



DONALDSON RUN THUNDERBOLTS

TEAM HANDBOOK

2012 Season

WELCOME

Welcome all Donaldson Run Thunderbolts! We're delighted to see all our returning swimmers, and we're very happy to welcome new Thunderbolt families.

This handbook was developed to assist Thunderbolt families in understanding summer swimming. Inside this handbook you will find general information, a description of the Northern Virginia Swim League (the "NVSL") and the various meets, and information about practices and our various social events. There is also detailed information on the different meet officials and their responsibilities.

GENERAL

The NVSL

The NVSL was begun in 1956 with six founding pools. Today, the NVSL is the largest summer swim league in the United States. More than 12,000 swimmers are part of over 100 teams who compete in 18 divisions, comprised of six teams each. The teams are seeded by overall “speed” rather than by size or location, with the fastest teams in Division I. The NVSL reseeds teams each year to keep each division as competitive as possible.

The NVSL’s philosophy is to develop in the swimmers participating in the program:

*A love for the sport, advanced aquatic skills,
teamwork, and the principles of good sportsmanship.*

Parent Participation

Volunteers are key to the success of our swim team. Unlike other youth sports, where a handful of people can run the team, we simply cannot have a successful swim program without help from literally every swim parent. There are many opportunities to help.

It takes more than 40 individuals to officiate, time, write ribbons and score a typical swim meet! Many of these meet responsibilities are described in more detail below.

Additionally, there are numerous other “behind the scenes” jobs, including both meet and non-meet related activities, such as running the concession stand, arranging social activities, and other non-swimming team activities. This year, we are asking a parent of each swimmer to volunteer at five swim events in which his/her swimmer is swimming, and at one non-swim event, during the season. If you have any questions about volunteer opportunities, please contact the Team Representatives(s). Their names, email addresses and telephone numbers appear at the end of this handbook.

MEET INFORMATION

General

During the season, the Thunderbolts participate in the following events:

- 5 weekly (Saturday) Dual Meets (known as “A” meets)
- 5-6 weekly (Monday) Developmental Meets (known as “B” meets)
- Divisional Relay Carnival
- All-Star Relay Carnival
- Divisional Individual Championships
- All Star Individual Championships

Swimmers are grouped for competition by gender and by age. The age categories are:

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

There also may be a 6 and under group at developmental “B” meets. Swimmers must be able to swim 25 meters unassisted to participate on the swim team. Swimmers compete at the age they are on the day of the meet. Swimmers compete in four individual strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Freestyle and medley relays are swum at all dual meets. At certain designated meets, swimmers also may compete in individual medley (IM) events. Events for 8 and under swimmers are 25 meters (one length of the pool) and events for swimmers 9 and older are 50 meters, except that the 9-10 age group swims a 25-meter butterfly.

Competition Notes

All meets are held, rain or shine. The only exception is thunder or lightening at the host pool, which results in a delay.

For away “A” meets, we normally meet at our pool, and caravan to the host pool. Departure time from our pool will be announced prior to the meet. If you plan to meet the team at the host pool, please let one of the coaches know, and he/she will tell you the time you need to be at the host pool. Directions to all the pools to which we will be traveling also will be provided.

All team members are expected to be available for “A” meets. If your swimmer will be unavailable to swim, please update the information under the "Unavailable to Swim" pages during on-line registration for the team. This information can be updated during the season and should be given to the head coach by the Monday immediately preceding the Saturday meet that will be missed. Failure to give the Head Coach timely notification

could result in an empty lane at the meet, as well as cause a teammate to miss the opportunity to swim in an “A” meet. If a child becomes ill on the morning of an “A” meet, please call one of the Team Representatives at home by 7:00 AM. The Team Representatives’ home telephone numbers are listed on the last page of this handbook.

At the meet, swimmers need to know what events they are swimming, and be ready when the event is called. Swimmers generally should stay in the team area during the meet, unless they receive a coach’s permission to leave the team area. If any swimmer needs to leave before the meet is over, they must tell the head coach first. This is particularly important for “A” meets.

Swimmers compete in age groups based on their exact date of birth. If a swimmer’s birthday occurs at any point during the swim season, they must move to the appropriate age group on that date. The only exception is for the All Star Individual Meet and All Star Relay Carnival; please refer to the information on those meets for more details.

Under NVSL rules, “August only” members are eligible to swim only in Developmental “B” meets. However, “August only” members are strongly encouraged to participate in all Thunderbolt social and other events.

Time Trials

Time Trials are held at the Donaldson Run Pool, typically on the Saturday before the first “A” meet. Time Trials generally is the first time the swimmers are timed during the summer swim season. Time Trials are conducted prior to the first meet to obtain an official baseline time for each swim team member in each individual event/stroke. These times are then used to select swimmers for the first “A” meet, which is typically held the following Saturday. Each swimmer should swim all four strokes at the Time Trials; although some exceptions are made for the younger swimmers who are not yet able to swim all four of the strokes.

Dual Meets (the “A” Meets)

Dual meets (also referred to as “A” meets) are held on Saturday mornings from 9:00 AM until approximately 11:30 AM. There are five of these meets and they are conducted only against teams in our division for that season. These are referred to as “dual meets”, since there are two teams swimming against each other. Two or three of these meets will be held at Donaldson Run each season.

Each team fields three swimmers per age and gender in the four individual strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly). Relays are swum in each age group, plus one with mixed ages. NVSL rules allow swimmers to swim a maximum of two individual events, participate in one age-group relay team, and the mixed-age relay team if selected. Beginning with the youngest age group, boys swim first, and girls follow.

In order, the events swum are:

- freestyle
- backstroke
- breaststroke
- butterfly

In Saturday “A” 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.

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 usually found in the concession area and typically sell for around \$1.00-\$2.00.

Dual Meet (“A” Meet) Events and Distances

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

Dual meets are scored, and the outcome of these meets determines a team’s division standing. Points are based on the swimmer’s performance in each event, with the total points scored determining the winning team.

Type of Race	1 st place points	2 nd place points	3 rd place points
Individual	5	3	1
Relay	5	0	N/A

In the event of a tie, the points for the places involved are equally split among the swimmers. For example, if there is 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.

The points are announced periodically throughout the meet. There are 402 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 202 points to win.

Ribbons are always awarded for 1st through 3rd place finishes, and the teams in the Division may agree before the start of the season also to award ribbons for 4th through 6th place finishes. Ribbons record the swimmer's time, event and age group on the back.

At the completion of the dual meet season, the NVSL awards a trophy to the team with the best won-loss record in each division.

Swimmer Selection

Swimmers are selected for dual meets by the coaching staff. There are several criteria, which are evaluated by the coaching staff. Each week, we swim a new team with different strengths and weaknesses. Since our goal is to win the meet, we need to try and match up our swimmers with those of our new opponent as best we can.

The Head Coach is responsible for developing the "meet sheet" each week for the following Saturday's dual meet. Our opponent's previous meet sheets are reviewed, and swimmers are placed in strokes where they will score the most points for the team. Creating a good (translation: winning) meet sheet is a little bit like trying to put together a new complicated puzzle each week. This may mean that the coach will have a swimmer swim in an older age group event (referred to as "swimming up") or swim a stroke that is not their strongest or favorite. Swimmers (and their parents) need to understand that coaching decisions are made for the benefit of the team as a whole. All decisions of the Head Coach regarding swimmer assignments are FINAL; parents and swimmers alike are requested to support these decisions.

Meet sheets will be announced by the Coaches. The list of swimmers that will be swimming at the upcoming dual meet is distributed by e-mail by the Wednesday before the meet. Please bring any issues regarding meet sheets to the attention of the Head Coach or Team Rep as soon as possible.

Event assignments may change weekly, as we match ourselves up against a new team with different strengths. Swimmers who participate in one dual meet are not guaranteed the same slot the next Saturday.

Apparel

There are NVSL rules for attire at meets. Only the team suit or a plain suit is permitted. No school, club, or other organization attire may be worn. Caps must be plain or the team cap. No NVSL caps may be worn except at special meets as indicated on the cap. For example, it is only acceptable to wear the NVSL All Star Relay cap at All Star Relays.

Items such as team suits and tee-shirts may be purchased or ordered at the registration Ice Cream Social typically held at the pool during the weekend prior to the first practice.

Developmental Meets (the “B” Meets)

Developmental meets (also referred to as “B” meets) are held on Monday evenings starting at 6:00 p.m. or at another start time designated by the host pool. They typically end between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. There are five or six of these meets each season. Two, three or four of these meets are held at Donaldson Run. The same format and rules used for dual meets apply, except that there may be an additional 6 & under age group category for freestyle and backstroke, and butterfly may be added for 8 & under swimmers. Relays are not included in these meets.

Individual Medleys (IM) are swum at most of the developmental meets. This requires the swimmer to swim one length of the pool using each stroke in the order of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. As this event is included in the NVSL Divisional Individual Championships, swimmers are encouraged to compete in this event as often as possible. All swimmers nine and older are eligible to swim in this event. Swimmers younger than nine may swim with a coach's consent. Since there is not a separate age group designation, those swimmers 8 and under who wish to do an IM must “swim-up” with the 9-10 year olds.

Developmental Meet Events and Distances (An Example)

Age Group	Freestyle	Backstroke	Breaststroke	Butterfly	Individual Medley
6 & under Boys	25M	25M			
6 & under Girls	25M	25M			
8 & under Boys	25M	25M	25M	25M	
8 & under Girls	25M	25M	25M	25M	
9-10 Boys	50M	50M	50M	25M	100M
9-10 Girls	50M	50M	50M	25M	100M
11-12 Boys	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M
11-12 Girls	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M
13 & up Boys	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M
13 & up Girls	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M

Developmental meets are not scored, and do not affect our standings, or what NVSL division we compete in. However, they are a crucial component of our summer swim program, allowing swimmers opportunities to improve their individual times in events. The format is essentially the same as a Saturday meet, except that there are generally multiple heats of each age group event. Ribbons are awarded to all participants. If a swimmer disqualifies, or is swimming unofficially, a participant ribbon is awarded. Ribbons record the swimmer’s time, event and age group on the back.

The Head Coach will establish the rules for swimmer eligibility for the developmental “B” meets.

Sign ups for the “B” meet typically occur the Monday morning of the meet. Signups also can take place at the meet on Monday night, but it is preferable to sign up in the morning.

Relay Carnivals

Divisional Relay Carnival

The Divisional Relay Carnival is held on a Wednesday evening in early July and is a highly spirited and competitive meet. The Thunderbolts may enter one relay team per event to compete against all five other teams from our division. There are medley and freestyle relays for each sex and age group, as well as boys and girls mixed age relays. The Head Coach selects the swimmers for the relay teams. Swimmers must swim in their own age group. 8 & under relay teams swim a modified medley relay with two swimmers doing freestyle and no butterfly. 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.

Each event is scored: 1st place earns 14 points; 2nd place 10 points; 3rd place 8 points, and on down to 6th place which earns 2 points. A trophy is awarded to the team accumulating the most points at the end of the meet.

All Star Relay Carnival

The eighteen fastest relay teams in each event from all divisions in the NVSL compete against each other the Wednesday following the Divisional Relay Carnival. The Division Coordinator represents the six teams at the seeding meeting and notifies the Team Representative of any team qualifications. One alternate team is selected for each event. There is one substitution allowed for each relay team only for illness, injury or absence. Swimmers "aging up" between the Divisional Relay Carnival and the All Star Relay Carnival (a birthday which moves them up an age group) can swim with their qualifying relay team for this meet.

Individual Championships

Divisional Individual Championship Meet

On the Saturday following the last Dual meet, each division conducts a "divisional" meet consisting of the fastest swimmers from all of the teams in the division. Swimmers may compete in two events. The individual medley event and the 8 & under butterfly are included in this meet. There are no relay events.

Eligible Thunderbolts with the fastest times in each event may select their two strokes. This process continues until all our allotted slots are filled. Next, a divisional seeding meeting is held and is attended by the Team Representative. Each team’s swimmers’ best times are submitted to the Division Coordinator and the swimmers are seeded

according to NVSL criteria specially designed for this meet. If a team does not have two swimmers for an event, another team may add (“bid-in”) additional swimmers in that event. We often have the opportunity to bid-in more swimmers. Our goal is to have as many Thunderbolts as possible have the opportunity to compete in this meet. Thus, it is particularly important for families to notify the Head Coach and Team Representatives if a swimmer will not be available for this meet. With proper notification, another swimmer may be substituted. If not, we might lose that spot to another team. Alternates can be chosen the morning of the divisional meet when the Team Representatives identify empty lanes due to absence. Plaques are awarded to the top six finishers in each event.

All Star Individual Championship Meet

After all of the divisions in the NVSL hold their Individual Championship Meets, the eighteen fastest swimmers and two alternates in each event are chosen to compete in the All Star Individual Championship Meet. These selections are based solely on times posted from Divisional Individual Championships. This meet is held the Saturday following the divisional meets. Medals and ribbons are presented in award ceremonies following each event. A swimmer’s age at the time that the Divisional Individual Championship was swum becomes their all-star age, even if a birthday occurs in the week between the two events.

Other Special Meets

Additional special meets may be scheduled during the season. For example, in certain years, an intra-Thunderbolt meet and/or a swim-a-thon have been held.

PRACTICES

Shortly after the pool opens in mid-May, after-school practices begin on Mondays through Fridays. It is understood that many swimmers will continue to participate in other sports and school activities while school is still in session. Plan to have your swimmer attend as many practices as possible. Upon the start of the Arlington public school summer break, practices shift to the morning. Morning practices are held Monday through Friday, except for July 4th, until the Divisional meet. Once morning practice starts, there will be afternoon swim clinics when the pool is available. Typically, there are a total of 6 of these clinics offered during the last week of June and month of July.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The Thunderbolts are an active, social group. Throughout the season, we undertake a wide variety of fun activities that help to unify the team. Attendance for all social events is voluntary, but you won't want to miss out on the fun!

Pep Rallies

We hold a Pep Rally at the pool every Friday beginning the Friday before the first "A" meet of the season, and ending the Friday before Divisionals. Pep Rallies may follow the morning practice session or be held in the evening, typically from 5:00-6:00 pm. Check the calendar each week for the time of that week's Pep Rally. Coaches lead team members in activities such as making posters, learning cheers, and mentally preparing for the upcoming meet.

After Meet Outings

After "A" meets, many of our families get together to eat lunch and celebrate the meet at Joe's Pizza and Pasta. Win or lose, we always find things to celebrate! All are invited, regardless of whether the swimmer swam in the meet.

Pancake Breakfast

Each Friday before "A" meets, after morning practice, we hold a team breakfast for the 12 and unders. The 13 and overs have breakfast out with the coaches these Friday mornings.

End of Season Party and Awards Ceremony

The End of Season Party and Awards Ceremony celebrates the season and what our kids have accomplished. It is held at our pool the Saturday evening after Divisionals. We eat, drink, and swim. The coaches give out trophies and awards, which team members have earned.

Other Social Activities

In past years, the Thunderbolts have attended movies, gone to Kings Dominion, and held various parties and other social functions at the pool. Again, attendance is strictly voluntary.

COMMUNICATIONS

The primary method of communication that we use is e-mail. All important information, including practice announcements, meet announcements, directions, and meet results are e-mailed to parents and swimmers. Parents can provide their email addresses during swimmer registration.

The DRRA.org website provides contact information for Team Reps and Coaches. Team reps also post updates to the site and maintain a calendar of swim team events.

The NVSL also maintains a web site, which contains detailed information about each NVSL event. We post certain information about the Thunderbolts at the section of the NVSL web site reserved for our team. The NVSL web site is a great way for out-of-town friends, family and former Thunderbolt members to keep up with their favorite swimmers! The NVSL web site address is <http://nvsl.nvblu.com>

The pool bulletin board is another source of information for such things as upcoming events, direction to meets at other pools, etc. Much but not all of the information distributed by e-mail also will be posted on the pool bulletin board.

Finally, each family is assigned a “mailbox” (a file folder) kept at the pool. Ribbons as well as disqualification slips will be distributed via this system. We ask that you check your folder at least weekly.

THE STROKES

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. Watching swimmers learn the backstroke is a perverse sense of fun as they bounce off lane lines and wonder where they are. Eventually, they will learn to guide off the lane lines, use the overhead backstroke flags and the lane line markings to know where they're at in the pool, and count strokes from the flags to the wall.

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. Persons serving in an official capacity (such as timers or coaches) may not serve as "legs".

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

A well-executed butterfly (or Fly) is the most beautiful exhibition of power you'll ever see in a swimming pool. Quite frankly, the fly is the hardest stroke for most swimmers to perfect and while they are learning it many look like they are drowning. 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. At the NVSL Relay Carnival, swimmers eight and under swim a modified medley relay where the fly leg of the relay is replaced with a freestyle leg.

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.

DISQUALIFICATIONS (DQs)

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 DQ's 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 DQ'ing 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 a rule has been broken. The Referee 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 that 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 can 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. If the starter sounds the recall signal, no swimmer can be removed for a false start.

How do I know if My Swimmer DQ'd

Your swimmer 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. Another way to find out is by reading the official Meet Results, which are posted at the pool by 4 PM the day of the meet. You also can get results by visiting the NVSL web site.

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 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. 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 he or she believes that to be appropriate.

Meet Officials

(or, Who Are All Those People In White?)

Marshall

Charged with maintaining order at the meet, amongst swimmers and spectators. 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.

Referee (1 per meet)

The referee (an NVSL or USS certified official) is the chief official for each meet. His/Her principal function is to ensure that the meet is properly conducted pursuant to the NVSL rules, and that swimmers have uniformly fair competitive conditions. The referee serves as 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 (1 per meet)

The starter (an NVSL or USS certified official) is the only official with direct contact with the swimmers. The starter makes sure that all swimmers are given a fair and equitable start. The starter informs the swimmers of the stroke and distance to be swum, and then uses a series of whistles to get swimmers ready for the start. After all swimmers are ready and still, the starter starts the race using an electronic starting device, the "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. A race can be recalled only if it was a bad start by the starter (i.e. not all the swimmers were ready) or for a safety reason. This is done using a recall signal on the Colorado system (you'll know it when you hear it).

Stroke and Turn Judge (4 per meet)

The Stroke and Turn Judges (NVSL or USS certified officials) ensure that swimmers obey all the rules for the stroke that they are swimming, including the appropriate turn or finish designated for the event. 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. The Disqualification is recorded on a DQ slip, which is submitted to the Referee, who has final authority to accept or reject the DQ observed by the Stroke and Turn Judge(s). If the Referee accepts the DQ, copies of the DQ slip are forwarded to the Table workers and the Team Rep.

Chief Timer (1 per meet)

The chief timer is responsible for delivery of all official times to the time recorder, as recorded by the head lane timers. The Chief Timer acts as Assistant Chief Timer at away meets. He/She recruits runners for time cards.

Timers (18 per meet)

Each timer is responsible to record the time for the swimmers. By starting their watches at the direction of the starter and stopping their watches when any part of the swimmer touches the wall, they record a swimmer's official time. There are three timers per lane, and the head lane timer records all three times. The middle time is the official time.

Relay Take-Off Judge (4 per meet)

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.

Clerk of Course (2 per dual meet; 4 per developmental meet)

The Clerk of Course is the “gatekeeper” for all swimmers, and is responsible for getting the right swimmer to the right place at the right time. Other duties include assembling the swimmers in the order of events, holding the swimmers ready on deck, and interfacing with the referee and scorer if there is a problem.

Announcer (1 per home meet)

The Announcer is important in meet management and control. Through close coordination with the referee, the starter and the meet director, the announcer controls the tempo of the meet. He/She announces the events and the swimmers as well as providing the names of the winners and other pertinent information.

Runners (2 per home meet)

Take time cards from the clerk of course to the timers. Take completed time cards from the chief timer to the time recorder.

Table Workers

Time Recorder

The Time Recorder determines the placement of order of the finished swimmers, inscribes the place on the time card, and records disqualifications as received from the referee.

Scorers

Scorers receive the time cards, with the official order of finish of each event, from the time recorder. They record the times and places of all swimmers, keep the official score of the meet, and prepare the official copies of the meet sheet.

Time-in-Water Recorder (dual meets only)

The Time-in -Water Recorder ensures that the times of the two fastest swimmers and the fastest relay from each team are recorded. This information is utilized by the NVSL to help determine team seeding for the next swim season.

Ribbon Writers

The Ribbon Writers receive the time cards from the scorer after they have been officially recorded, select the appropriate award, and record the swimmer's name, time and club on the award.

GLOSSARY

Aging Up	When a swimmer's birthday occurs during the season, thus adjusting the age group they compete in.
DQ	Short for disqualification. A DQ is any violation of swimming rules observed by any appropriate official.
False Start	Any time a swimmer moves after taking his/her mark, but before the starting signal sounds. A false start is a disqualification.
Free Relay	A relay event in which all swimmers swim freestyle.
IM	Short for individual medley. This is an event where swimmers swim each of the four strokes for one length of the pool (for a total of 100M) in a particular order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.
Medley Relay	A relay event in which each of the four swimmers swims a different stroke, in a prescribed order.
Modified Medley	A medley relay, except two of the swimmers swim freestyle and no swimmer swims butterfly.
Swimming Up	A swimmer may be asked to compete at a higher age group than their chronological age at one or more meets. For example, a 10 year old may be asked to swim in the 11-12 age group, if in the opinion of the coach that swimmer can be competitive in the older group.