championship meet is held at the end of the season for teams participating within our



league. The district meet has qualifying times and is open to all teams within our district. Regional and National meets also have qualifying times which are the fastest times to achieve. National qualifying times can be found at www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org

How do I enter my swimmer in a swim meet? All dual meets (our team verses one other team) entries are handled directly by the coaching staff. The cost of the dual meets is included in the cost of registering for the team.

All invitational, championship, district, regional meet entries are handled directly by the swimmer and parents of the swimmers involved. This is strictly for individual events, coaches will be deciding upon all relay events. The entry date (deadline) will be on the meet notice. Meet notices will be placed in the swimmers folder in the black file folder in the pool bleachers. The date on the meet notice is the DEADLINE for entering the meet. To efficiently enter the team entries and determine the relays all entries must be submitted by the DEADLINE. There will no longer be any exceptions to this rule under any circumstances. These meets generally have a fee per event and per relay. In addition some meets charge a facility fee as well.

Meet entries and checks should be placed in an envelope and sealed. Please make all checks payable to the CUY Sea Otters. ALL ENTRIES ARE TO BE PLACED IN THE SEA OTTER MAILBOX. THE MAILBOX IS WHITE AND GOLD AND IS IN THE ENTERANCE TO THE POOL AREA.

What time do we go to swim meets?

Always check the bulletin boards to be certain, but general rule of thumb is to be at the pool whether it is home or away 15 to 20 minutes prior to the start of warm-ups so that swimmers can find the locker room, change and locate the team on deck. This will allow time for swimmers to stretch before they warm-up.

What rules do swimmers need to follow when participating in meets?

Swimmers are to report to a coach on time for meets. If a swimmer is absent, late, or needs to leave early a coach needs to be notified prior to the day of the meet. Swimmers need to stay in the team area. No rough housing on the deck or in the locker rooms. Pay attention to the coaches and starter of the meet. Do not miss your events. Keep the pool, team area, and locker rooms clean by picking up after yourself. Be respect and considerate as a guest at away meets. All swimmers must swim all events that they are entered in. Scratches are only allowed with all attending coaches' consent. Time Trials are allowed for those swimmers within one second of a cut time. Swimmer must have the Head Coach's permission prior to entering into a time trial event. Swimmers must be a participant in that meet not necessarily that day. Relays are set up to score points. They will not be changed unless the coaching staff agrees to it.

How do I enter into a swim meet?

All swimmers will be entered in every dual meet by the coaching staff. Some events may be exhibition. Swimmers may be entered in as many as 4 events in each dual meet. If a swimmer is entered in 4 events: 1 of the events must be a relay. Unless, the child or parent notifies a coach, all swimmers will be entered in each dual meet.

What should you bring to a swim meet?

Blankets, sleeping bags, chairs, towels and kids everywhere. Chilly gymnasium (keep your swimmer warm). Lots of cheering, new friends and a great time (especially if you get involved with the team and volunteer).



Hand Marking at meets? What is this?

Event #	Heat	Lane
Ex) 4	2	6

Make sure you know your event numbers. You can get the event numbers from the heat sheets that are sold at the meet and also are usually posted in the pool area.

What if we are going to be out of town for a meet?

It is IMPARATIVE that the Head Coach is notified that the child and/ or children will NOT be attending the meet the Tuesday prior to the meet. A verbal message is hard to remember when coaches sit down to do entries, so a note is preferred. The consequences for misinforming the coach will be grounds for benching the child and/ or children for the subsequent meet.



What do we need to bring for the concession stand?

For home meets parents will be asked to assist by bringing baked goods, officiating, timing, and other duties. Parents are obligated to help officiate at home meet whenever possible. A team rep will call upon you for your assistance. Please try and make arrangements to be available.

Should I come to a meet I am not swimming in?

It is always nice to have non-swimming team members there to help cheer. The older swimmers are encouraged to attend meets to help the coaching staff with the younger swimmers.

What is a Heat Sheet?

A heat sheet will have information about what event, heat and lane the swimmers will be in. At most meets the heat sheets will be for sale at the team concession stand for less than \$5. At larger qualifying meets heat sheets can cost upwards of \$10. The coaching staff always has a copy of the heat sheet so that swimmers know where they need to be.

How do you prepare swimmers for a successful meet?

During the season, healthy eating and lots of water are a good idea. The night before a meet, eat high carbohydrates like pasta or rice to store energy for the next day. The morning of the meet, eat before coming to the pool, and if snacks are needed, pack bagels, granola bars or fruit. Pack two towels, two pair of goggles and two swim caps for every meet. If it is cold, pack a sweatshirt and sweat pants to keep warm in between races. Swimmers should stay in the team area. After a race, the swimmer should go talk with the coaches before going to visit family. Parents should let coaches work with the swimmers and not interrupt them during a meet. If a parent has a question about their child's performance, they should talk to the coach after the meet. Always be positive when talking to your swimmer. Be encouraging, not discouraging.

What is a DQ or being DQ'd?

Being disqualified (DQ) means that the swimmer did something that broke the rules for the legal execution of the stroke. This often happens as swimmers learn the finer points of a new stroke, and it is not a life shattering event, merely a learning experience. All swimmers (even Olympic athletes) have DQ'd many times in their lives, but they learned how to be successful at the stroke as a results.



Who are all the people dressed in white on the pool deck at meets?

These are the officials running the meets. Each official has a specific jobs such as, Referee, Starter, Stroke & Turn Judges. The Referee is the chief official of the meet. He/ She is responsible for conducting the meet and is the final authority on interpretation and enforcement of all rules. He/ She signal the start of each race by blowing his/ her whistle, at which time everyone becomes quiet. The Starter is responsible for making sure that each swimmer gets a fair start. At the beginning of each race, he/she announces the stroke and the distance of the race, instructs them to “take your mark,” and once the swimmer are ready and still he/she starts the race. The Stroke & Turn Judges make sure each swimmer swims in accordance with the rules for that stroke. If a swimmer does not, the stroke and turn judge records the error on a disqualification (DQ) slip and give it’s to the referee for review.

How can I be an official?

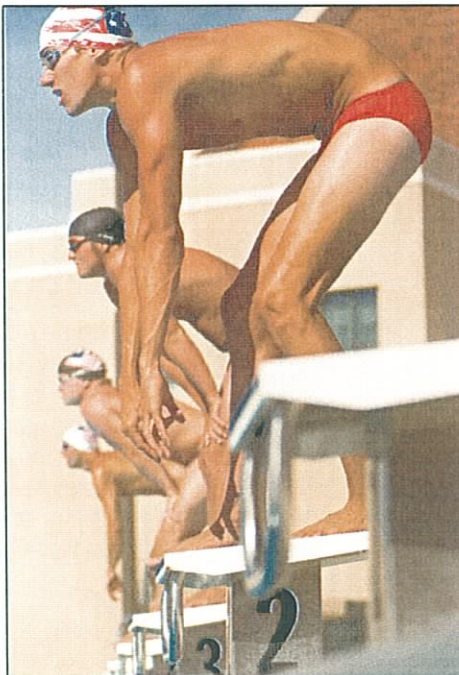
Many official positions require training sessions with a certified instructor. Officials clinics are held prior to the start of the winter dual meet season. If you are interested, let a coach, parents board officer, or team rep know.

What is the Swim Team Parents Board?

The parent’s board is comprised of parents of children on the swim team. There is a president, vice president for the winter, vice president for the summer, secretary and treasurer. The board meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm in the conference room and the Riverside Branch of the Cumberland YMCA. All parents are welcome to attend any of the meetings. The meetings usually run one hour in length. Discussions range from preparing for a meet, fundraising, and ordering and purchasing equipment, swim suits, etc.

FUN STUFF- SOCIAL EVENTS

Team Pictures- Several parents on the team will take pictures at the meets throughout the season. Please indicate whether you would or would not like your swimmers picture taken during the swim meets.



Picture Day- Team pictures are usually held prior to the start of a swim meet. They will be taken by a professional photographer. Flyers and information about the date will be provided weeks prior. Individual pictures can also be purchased at this time.

Ice Cream Social- After a practice or swim meet during the season swimmers are welcome to stay for free ice cream.

Pasta Party- Prior to the first home dual meet the team will host a pot luck pasta party in the youth center. Dates and more information will be put in your team mailbox and posted on the bulletin board.

Friday Fun Nights-Sometimes we organize outings to the movies theatre, bowling, snow tubing and much more. These dates and times will be posted on the bulletin board or done via the phone tree.

13 & Over Dinners- Sometimes we organize dinner get together at a local restaurant. No parents allowed. Just coaching staff and swimmers.