



Martinsburg Marlins Swim Team Parent Handbook

MESSAGE TO THE TEAM: It is quite possible your summertime activity will evolve into a life-long passion. If you are new to the team, we extend a warm welcome to you and must let you know that your child may not be the same by the end of the season. Your swimmer will not only possess skills to swim faster but will likely finish the season with an increased level of self-confidence, a love for swimming and the pleasure of new-found friendships formed by this very memorable summertime experience. If you are returning to the team, you may have discovered what being part of the Marlins is all about: personal achievements from working hard each day, building great friendships and having a lot of fun! Welcome back. We're happy to have you join us for another season on the team!

MARLINS SUCCESS THROUGH PARENT PARTICIPATION: Every family is expected to participate at each meet in which your swimmer is competing. We understand this can be an inconvenience, however, meets are run by volunteers only. If you are unable to volunteer your time, you must find your own replacement. Your replacement can be a grandparent, nanny, babysitter, teenage child (age 14 or older) or another responsible person. Volunteer descriptions and additional details on how to sign up can be found later in this document. We thank you in advance for offering your time and talents to make this season a success!

MARLINS SPIRIT: Building up our swimmers' confidence is something we can all take part in. Everyone affiliated with the team should take an active role in encouraging all Marlins to do their best during every team event, whether it is a swim meet or a daily practice. Please try to become acquainted with other swimmers and their families as we will spend a great deal of time with each other this summer and will have the most fun cheering our Marlins on together.

MARLINS CONDUCT: Marlins pride themselves on good sportsmanship and all-around good character. Swimmers, family members and guests attending team events will be held accountable for their conduct. We expect all adults to be positive role models for our team and encourage good behavior from all children.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Martinsburg Marlins is dedicated to train swimmers for championship-style, competitive swim meets using proper form and technique in a disciplined, yet fun and encouraging environment.

ABOUT THE MARLINS: The Martinsburg Marlins is a competitive travel team which trains daily at Lambert Pool to compete in the Mid-Atlantic Summer Swim League. The team is open to the first 125 boys and girls from ages 5-18 years prior to June 1st of that swim season. High school graduates may participate the summer immediately following their senior year if they have not attended college full-time or participated on a collegiate team prior to June 1st that season. To be considered for the competitive swim team, swimmers 5-8 years of age must independently swim 25 meters and swimmers 9-18 years of age must independently swim 50 meters. Assignments to skill-appropriate practice groups and ability to compete is at the discretion of the coaching staff.

MARLINS HISTORY: The Martinsburg Marlins Summer Swim Team has been a part of Berkeley County since Lambert Pool first opened in 1975. Each year, the team is run by a volunteer board of directors committed to providing a fun, encouraging environment to all young swimmers in the community.

MARLINS PHILOSOPHY: Although competitive swimming is a team sport, victory cannot be determined solely by points scored during swim meets. True success lies within each individual's desire to achieve better results every time he or she enters the water.

SWIM PRACTICES AND ATTENDANCE: Your time and effort in getting your swimmers to their assigned practice on a regular basis on time is greatly appreciated. Practices will be conducted Mondays-Saturdays. We anticipate swimmer attendance at every practice, but are very flexible with camp, vacation and work schedules. Attendance every day is not a prerequisite for a successful swim team experience. Not being in town for part of this very short season should not discourage your participation. The team wants everyone! It is however a league requirement for the swimmer to participate in at least 1 meet during the season to participate in a championship meet.

For the safety of our swimmers, only coaches, captains and swimmers participating in practice are allowed in the grass area behind the starting blocks and on the pool deck. Standing in/near the bathroom entrance to observe practices is not permitted. It is imperative that parents and siblings remain in the pavilion or the grass area on the pavilion side to limit distractions and maintain a safe environment for all swimmers and coaches. Parents of younger swimmers, such as our Mini Marlins group, may receive permission to be on deck on a case-by-case basis, but they must receive permission from the coaches beforehand. Please know that our coaches are available for questions and concerns before and after practices only. During practices, the coaches attention must remain on the swimmers currently in practice for safety. Coaches should be consulted for all swim related questions (practice group assignments, progress, stroke concerns, events, etc). A board member will be available between 8-10am. Or by email anytime. Martinsburg.marlins@gmail.com Board members handle the administrative affairs of the team (registration/waitlist questions, SwimTopia opt-ins, volunteer meet duties and meet administration, team events/celebrations, etc).

INCLEMENT WEATHER: Practices and meets are not necessarily canceled due to rain, however, during inclement weather such as severe low temperatures, lightning, thunder, and severe rain or wind storms, practices or meets may be canceled by coaches or officials. Cancellations will be announced as early as possible and through SwimTopia which automatically sends notifications to its subscribers.

Our team posts the air and water temperatures each morning on our SwimTopia homepage. If you have a swimmer who does not tolerate cold, please check the temperatures there before practice and come prepared with warm clothes, towels and blankets for any time out of the water.

PRACTICE GROUPS

All swimmers will be evaluated the first week (May 30-June 3) by a coach and assigned to a practice group that matches their age and ability. Guidelines for practice groups (listed below) allow our coaches to work more effectively within their practices with a cohesive group of swimmers.

The Marlins coaches have each swimmer's best interest and long-term development in mind when assigning a practice group. The coaches consider the age and physical ability of the swimmer as well as the emotional readiness of each child for the training required of the higher practice group.

Please note that the prerequisites for each group are only guidelines. The coaches use their experience and judgment to determine the practice group most appropriate for the swimmer and his/her long-term development and enjoyment of the sport. To support the ongoing training of all of our athletes, our coaches have designed each practice group to produce optimum growth and development. Therefore, swimmers who are unable to meet the minimal requirements for their practice group may be moved to a practice group that better accommodates their attendance and training needs.

Practice Groups & Times

Competitive Team:

Master Marlins (M-F 6:15AM-8:00AM, Sat 9:00AM-10:45AM)

Master Marlins are advanced swimmers of at or near high school age who are efficient in the individual medley with

proper stroke transitions. This athlete is proficient in the appropriate starts, transitions and flip or open turns associated with each stroke and every competitive event. A swimmer in this group can continuously swim 1,000 meters with flip turns.

Sharks (M-F 7:45-9:00AM, Sat. 9:00AM-10:45AM)

Sharks are intermediate level swimmers efficient in all 4 competitive strokes using streamline and flip turns consistently. These athletes make successful head-first entry from the starting blocks and can swim 200 meters freestyle consecutively.

Stingrays (M-F 8:45-10:00 AM, Sat. 9:00-10:45 AM)

Stingrays are beginning competitive swimmers who demonstrate efficient streamline with dolphin kicks and are familiar with all 4 competitive strokes. A swimmer at this level can independently swim 25 meters (8 and under) or 50 meters (age 9 and up).

Pre-Competitive Team:

Mini Marlins I (M-F 7:45AM-8:45AM)

Mini Marlins II (M-F 9:00AM-10:00AM)

Mini Marlins are the earliest skill level of pre-competitive swimmers who train specifically to master the freestyle and backstroke competitive swimming styles as well as practice competition techniques involving entries, finishes and exits expected during a swim meet. They are of about kindergarten age or older, and are able to follow directions and are comfortable in the water.

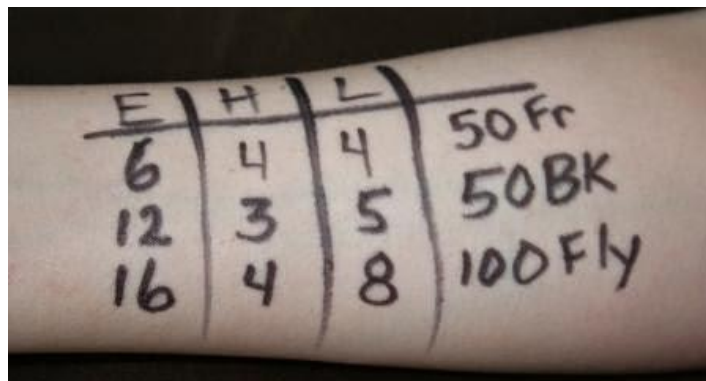
The Pre-competitive Mini Marlins program is focused on the immediate goal of transitioning directly onto the competition team once the swimmer is capable of swimming 25 yards independently. If a swimmer transitions from Mini Marlins II onto the competitive team, the parent will assume all the volunteer requirements associated with a competitive swim parent.

Swim Meets

Swimmers are required to “opt-in” to swim meets and declare if they will be participating as well as select their desired events on SwimTopia 48 hrs prior to the meet. Coaches make the final decision on meet event entries, including relay participation.

Most swim meets are held on weeknights, typically Mondays and Thursdays with an occasional Saturday meet. Arrival times are different depending on the warm-up and start times assigned by the hosting team. Swimmers should arrive by **5:45pm for home meets** to be ready for their 6pm warm up before the visiting team arrives.

All competitive swimmers swim at least one, but not more than four events per swim meet. The coach will post a roster, but reserves the right to make last-minute changes to the line-up on the day of the meet due to the needs of the team.



There are 90 events in each meet, in five age divisions. The roster will be posted by the coach, usually on a fence or wall at the meet. Find the events that your swimmer will be participating in and write that information in permanent marker on their arm so that they can read it. (Veteran parents are a good source to ask for guidance on how this works.)

You can track the events your swimmer will be participating in on the SwimTopia app, as well as their times throughout the season. Please note any last minute changes to the meet line up may not be reflected on SwimTopia.

Coaches, team captains and clerks of the course may help alert swimmers to upcoming races, but ultimately, the **parents of younger swimmers are responsible to line up for event 3-5 events prior to their event.** Older swimmers should be capable of lining themselves up with the clerk of course to swim their events. It is imperative that swimmers be ON TIME for each of their events as they will not be delayed for tardy swimmers.

Prior to the start of any meet, short meetings will be conducted for officials and timers. Everyone who is participating as an official or a timer for that meet MUST attend. During this time, stopwatches will be checked and assigned along with clipboards and pencils.

If a swimmer has completed all their assigned events prior to the conclusion of the meet, that **swimmer should check with the coaches in order to be dismissed to leave the meet.** The coach may need a swimmer who finishes early to swim in another event. Please do not leave without a coach's permission.

Please note that smoking is prohibited everywhere except for the parking lot. This is essential to the health of our swimmers and is stated in the policies of the Lambert Pool.

WHAT TO BRING:

- At least (2) towels, one to sit on and one to dry off with.
- An extra shirt, sweatshirt, sweat pants to cover up with between events.
- Lawn chairs or sitting blankets for outdoor meets, Sunblock/Umbrellas/Canopy.
- Games, crafts or books for entertainment during long events.
- Money to purchase food and drinks from the concession stand or food and drinks from home.

DISQUALIFICATIONS (DQ's)

If a swimmer is disqualified for an event, an official may speak to the swimmer at the end of the race/heat. An explanation will be given as to why the DQ was given so that mistakes can be corrected and the swimmer will learn from the experience. That swim will not count for ribbons or placement. Swimmers of all ages and abilities receive DQ's and it should be viewed as an opportunity to correct and fine-tune techniques. Please hold any questions or concerns regarding DQ's until after the meet when the official and/or coach can address your questions.

ALL-STAR CHAMPIONSHIP MEET: Any swimmer who meets the qualifying times for an event, will automatically qualify to compete against their peers in a championship setting at the end of the season. Swimmers may qualify during regular dual meets, virtual meets or at the Last Chance Qualifying Meet the week before the All-Star Meet. Qualifying times are set by the league and will be made available to families on SwimTopia as soon as they are published.