



2009 Somerset Swim Team Handbook
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**FOR CURRENT INFORMATION BE SURE AND CHECK
 THE SOMERSET REC CLUB WEBSITE
www.somersetrec.org**

POOL OFFICE 747-5575

Web Site: www.somersetrec.org

Head Coach

Erica Sorensen

Email: esorensen85@gmail.com

Assistant Coaches

Chris Bendix

Email: bendixcd@whitman.edu

Danica Mock

Email: dmock@tulane.edu

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Email: ali.jensenn@gmail.com

Board Representative & Swim Team Chair

Kim Smerekanych

425-746-9581 (home)

425-445-8634 (cell)

Email: swimteam@somersetrec.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Volunteer Coordinator

Barb Lall, Traci Grouws, Julie Waddell

Stroke and Turn

Paul Jensen

Announcer

Jim Umbeck

Timers "A" Meets

Timers "B" Meets

Ribbons

TBD

Meet Scoring

Linda Shigeta

Data Base Coordinator

TBD

Social Coordinator

Barb Lall, Traci Grouws, Julie Waddell

Somerset Swim Team Philosophy

The Somerset Swim Team program works to provide a positive learning and growing atmosphere for all team members. The coaches constantly work to help swimmers enhance all four competitive strokes, improve racing techniques, build self confidence, become good team members, and learn

that winning and succeeding are not always the same thing. The Somerset Swim Team hopes to provide motivation, instruction, fun times, and support for all team members.

Top 10 Reasons to Join Somerset Swim Team

- 10) See your friends all summer long.
- 9) Donut Friday.
- 8) Listening to Jim Umbeck announce a meet is more fun than a night at the improv!
- 7) Sharks and Minnows, Animal Ball & crazy water games you've never heard of before.
- 6) Co-ed workouts... how many sports offer that?
- 5) Racing is fun!
- 4) Eat pancakes at the end of the season!
- 3) Learn to swim now... become a SRC lifeguard or coach when you're older.
- 2) BBQ Burgers always taste better at swim meets.
- 1) Help Somerset as they take on Division 3!

What's New in 2009?

- New Coaches (check website for their bios):
 - Head Coach – Erica Sorensen
 - Assistant Coaches – Chris Bendix, Danica Mock, Alison Jensen
- Somerset has moved to Division 3. We'll be competing against:
 - Maple Hills
 - Kingsgate Royals
 - Kingsgate Gators
 - Overlake
- 8&U and 9-10 have longer workouts. The workout times no longer overlap. Please be prompt because the coaches will start the workouts immediately.
- The swim suit fitting is not on Opening Day. It's on Tuesday, May 12th, from 4:30 – 6:30.
- The Parent Meeting is Mandatory: Tuesday, May 12th: 6:30 – 7:30.
- There's a free Starts & Turns Clinic on Thursday, May 14th – 7:00 – 8:00.
- Coaches will have office hours. Check the website for times. Please do not talk to them during practice.
- Coaches are working on the lineups over the weekend.

- Lineups for both the A & B meets will be posted at the pool by Monday morning before workouts
- Vacation schedule Format – There will be a sign-out sheet for each swim meet. You must add your name to each swim meet that your swimmer will not attend. Their name must be on it by the Friday before the meet so the coaches can pull this sheet and use it to create the lineup over the weekend. We are no longer using the old spreadsheet format.
- T-Shirts – They're red with a new black logo.
- The Water Park Event is following Photo Day on Friday, June 26th. That's the first day of Summer Break.
- No A Champs Meet at KCAC in Federal Way this year only. Instead the A Champs will take place at the Prelims meets. This is a one-time only occurrence because KCAC is hosting two very large swim meets: 2009 US Open Swimming Championships (International Competition) and the US Swimming Junior National Championships). These are meets that you have to put a bid on way in advance and it's very hard to get to host these meets. So this will most likely never happen again. Your child may enjoy going to watch one of those competitions.

What's not new in 2009?

- SWIMSUITS & CAPS!!! Come to the Swim Suit Fitting on Tuesday, May 12th, from 4:30 – 6:30 or just wear last year's swim suits or you can buy a plain black swim suit.
- Time Trials on 6/4 is for younger swimmers only: 11-12, 9-10, 8 & U.
- Heat winner prizes at home meets!
- Best Time Awards!
- Track your own Best Times with Best Times Sheets.

Minimum Requirements for Swim Team Members

To become a member of the Somerset Swim Team, swimmers under eight years old must be able to swim one length of the pool (25 yards). Swimmers nine and over must be able to swim 50 yards. Judgments will be made by the coaches.

A Placement Test (Date and Time TBD – check website) will be required of all children with no previous swim team experience. It will be the decision of the coaches whether or not the swim team is appropriate for each child.

Swimmers that are 8 years old or younger and do not meet the above criteria or who are otherwise not ready to swim competitively with the team will be eligible to participate in the **Sharkies** program. **Sharkies** are swim

team members 8-years-old or younger. Swimmers work with coaches and develop the four competitive strokes. They must be able to swim the width of the pool. This program is limited to 20 swimmers. Sharkies are rarely placed in swim meets.

Parent Participation Requirements

Many people are surprised when they hear that it takes close to 50 volunteers to run a home swim meet! Somerset will be hosting or attending meets each week for six weeks. We will need help with scoring (data entry), timing, officiating and concessions. Additionally, the younger swimmers will need assistance from adults in getting to their relays and individual events. Families are required to volunteer for 6 shifts:

- 4 volunteer shifts in DUAL meets (timing, scoring(data entry) or officiating (stroke and turn judge, starter)
- 2 food items at Dual meets (i.e., 12 baked potatoes, 1 fruit salad, 1 pasta salad, 2 dozen cookies, or 2 dozen brownies)
- 1 volunteer shift in a CHAMPIONSHIP meet or an extra DUAL meet shift (Your choice!):
 - Saturday, July 18th: B Champs
 - Monday, July 20th: Senior Finals @ Mercer Island Beach Club
 - Tuesday, July 21st: Junior Girls Finals @ Edgebrook
 - Wed, July 22nd: Junior Boys Finals @ Mercer Island Country Club

Please check the website www.somersetrec.org under "Swim Team" "Volunteer Schedule" to verify the volunteer shifts you have signed up for.

No experience is required for the jobs listed above. Classes are available for stroke and turn judging and starting. Volunteers new to timing will have a no-pressure opportunity to learn at the time trials meet before the season begins.

Swim team is unlike other sports your children may participate in, such as baseball or soccer. The swim team simply cannot function without reliable help for general organization and to run meets. Accordingly, if you cannot commit to fulfilling the volunteer responsibilities of a Somerset Swim Team parent, please do not expect that your son or daughter will be participating in swim meets.

Fees

Swim Team membership cost is \$110 for each swimmer. These fees go to offset expenses such as Midlakes membership, coaches' salaries, ribbons and printing. An additional \$75 volunteer deposit will be charged. This deposit will be refunded to parents who complete their work shifts. This will be done on an all-or-nothing basis. This policy has been instituted because the Club must hire persons to work meets if parents are unable or unwilling

to fulfill their obligations. This in no way means you can pay the \$75.00 and not volunteer. You must sign up for your volunteer spots if you want your child to participate in swim team.

Communication

Communication is key to a happy and successful season. Somerset's Swim Team Communication:

- Our website (www.somersetrec.org) is constantly updated. Check it regularly!
- Swim Team Coordinator and Swim Coaches will send emails.
- Do not interrupt swim coaches during swim practices or meets. Their eyes need to be on the swimmers for safety reasons. Plus there are many ears listening during practice.
- How do you reach coaches? Email them or talk during office hours.
- Office Hours: Posted on website.
- Questions or Complaints: Contact the swim team coordinator, Kim Smerekanych: swimteam@somersetrec.org or (425)746-9581.
- Vacation Schedule: Please update sheets before Friday.

It is your responsibility to check the website and stay informed. If there is a sudden change, a note will be posted on the front door of the pool as well as an email sent out, if time permits. Also, you will receive various notices from the Swim Team Coordinator via email, please check it regularly. Head Coach Erica Sorensen will send out emails as well.

Swim team coordinators, coaches and staff/manager are usually very easy to get a hold of. They are often at the pool at meets or can be phoned or emailed. Please limit communication with the coaches until after the conclusion of practice. It has been found that small issues can be handled much more effectively if they are not allowed to grow into big issues. So, please contact the swim team coordinator if questions or problems come up.

Swim Team Coordinator: swimteam@somersetrec.org

Vacation Schedules

*****READ THIS***** IT'S A NEW PROCESS *****

1. Instead of using a spreadsheet, we are now using sign-out sheets for each individual swim meet. The top of the page will say the swim meet and the date and location. You must write your child's name below if they will not be attending that meet. There will be a separate page for each swim meet.
2. You must write your swimmers name before the Friday of the previous week. The coaches have kindly offered to create the lineups over the

weekend. So they will be removing the vacation sign-out sheets on Friday.

3. The lineups for both meets will be ready by Monday morning.

Work Out Structure

Workouts are a very important part of swim team participation. Workouts will be held beginning May 18th four days a week in the evening until June 25th. Morning workouts begin June 29th and go to July 17th. Workout times are as follows:

May 18 th to June 25 th Monday through Thursday		June 29 th to July 17 th *** Monday through **Friday	
Sharkies	4:30 – 5:00 pm	15 & Over	7:00-8:00 am
8 & Under	5:00-5:45 pm	13-14	7:45-8:45 am
9-10	5:45-6:45 pm	11-12	8:30-9:30 am
11-12	6:30-7:30 pm	9-10	9:15-10:15 am
13-14	7:15-8:15 pm	8 & Under	10:00-11:00 am
15 & Over	8:00-9:00 pm	Sharkies	11:00-11:30 am

*** There will be workouts for swimmers qualifying for the prelims/Finals during the week of July 20th – 22nd. Workout times will be TBD during the morning hours.

Please be on time to workouts unless you make prior arrangements with the coaches. Please note that 8&Unders and 9-10 workouts no longer overlap. Please be on time to workout because coaches will start the swimmers immediately at their start time.

The workouts may be run in a variety of ways. The coaches will be responsible for all activities associated with the workouts and may tailor the difficulty and duration for each group. In general workouts consist of dry land training, a long warm-up swim, and then shorter sets. Coaches will work on technique in each stroke, starts and turns, as well as behavior and teamwork. There will be a strong emphasis on stroke technique and drills this season.

If your child will be in camp and can not attend their regularly scheduled workout, please contact the swim coach to figure out a better practice time during the camp.

If your child is a year-round club swimmer, please attend the age-appropriate workout and the coaches will determine if a change should be made.

Private Lessons

Private lessons will be available from any of the coaches or other Somerset staff member. These lessons have proven to be effective for rapid

improvement in stroke techniques, starts and turns. It is up to the swimmer and parent to arrange times for private lessons with the staff member. The cost is \$20.00/half hour. There will be a binder with private lesson sign-ups in the office.

Competition - Swim Meets

Swim team members are expected to compete in the swim meets throughout the summer season, beginning mid-June and ending the final week of July. Unless you specify, your child may be placed in both the A and B meet. Please try to plan your vacations keeping your commitment to swim team in mind. In the event you are unable to make it to a meet, it is imperative to sign out on the Vacation Sign out sheet before Friday of the prior week. The coaches will be working on the lineups during the weekend so it is important that they know who will be swimming by Friday.

What do you do at a swim meet?

- On Arrival: Check in with your swim coach. Find the swim coach carrying a clipboard.
- Double-check the posted line-up to see if your swimmer's events have changed. *(Remember: Events are subject to change that's why you always check the final posting on the afternoon of the swim meet).*
- Write down your event number, heat and lane on your arm with a Sharpie. Don't forget to bring a Sharpie!
- Warm-up:
 - Home meet warm-ups start at 4:45
 - Away meet warm-ups start at 5:15
- Swim meets start at 6:00 sharp!
- Find out your time from the Timers.
- Talk to your coach after every race. Your coach watches you swim and she will have helpful advice after your race. Tell your coach your time and you'll get a sucker!
- Shake your opponents hand after each race. Good sportsmanship is a must!
- Find your relay teammates well in advance of your relay.

Time Trials

- 13 & Older Swimmers will have Time Trials during their regularly scheduled workout time. Check the date on the website.
 - Events include:
 - 100 IM
 - 50 Free, 100 Free, 200 Free, 500 Free
 - 50 Back
 - 50 Breast
 - 50 Fly
- 8 & Under, 9-10, 11-12 Time Trials: **Thursday, June 4th.**

- This Time Trial is run like a regular meet to give each swimmer and parent experience swimming in a meet and running a meet.
- Each swimmer will swim in the same heat and lane for each event.
- Events include (listed in order):
 - 9-10 100 IM
 - 11 – 12 100 IM
 - 8 & U 25 Free
 - 10 & U 50 Free
 - 11 – 12 50 Free
 - 8 & U 25 Back
 - 9-10 50 Back
 - 11-12 50 Back
 - 8 & U 25 Breast
 - 9-10 50 Breast
 - 11-12 50 Breast
 - 8 & U 25 Fly
 - 9-10 25 Fly
 - 11-12 50 Fly
- This is an intra-squad meet (only Somerset swimmers participate.) It is a great opportunity for new swimmers to get the feel of what a meet is like. Also, it allows the coaches to get times for all the swimmers so they can place the swimmers in the best events. All swimmers should plan on attending this meet.

Dual Meets

There are two dual meets per week for the five weeks of swim team. Each week includes an "A" and "B" meets. The coaches will assign swimmers events in either meet or sometimes both. It is the parent's responsibility to find out which meet their child is swimming in.

Friday of the Week Prior – Swim Meet Vacation Schedule Sheet pulled

Weekend Prior – Coaches work on lineup

Monday Morning – Lineups for both meets posted

Meet Days: Tuesday & Thursday

Workouts: Workouts are at their regularly scheduled time

Warm-ups: Start at 4:45 for home meets, 5:15 for away meets

Meet Start Time: 6:00

Approximate Meet End Time: 9:00

Please allow the appropriate travel time and preparation time for the swimmer to be in the water at those specific warm-up times.

Coaches Philosophy for creating our line-up

- With 160 swimmers and limited pool space, it's tricky to create a line-up that makes everyone happy.
- Coaches try to give swimmers as many swims as possible- both relay swims and individual events
- Coaches will use the maximum amount of exhibition heats in each meet to ensure the maximum amount of individual entries
- Some age groups (usually 8 & Under and 9-10) have so many swimmers that it makes it very hard to give each swimmer more than 2 individual swims per week
- Most Division 4 pools have only 4 lanes, which only allow 2 SRC swimmers to swim in each individual event and 8 SRC swimmers to swim in each relay event.
- We may swim up to 15 Exhibition heats at each swim meet. The coach will try to create as many exhibition heats as possible to allow each swimmer to have more races.
- The coaches are more concerned with scoring points for the team during "A" meets because they count in the division standings.
- Coaches use a software program called Team Manager, which provides reports to ensure that swimmers swim a variety of events throughout the season. These reports will be checked frequently to ensure that swimmers are not swimming in the same events every meet.
- Team Manager also produces reports to help put together relays.
- If a swimmer hasn't mastered a stroke, they will usually not swim it in an "A" meet because of potential disqualifications.
- Note: Disqualifications are a good learning experience! They will be treated as a way to teach the swimmer how to improve their stroke and turns for the future.
- Coaches try to make meets fun for their swimmers and may place swimmers in events will challenge them.
- Please contact swimteam@somersetrec.org if you have any questions or concerns about the lineup.

Championship Meets

Swimmers who surpass the "B-Meet Disqualification Times" are eligible to swim in the Preliminary Championship meet. Those who do not beat these times are eligible to swim in the "B" Champs (also called Divisional Championships) in that event. Swimmers may swim in the Prelims as well as the "B" Champs, but not in the same event. Anyone may choose to swim in the "A Finals" meet rather than the B-Champs. You do not need to have achieved a B-DQ time to enter the A Finals Meet.

This year there will be no A Champs Meet at KCAC in Federal Way. Instead the A Champs will take place at the Prelims meets. The Prelims will now be called "Finals". This is a one-time only occurrence because KCAC is hosting two very large swim meets: 2009 US Open Swimming Championships

(International Competition) and the US Swimming Junior National Championships). These are meets that you have to put a bid on way in advance and it's very hard to get to host these meets. So this will most likely never happen again. Your child may enjoy going to watch one of those competitions:

- 2009 Pacific Northwest Swimming Championships July 23rd – 26th @ KCAC
- 2009 US Open Swimming Championships August 4th – 8th @ KCAC
- 2009 USA Swimming Junior Nationals August 10th – 14th @ KCAC

2009 Midlakes B-Meet Disqualification Times

Swimmers who surpass the "B-Meet Disqualification Times" must swim that event in "A Meets" only. If a swimmer has not met the "B Disqualification Time," then they may swim that event in B meets or A meets.

2009 Midlakes B Disqualification Times

	Yards		Meters		*Yards	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
8 & Under						
100 Medley Relay	1:37.00	1:39.10	1:47.67	1:50.00	1:27.00	1:29.10
25 Free	18.90	19.20	20.98	21.31		
25 Back	23.60	24.90	26.20	27.64		
25 Breast	26.50	26.90	29.42	29.86		
25 Fly	23.60	25.80	26.20	28.64		
100 Free Relay	1:26.30	1:29.30	1:35.79	1:39.12	1:16.30	1:19.30
10 & Under						
100 Medley Relay	1:19.00	1:22.80	1:27.69	1:31.91	1:11.00	1:14.80
100 IM	1:34.50	1:38.20	1:44.90	1:49.00		
50 Free	36.10	36.70	40.07	40.74		
50 Back	44.30	46.70	49.17	51.84		
50 Breast	48.40	50.20	53.72	55.72		
25 Fly	18.80	20.10	20.87	22.31		
200 Free Relay	2:36.10	2:34.30	2:53.27	2:51.27	2:20.10	2:18.30
12 & Under						
200 Medley Relay	2:34.80	2:38.40	2:51.83	2:55.82	2:18.80	2:22.40
100 IM	1:21.90	1:25.30	1:30.91	1:34.68		
50 Free	31.40	33.00	34.85	36.63		
50 Back	38.90	40.90	43.18	45.40		
50 Breast	42.50	44.40	47.18	49.28		
50 Fly	37.40	39.40	41.51	43.73		
200 Free Relay	2:15.70	2:18.10	2:30.63	2:33.29	2:01.70	2:04.10
14 & Under						
200 Medley Relay	2:21.90	2:21.00	2:37.51	2:36.51	2:06.90	2:06.00
100 IM	1:17.00	1:15.50	1:25.25	1:23.81		
50 Free	30.00	28.50	33.30	31.64		
50 Back	36.70	36.20	40.74	40.18		
50 Breast	40.20	39.20	44.62	43.51		
50 Fly	34.20	33.20	37.96	36.85		
200 Free Relay	2:05.70	2:04.10	2:19.53	2:17.75	1:53.70	1:52.10
17 & Under						
200 Medley Relay	2:19.50	2:04.80	2:34.85	2:18.53	2:05.50	1:50.80
100 IM	1:13.90	1:06.80	1:22.03	1:14.15		
100 Free	1:03.70	56.70	1:10.71	1:02.94		
50 Back	35.00	31.60	38.85	35.08		
50 Breast	38.80	34.30	43.07	38.07		
50 Fly	32.30	28.10	35.85	31.19		
200 Free Relay	2:02.80	1:48.60	2:16.31	2:00.55	1:50.80	1:36.60

* If a relay at Division Championship betters this time, they will automatically be entered into League Championship and disqualified from Division Championship.

SWIM MEET SCHEDULE

Date Loc. VS.
6/04 Home Time Trials 8U, 10U, 12U
6/16 Away [Maple Hills](#) (B)
6/18 Home [Maple Hills](#) (A)
6/23 Away [Kingsgate Royals](#) (B)
6/25 Home [Kingsgate Royals](#) (A)
6/30 Home [Kingsgate Gators](#) (B)
7/02 Away [Kingsgate Gators](#) (A)
7/07 Home [Seattle Tennis Club](#) (B)
7/09 Away [Seattle Tennis Club](#) (A)
7/14 Away [Overlake Golf & CC](#) (A)
7/16 Home [Overlake Golf & CC](#) (B)
7/18 Away B-Champs
7/20 Away Sr. Finals, [MI Beach Club](#)
7/21 Away Jr. Girl Finals, [Edgebrook Club](#)
7/22 Away Jr. Boy Finals, [MI Country Club](#)
* * No A-Champs for 2009 Season

* **Note:** **No A-Champs** is a one-time only occurrence because KCAC is hosting the US Open Swimming Championships and the Jr Nationals.

SWIM TEAM SOCIAL EVENTS

Event	Date	Time
Swim Team Signup (open house)	Sat, May 9	1 - 4 pm
Swimsuit Fittings	Tue, May 12	4:30 - 6:30 pm
Parent Meeting-Mandatory	Tue, May 12	6:30 pm
Clinic: Starts and Turns	Thr, May 14	7-8 pm
Time Trials (8U, 10U, 12U)	Thr, Jun 4	TBD
Team Photos (no workout)	Fri, Jun 26	9 am
Water park Event	Fri, Jun 26	Noon - 3:30
Ice Cream Social	Tue, Jun 30	9 pm
Donut Day	Fri, July 3	7 - 11:30 am
Donut Day	Fri, July 10	7 - 11:30 am
Pancake breakfast	Fri, July 17	7 - 11:30 am
Parent/Adult Free Relay	Thr, July 16	8:30 pm
Awards Night	TBD	TBD

Best Times Chart:

Meet	Goal Time	Time Trials	B – Maple Hills	A – Maple Hills	B – KGR	A – KGR	A – KGG	B – KGG	B – STC	A – STC	A – OLL	B – OL	B Champ	Finals	# of Best Times
Date		June 4	June 16	June 18	June 23	June 25	June 30	July 2	July 7	July 9	July 14	July 16	July 18	various	
100 IM															
25 Free															
50 Free															
100 Free															
200 Free															
500 Free															
25 Back															
50 Back															
25 Breast															
50 Breast															
25 Fly															
50 Fly															

Number of Best Times: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Best Times Sheets

Our coaches truly appreciate the hard work that goes into individual achievement in the sport of swimming. They recognize each swimmer's time improvements as vital to the development of his or her goals and abilities as well as the success of the team. Your coaches have set a goal for every swimmer to realize eight (8) or more improvements this summer. When you get 8 best times, you will get a prize from your coach.

Track Your Own Best Times

You just need **8 best times** to collect a prize from your coach. It's up to you to track your own best times. You will get a time in every event during the time trials. Write down your time in each event from the time trials in the chart above. Or, download a new chart from the Somerset website (click on swim team). Look at the time you swam in the Time Trials and then choose a goal time. You may want to look at the B-Meet Disqualification times and use those times for your goal times. Post your Best Times Chart

somewhere you will remember so you can track the rest of your swim meets throughout the season. You are responsible for:

- tracking your own times
- filling in the chart
- turning the chart into your coach to receive your prize

How do you find out your times after a swim race?

- Ask the timers when you finish your race.
- Look at the label on the ribbon you receive from your race.
- Click on the Somerset Website under “Swim Team” and “Lineup/Results”— here is the link:
http://www.somersetrec.org/st_lineup.html
- Click on the Midlakes website:
<http://www.midlakesswimleague.org/Scoreboard.htm>

Remember, you can sometimes win without swimming fast, but you can never improve your times without swimming your fastest.

Good luck this season!

Judging and Disqualification (DQ)

Competitive Swimming, like any other sport, has a set of rules and has officials to enforce those rules. However unlike sports such as basketball, football and soccer, most people are not familiar with the rules of competitive swimming. We would therefore like to present a brief summary of the rules and outline the common mistakes made by new swimmers. This summary is intended to be neither exhaustive nor authoritative. Rather it is intended to be a "plain English" explanation of the calls made by the sideline officials.

Instead of referees, competitive swimming uses Stroke & Turn Judges that stand at the ends or walk the sides of the pool watching the swimmers. If the judge sees an infraction, he or she raises his or her hand. After completion of the race the judge informs the swimmer of the nature of the infraction and notifies the timer that the swimmer has been disqualified ("DQed"). Occasionally the swimmer leaves before the judge can get to them. This happens most frequently on a relay. It should always be emphasized to the swimmer that a DQ is not a big deal. While it can be a great disappointment to a beginning swimmer, a DQ is really little different than a foul in basketball or a penalty in soccer or football. Obviously disqualifications should be avoided, if possible, but when they happen they should be viewed as a learning experience. Below is an informal summary of the major rules for each stroke with some comments as to which infractions that are the most common causes of DQs. If you have any questions or do not understand a rule, please feel free to ask one of the judges or one of the coaches to explain it to you.

Freestyle

Freestyle does not mean the crawl stroke. It means any stroke, from dogpaddle to butterfly, is legal in a freestyle race. Hanging on the wall or standing on the bottom, while not recommended, is legal in a freestyle race. (Hanging on the wall or standing on the bottom is illegal in any other race.) However it is an infraction to pull oneself along the wall or lane rope, or to jump forward off the bottom. The judges see this occasionally among the youngest swimmers and will call it. The rule is that all forward motion must come from swimming.

The swimmer must touch the wall with some part of their body at the end of each lap. This is the most common DQ in freestyle races. It occurs when a swimmer performs a flip turn too early, misses the wall with their feet, and continues to swim the next lap. If a swimmer misses the wall, they should either back-paddle until they can touch the wall with a toe or turn around, go back, and touch the wall.

Backstroke

Backstroke is sometimes called freestyle on your back because the only rule concerning the stroke is that the swimmer must stay on their back. Single arm pulls or double arm pulls are both legal as long as the swimmer stays on their back throughout the race. Beginning swimmers are occasionally DQed for turning over onto their breast so that they can see how far they are from the wall. Frequently they will turn onto their breast when they grab the wall at the finish, which is illegal. They need to touch the wall while still on their backs.

The swimmer cannot curl their toes over the gutter on the start.

At the turns, the swimmer is allowed to roll onto their belly for a flip turn that is similar to the one used in freestyle, provided that the following criteria are met: the swimmer may take only one pull (either single arm or double arm) after rolling onto their breast before making the turn, and they must be on their back when their feet leave the wall. The rules governing backstroke flip turns vary slightly depending on the organization sanctioning the meet. USS (United States Swimming) rules are more stringent than the Midlakes rules.

Breaststroke

Breaststroke is by far the most difficult stroke to do legally. It seems to have more things to watch for than all of the rest of the strokes combined.

Probably the most common DQ in breaststroke swimming is the one-handed touch on the turn or the finish. On all turns, and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously. The hands must also be parallel in a horizontal plane (i.e., one hand can not be slightly higher than the other hand).

The kick must be a "frog kick". Flutter kicks, dolphin kicks, and scissors kicks are illegal. A flutter kick is the alternating kick used in freestyle. A dolphin kick is the two-legged undulating kick used in butterfly. A scissors kick is similar to a legal frog kick but instead of being symmetrical in a horizontal plane, the legs make a shearing motion relative to each other. In a legal frog kick the water pressure will impinge on the bottom and the inside of both feet. On a scissors kick the water pressure will impinge on the top of one foot and the bottom of the other.

At the start and after each turn, the swimmer is allowed one underwater pull and one underwater kick. Some part of the swimmer's head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn in on the second pull off of the wall. Additionally some part of the swimmer's head must break the surface of the water on each pull until the wall is reached at the other end.

Except for the one underwater pull mentioned above, the arm pulls cannot extend past the hip line. The hands must turn in at the belly and move forward under the breast.

The arms pulls must be simultaneous.

The pulls and kicks must alternate. The swimmer cannot do two kicks or two pulls in a row.

Butterfly

On all turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously. The turn rules are the same as for breaststroke.

The kick must be a dolphin kick. Flutter kicks, scissors kicks, or frog kicks are illegal.

When properly done there are two dolphin kicks for each butterfly pull. However this is not a rule. Any number of kicks or, for example, two or more pulls without a kick is legal in butterfly.

The arms must recover simultaneously over the water. In Midlakes we try to cut the little guys some slack on this one and we interpret it to mean that the top of the arms must break the surface. Nevertheless until the swimmer develops some strength and technique, they may get called for this.

Individual Medley (IM)

The IM is one (or more) length of each of the four strokes. The strokes must be done in the following order: 1. Butterfly, 2. Backstroke, 3. Breaststroke, 4. Freestyle.

The rules for each stroke apply for the lengths that that stroke is swum. For example the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at the end of the butterfly and breaststroke legs, and the swimmer must touch the wall on their back at the end of the backstroke leg.

The freestyle leg of the IM can be any stroke except butterfly, backstroke, or breaststroke. (Dogpaddle is legal. Butterfly is not)

Relays

The Medley Relay legs must be swum in the following order: 1. Backstroke, 2. Breaststroke, 3. Butterfly, 4. Freestyle. (It's alphabetical)

Some part of the swimmer in the water must touch the wall before the toes of the next swimmer leave the block.

There are a few other rules such as leaving your lane and interfering with another swimmer, etc., but they rarely occur in our meets.

Copies of the rulebooks are available through USS, or the judges may be able to share one with you if you have a particular interest.