

Poolesville Piranhas
Swim Team Handbook
Montgomery County Swim League

Western County Outdoor Pool
20151 Fisher Ave. Poolesville, MD 20837
www.poolesvilleswimteam.us

Message from Coach Tara:

Dear Swim Team Parents,

Welcome to the Poolesville Piranhas Swim Team (Piranhas)! In this Handbook you will find information that will be helpful throughout the season. Every child is an important part of Piranhas.

Please support your children by giving them lots of encouragement and by volunteering to help the program run smoothly. At each meet, we need at least 30 volunteers. Therefore, it is highly encouraged that each family provides an adult to work at a minimum of three meets.

Please visit the Piranhas website – www.poolesvilleswimteam.us for information about key contact information, schedules, announcements, results and more. If you have questions, it's best to email us at the addresses listed on the website.

Enjoy the season -- let's make it fun and worthwhile for all our children!

Thanks, Coach Tara

OUR MISSION

The Piranhas are dedicated to the development of its members as swimmers/athletes. It seeks to foster the respect of each Piranhas member, as well as the members of other teams, officials, and for the sport of swimming. The Piranhas will emphasize the concept of teamwork and will strive to provide fun, meaningful competition for all its members. The Piranhas are part of the Montgomery County Department of Recreation Aquatics Program.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Parents of swimmers and all swimmers should be respectful of other swimmers, parents and coaches. This includes during practice, at meets and team events. Please do not approach the coaches during practice or at meets. If you have any issues, please talk to the A or B Representatives. The Piranhas have a zero-tolerance policy on bullying. Please notify the A and B Representatives if any bullying is witnessed. Summer swimming should be a fun and safe environment for everyone.

For more information see the MCSL Code of Conduct:

<http://www.mcsl.org/documents/CodesofConduct2010.pdf>

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SWIM LEAGUE (MCSL)

The Piranhas compete in the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL). The MCSL is made up of approximately 90 teams divided into 15 divisions (A through O), with six teams per division. The teams are seeded within the divisions according to the prior year's performance. Our division may change year to year. You can follow all the teams in MCSL by visiting the website at www.mcsl.org

SWIMMER INFORMATION

Each MCSL meet (A or B) is divided by gender into races for each stroke in the following age groups:

- 8 and under
- 9 and 10
- 11 and 12
- 13 and 14
- 15 to 18

A swimmer's age category is determined based on the age of the swimmer as of June 1st of the current swim season. For example, a swimmer who turns 9 years old on June 3rd will swim the entire summer season in the 8 and under age group.

Piranhas membership is available to any child. Membership to the pool is not required. Typically, the Piranhas have approximately 180 swimmers across the various age groups.

Returning swimmers must sign up with MCSL by ____ as returning swimmers.

Swimmer tryouts are held the week after Memorial Day on dates times to be determined. The minimum swimmer qualifications are as follows:

- 8 & Under Swimmers: Must be able to swim 1 continuous length (25 meters) of the pool using a coordinated stroke and rhythmic breathing, and be able to float on their back.
- 9-12 Year Old Swimmers: Must be able to swim 1 continuous length (25 meters) of legal freestyle with good rhythmic breathing and 1 length (25 meters) of legal backstroke.
- 13 & Over Swimmers: Must be able to swim 2 continuous lengths (50 meters) of legal freestyle with good rhythmic breathing and 2 continuous lengths (50 meters) of legal backstroke.

Tryouts are not timed. Do not sign up for the summer swim session on the MCSL website until your swimmer has been to tryouts and the coach has advised you to sign up.

TIME TRIALS

The purpose of time trials is to establish official event times for the swimmers prior to the first Saturday "A" meet. Time trials are typically held one week before the first Saturday "A" meet. Swimmers need to obtain an official time in individual events to be considered for "A" meets.

THE MEETS, GENERALLY

There are two swim meets each week, an "A" meet and "B" meet. The "A" meet is typically held on Saturday mornings and the "B" meet is typically held on Wednesday evenings. A swim week starts with the Saturday "A" meet and includes the following Wednesday "B" meet.

The meets will be automated, which means the line up is added into the meet software program provided by MCSL prior to the meet. Review the

rules for swimmer line up for each type of meet below. No late entries, and no "deck entries".

Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children during meets. Parents should remain with swimmers during meets. No adult supervision is provided generally for children at swim meets. Coaches and volunteers are at the meets to run the meets.

Swimmers should remain in the designated team area and inform a coach or clerk of course should it become necessary to leave. The clerk of the course lines up the swimmers for each event / heat about 4 to 5 events in advance. The clerk of course will not look for your swimmers outside of the team area. Be aware of which events / heats your swimmers are in be sure they lined up on deck for the events. The clerk of course is not responsible for missed events and swimmers cannot make up missed events.

Everyone is encouraged to cheer for Poolesville swimmers and to have fun. In addition, all swimmers are responsible for the clean-up of the pool and surrounding area at the end of the meet.

THE MEETS, EVENTS

The events are open medleys, individual medleys, free style, back stroke, breast stroke, butterfly stroke, free style medley. There are four relays at each dual meet: the Boys and Girls Open Medleys (events #3 and #4) and the Boys and Girls Graduated Relays (events #49 and #50). The Open Medleys are open to the fastest swimmers regardless of age. The stroke order is as follows: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle. Prior to the start of the dual meet, the coaches choose the participants. The age group order for the two Graduated Relays are: 9-10 (50M), 11-12 (50M), 13-14 (50M), and 8 & Under (25M). The participants for the graduated relays are determined by the two fastest freestyle swimmers in each age group during the dual meet each week.

Each individual event will be scored for the first five finishers, points scored as follows:

- 6 points for 1st place
- 4 points for 2nd place
- 3 points for 3rd place

- 2 points for 4th place
- 1 point for 5th place

Medley relay events and graduated relay events will be scored for the first three finishing teams, points scored as follows:

- 8 points for 1st place
- 4 points for 2nd place
- 2 points for 3rd place

Any meet delays, cancellations and rescheduling will be communicated via the Team App. The most common cause of delay or cancellation is bad weather. If lightening is in the area, we must exit the pool deck completely and we cannot re-enter until 30 minutes after last confirmed lightening.

“A” MEETS – SATURDAY MORNINGS

The MCSL Meet Schedule is available on the Piranhas website – www.poolesvilleswimteam.us. Five dual meets are held on consecutive Saturday mornings. MCSL Saturday morning “A” meets start at 9:00 am; however, swimmers are expected to be at the pool before the meet starts for set up and warm up. Instructions for each meet will differ for each meet; watch for instructions from the coaches.

The coaches decide who will be in the “A” meet lineup (including each stroke and relays) based each swimmer’s upon most recent time (either at time trials or a meet). Typically, this will be the three fastest swimmers (or the six fastest in freestyle) who are legal for each event. However, the coaches have discretion in selecting “A” meet swimmers and can take into consideration various factors including swimmer’s participation at practices and swimmer’s dedication. The swimmers for the “A” meet will change each week based on the results accomplished at the previous “B” meet and swimmers who are available to swim. We will post the names of swimmers for “A” meets on the Team App of each week. Please immediately let the coaches know if your swimmer is NOT available.

A swimmer in an “A” meet may participate in a maximum of five events, including IM and relays, and may not swim in more than three individual strokes (individual strokes include freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly). The combination may include:

- 3 individual strokes, 1 individual medley (IM), and 1 relay

- 2 individual strokes, 1 IM and 2 relays
- 3 individual strokes and 2 relays

“B” MEETS – WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

The “B” meets are held on Wednesday evenings. Time to be announced for each meet. All swimmers are eligible to swim in the “B” meets as long as they have mastered the mechanics of the specific stroke (as determined by the coaches) and satisfies the other rules relative to swimming and placing at immediately prior A meet. Swimmers that earn points in two or more events in the “A” meet cannot earn ribbons for any event in the “B” meet for the same week. (See the discussion below on exhibition swimming for B meets). A general rule of thumb is that a swimmer may only swim each stroke once per week. However, there are certain exceptions to this rule (e.g., disqualifications, exhibition swims, etc.). Please see your “A” and “B” Representatives with any questions.

The coaches encourage swimmers wishing to swim in each "B" meet to sign up using google docs on the Team App. Signs may also be made in the “B” meet book at the pool during practices on Monday morning, Monday night, and Tuesday morning. Signs up must be received by Tuesday at noon in order to be included in the line-up for the Wednesday “B” meet.

Exhibition swimming for “B” meets. Exhibition swims are only permitted at the B meets and are solely as the head coach’s discretion. A Swimmer may only swim exhibition in an event that he/she did not swim in the previous Saturday “A” meet. An exhibition swim does not count as a MCSL dual meet swim to qualify for the division championship meet (Divisionals) and cannot be used to seed a swimmer in Divisionals. Exhibition swimmers may be required wear an orange swim cap.

MEET ETIQUETTE

Meets are FUN! Everyone is encouraged to cheer for all swimmers. There are several rules that must be followed to ensure fairness:

- As a courtesy, swimmers should wait in the water at the finish of a race until all other swimmers have finished. Be quiet at the start of each race.
- Do not talk to meet officials during the meet. Questions and/or concerns should be brought to the attention of our “A” and “B” Representatives.

- Do not obstruct the view of meet officials, especially stroke and turn judges.
- Respect the team areas. Share the chairs. Clean up.
- Smoking is prohibited on the deck, in the locker rooms, in spectator areas and in all areas used by the swimmers during the meet or warm-ups.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

There are many reasons for the disqualification of a swimmer. Please see [2021-handbook.pdf \(mcsl.org\)](#)

MEET AWARDS

For “A” meets, ribbons in individual events are awarded for the first six places with duplicates for ties. For relays, ribbons for the first four places with duplicates for ties. For “B” meets, ribbons in individual events are awarded for the first eight places with duplicates for ties.

TEAM ADMINISTRATION

The Western County Outdoor Pool is owned and operated by the Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD). The Poolesville Piranhas are sponsored by the Aquatics Department of MCRD. MCRD provides the pool facility, hires the coaches and pays the coaches’ salaries, pays the Piranhas’ MCSL dues, and provides “A” ribbons for our meets. The registration fee as determined by MCRD goes directly to MCRD to pay for these items. All other operations and activities of Piranhas and associated costs are the responsibility of Piranhas and its volunteers.

OFFICIALS CLINICS

Every meet must have starters (2), stroke-and-turn judges(2) and referees (2) who have been trained and certified at a clinic. It is strongly urged that as many parents as possible attend at least one clinic. Clinics last approximately two hours. Information is available on the MCSL website at www.mcsl.org.

DONATIONS

Piranhas have added expenses that are not covered by the county. Funds collected are used for additional place ribbons not supplied by the county, all “B” meet ribbons, starting equipment, end-of-season awards and trophies, pep rally supplies, automation equipment and supplies, and team building activities. Please consider donating to our team! Donations can

be made to help support concessions, for individual events or directly to the team. We do team fundraising and encourage all parents to help support our team!

VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers are critical to the success of the swim season. Each family is expected to participate in events and activities during the season, including volunteering during at least three meets per swim season.

Without sufficient volunteers, meets will be cancelled. Volunteers needed for dual swim meets include:

Position	Home Team	Visiting Team
Certified Referee	1	
Certified Starter		1
Certified stroke and turn	2	2
Announcer	1	
Clerk of Course, Head	1	
Clerk of Course, Assistant		1
Head Timer	1	
Assistant Head Timer		1
Timers	9 (A meets) 12 (B Meets)	9 (A Meets) 12 (B Meets)
Scorer		1
Computer Operator	1	
Verifiers	1	1
Runner	1	
Ribbon Writers	1	1
Concessions	6	
Hospitality	1	

There are a number of “behind-the-scenes” positions that must be filled. See the www.poolesvilleswimteam.us for open positions or email A Meet or B Meet Representatives for information.

TIMERS

Please sign up to be a timer at a swim meet!! This is an extremely important job for which accuracy and consistency are vital. Below is a list of points to remember while serving as a timer.

- Timers should assure that their watches are functioning properly at all times during the meet by:

 - Checking for accuracy at the starter's time check.

 - Watching for proper operation throughout the meet.

- Timers should look at the starter system and start their watches at the sign of the flash – not by the sound. Start your watch even if there is no swimmer in your lane.

- Before the end of each race, timers should position themselves directly at the end of the pool, overlooking the finish line in order to closely observe the swimmer's finish. Watch for underwater touches.

- The watch should be stopped when any part of the swimmer's body touches the solid wall or breaks the plane. It is not the responsibility of the lane timers to judge if the finish touch meets the requirements of the appropriate stroke finish rule.

- If during an event, a timer discovers that he/she failed to properly start the watch, or that the watch is not functioning properly, the timer should immediately raise their hand to notify the head or assistant timer.

- One timer in each lane will be designated as recorder. The recorder shall be responsible for the following:
 - o Determination that the proper swimmer is in his lane and that relay swimmers are swimming in the order listed on the lane timer's card.
 - o Determination of and recording of all manual watch times.

- All lane timers shall promptly report their times to the recorder and present their watches for inspection, if requested. Do not clear your watch until the head timer gives the command to "clear all watches."

PRACTICE SCHEDULE AND POLICIES

The practice schedule is located on the website. Swimmers are encouraged to attend practices on a regular basis. Swimmers should be on time for practice. This means being on deck and ready to swim at the scheduled time. Practice will be held during inclement weather unless lightning has been spotted, thunder has been heard, or rain is so heavy you cannot see the bottom of the pool. If practice is canceled, an email will be sent to the Piranhas distribution list. If you find that you are not receiving team emails, please check your spam folders.

Parents are not permitted on deck during practices unless there is an emergency. Please wait in the snack bar area during practice and hold questions for the coaching staff until after practice. Piranhas “A” and “B” Representatives are available to answer any parent questions.

END-OF-SEASON CELEBRATION AND AWARDS

At the end of the season, the Piranhas will hold an end of the year celebration. All swimmers and their families are invited to attend. Awards are given to swimmers for their accomplishments and contributions to Piranhas.

SWIMMING EVENTS DURING THE SEASON

- Dual Meets: The regular MCSL “A” and “B” meets. Two teams compete, swimming a specified order of events.
- Relay Carnival: Each MCSL Division hosts a Relay Carnival in the middle of the swim season. All six teams in each division race one another in special relay events. We also participate in a “B” Relay Carnival with two other teams from our “B” meet division.
- Divisionals: An MCSL meet at the end of the season in which the six teams in each division race their two fastest swimmers in each event. Final selection of the swimmers 12 for this event is at the coaching staff’s discretion, and may only include swimmers who swam in and obtained their time during an “A” meet for the current season.
- All-Star Relays: An identical meet to the Relay Carnival, except that it is made up of those relay teams placing first in their respective MCSL division Relay Carnival, or had the fastest time during the season in the 200 Medley (open) and the 175 Free Relay.
- Individual All-Stars: An invitational meet for the 16 fastest swimmers in each event from the entire MCSL. A list of All-Star nominating times can be found at <http://www.mcsl.org/allstar>.
- B Superstars: Swimmers are eligible to swim in B Superstars if he/she did not swim in two or more events in Divisionals. Swimmers must also meet the “no slower than” requirement established for each event.

TEAM APPAREL AND SPIRIT WEAR

There is no mandatory team swimsuit. Each year, swimmers are provided an option to purchase an unofficial team swimsuit. These swimsuits can be ordered through our spirit wear representatives or may be purchased independently.

Eligible Swimsuits -- MCSL follows USA Swimming rules with regard to eligible swimsuits for competition. In general, these requirements state that swimsuits for men may not extend above the navel or below the knee and for women may not cover the neck or extend past the shoulders or below the knee. No zippers or other fastening devices are allowed, except for a waist tie on a brief or jammer. Suits must be of textile material and must not be made of any rubberized type of material such as polyurethane or neoprene. The swimmer must wear only one swimsuit in one or two pieces except it is permissible for the swimmer to wear a single set of garments underneath his or her competition swimsuit for modesty and/or privacy reasons. Exemptions to this rule will be granted only for conflicts due to a swimmer's religious beliefs or medical conditions. All requests for an exemption must be submitted to the Meet Referee by the swimmer, coach and/or team representative prior to participation in any MCSL sanctioned event for consideration.

Swimmers have the option of wearing a swim cap. Team swim caps are available for purchase from the spirit wear representatives. Swim caps may not have any advertising or logos printed on them other than Piranhas.

Items are available before and during the season and are sold by the team as a fundraiser. <https://piranhas.spiritsale.com>

TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

The Piranhas have a Team App and a Facebook page. You can request access to both. We make every effort to cross post information. The access and information is managed and posted by the admins for each platform. Admins are current coaches or select volunteers who maintain active accounts on the platform. The platforms are for team announcements and information. Be respectful of your fellow swimmers and parents. Admins may remove any content and remove any user.

To contact the head coach and A Rep, use the email listed on the website.

TIPS FOR SWIMMERS AND PARENTS

- Get plenty of rest before your meet. Heat and sun are especially tiring for swimmers.

- Be early for meet warm-ups and practices! Work hard at all practices.
- Know your event number and report to the clerk of course when called.
- Stay in the Piranhas area! Show some team spirit by cheering and supporting your teammates and be proud to be a Piranha.
- Support your teammates. Show some spirit! Stay until the end of the meet to cheer on your teammates even if your events are completed.
- Communicate with your coaches and Piranhas representatives; inform them of illness, camp, vacations, etc., giving written notice when possible. This will help our coaches when preparing line-ups for meets and the Relay Carnival.
- Sign up for the strokes you want to swim in Wednesday's "B" meet by noon on Tuesday.
- Parent participation and support is important to ensure a fun and memorable experience for the swimmers.
- Diet affects a swimmer's performance. Consider eating a light meal one-hour prior to warm-up and LIGHT snacks between events. During a meet, drink water or a sports drink between events.

SWIM BAG CHECK LIST

- one extra swim suit
- two pairs of goggles
- two towels
- two swim caps
- water bottle
- snacks
- dry/warm clothes (sweatshirt, robe, t-shirt)
- sunscreen/insect repellent
- books and games
- extra hair ties
- plastic bag for wet items or trash

Have Fun!!! Swim Fast!!!