

WARRINGTON SWIM TEAM Q & A

How do you qualify to be on the team and how old do swimmers have to be? To qualify for the team swimmers need to be able to do one length of “reasonable” freestyle as determined by the WST coaching staff and participate cooperatively (focus, respond appropriately to coaches) in practices and meets. Swimmers are typically at least six years old. Often children are much older before they’re ready for the team and, occasionally a younger swimmer is ready.

What are the age groups? Swimmers in the league are divided into six age groups for competition. Age is determined as of June 15th of the current season.

The age groups are:

- 6 and under (combined with 8 and unders for most races)
- 8 and under
- 10 and under
- 12 and under
- 14 and under
- 18 and under

How do you register for the team? Registration materials will be posted online by early April each year. Please refer to all online instructions on the website www.wstdragons.org and/or any reference materials for instructions.

What if I think my swimmer is ready but am not 100% sure? Please complete online registrations and/or fill out all required paperwork and submit it with payment by the deadline. Please contact the registration point person as indicated on website and email Dragonsreg@gmail.com that your swimmer is interested in “TRIAL”. The coaches will make the determination by time trials (or sooner if possible) about whether your swimmer is ready for the team. If so, you will be notified officially that your swimmer is ready for team. If not, you will be notified and your fees will be refunded, (less processing fees determined by ACTIVE).

How much does it cost? Registration information will be posted on our website by early April each year and the fee information will be included. Fees are significantly discounted for participants who are also members of the Mary Barness Tennis and Swim Club.

I have missed the registration deadline – can I register late? Requests for late registration cause considerable extra work for WST volunteers, please make every attempt to register on time. WST volunteers will accommodate the late registration, if there is room on the team (decision made by head coach as determined by current numbers in each age group), but the program start date for the late registrants may be delayed due to paperwork processing and league participation rules. If you have missed the registration deadline and wish to find out if late registration is possible please email the president of the board (contacts page of the website) immediately – the sooner the contact, the more likely your request can be accommodated. NOTE: If you have multiple swimmers, we may not be able to accommodate all of the them, there may be room in one age group, but not another etc.

What equipment is needed?

- One-piece competitive swim suits – (a meet suit and a practice suit are recommended, but not required)
- Goggles
- Swim cap (necessary for swimmers with long hair and many other swimmers wear them as well)
- Towels
- Sneakers, shorts, t-shirt for dry-land workouts
- Filled water bottles

Is there a team suit? There is a team suit offered each season, which can be purchased either online or at designated store. The suit is not mandatory but most children on the team (particularly in the younger age groups) do wear them. It is recommended that they be worn for meets only to keep them in good shape and last longer.

How do I get WST apparel? There will be a WST apparel sale each year – registered team members should watch email for notification about the sale and the order deadline.

Who are the coaches? Due to the huge time commitment and specialized knowledge necessary, swim coaches are paid team staff, rather than parent volunteers as you find in many youth sports. See the Info: Coaches section of the website for information about the coaching staff.

What are the season dates? The season begins with practices just after Memorial Day in late May and concludes by the end of July or very early August. See the calendar for specific dates for this season. Dates usually start getting posted in early May after the league approves the basics of the season's schedule. Prior to current season information being posted, please scroll back through the months to the previous season to get an idea of what to expect (though changes do occur year-to-year, prior year is a fair guide).

When are practices? Practices are in the afternoon after school from just after Memorial Day until roughly when Central Bucks schools start summer break. From the start of summer break through the end of the season, practices are weekday mornings. See the calendar for specific dates for this season. Prior to current season information being posted, please scroll back through the months to the previous season to get an idea of what to expect (though changes do occur year-to-year, prior year is a fair guide).

Where are practices? Practices are held at the Mary Barness Tennis and Swim Club in Warrington, PA.

When are meets? Dual meets (meets in which two teams compete against one another as teams to see who wins the meet) are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings during June and July. There are typically five or six dual meets during the season (depending on LBSL size). As details about the current season's dual meets become available they will be posted on the calendar. Prior to current season information being posted, please scroll back through the months to the previous season to get an idea of what to expect (though changes do occur year-to-year, prior year is a fair guide).

What is an invitational? An invitational is type of swim meet in which swimmers from a number different teams (usually from our entire league) are invited to compete. Swimmers choose their own races (as opposed to dual meets, in which the *coaches decide who will swim each race*) and pay a per race entry fee. Awards are given for the top finishers in each event after the meet.

What is the Cold Water Classic? The Cold Water Classic is WST's hosted invitational. It is held in late June.

How do I sign my swimmer(s) up for meets?

DUAL MEETS: It is very important to follow email and website instructions for signing your swimmers in or out of all dual meets. Signing in or out is done by: 1) using the signup genius links provided in email updates or on website 2) signing the sheet in the meet sign in/out binder located at the pool 3) doing both. Please update daily/weekly. If you sign in your swimmers and then they become ill or something comes up and they can no longer attend, you must email coaches immediately so the line up can be adjusted. Not doing, this causes a lot of work for coaches, computer entry/scoring table and can delay meet starts up to an hour or more. INVITATIONAL MEETS: All invitational meets are optional and instructions on how to enter the meets are posted on our website as well as host websites. If you have any questions on how to register, please ask a coach.

Does WST have a diving team? No.

Where are meets and what teams are WST's opponents? Home meets are held at the Mary Barness Tennis and Swim Club in Warrington, PA. Away meets are at a variety of different pools within our league (the Lower Bucks Swim League or LBSL). The league is competitively organized into three divisions. Our meets will be against the other teams in our division. For more information about which teams are in which divisions and the locations of their pools, please consult the LBSL website: www.lbsl.org

What are the team practice and meet commitments? Coaches like to see swimmers at as many of their group's after school practices as possible. Once morning practices begin, many of our swimmers attend practice every day. The minimum practice attendance requirements vary by practice group from 2-4 practices per week. The more experienced swimmers' minimum being highest. Practice group assignments are made just prior to morning practices beginning. Swimmers are expected to attend as many of the dual meets as possible and the Cold Water Classic (see description below).

What other team events are there? The coaches and parent board organize a number of events throughout the season for practical and team-bonding purposes. These events include fundraisers, time trials (early in the season to get baseline times for swimmers), Blue & Gold Night (team spirit event), senior night (recognition of graduating seniors at last home meet), and often other events like t-shirt dyeing or pasta parties.

How much do I have to volunteer? We ask all families to volunteer as much as they are able and generally find that in order to fill all the positions it is necessary for each family to volunteer at a least three dual meets (and at all invitational meets in which they have a participant). Families with multiple swimmers on the team should plan to help more. If you do not fulfill your volunteering obligation, you will be billed at the end of the season for the volunteer opt-out fee.

What are the volunteer jobs?

- **Timer:** There are three timers in each lane that record the time on a stopwatch. One timer will record the time on the swimmer's card and hand it to the runner for pick up. The Starter will ensure all timers are in their place and assign one timer per lane to record times on the swimmer's card. There will also be a back-up timer to also time in case a timer has a problem with their stopwatch.
- **Runner:** Picks up cards from timers, Referee, strokes/turns judges and takes them to the scorer's table for processing.
- **Ready Bench:** Are needed for each age group and each gender with the exception of the 15-18 groups. These parents gather the swimmers and lead them to the pool deck for their races. Having a child in the particular age group helps as it's easier to identify who's who. Having patience and a good knowledge of the kids is strength for this function. IDEALLY THE SAME PEOPLE FILL THIS POSITION EVERY MEET – IF SIGNING UP FOR THIS ROLE, PLEASE PLAN TO WORK ALL MEETS IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.
- **Place Judge:** Determines and records the order of finish for swimmers in a race. (Finish Judge.)
- **Stroke and Turn Official: (Certified Position)** He or She stands on the side of the pool watching the swimmers in his/her assigned lanes. If the swimmer does not execute the stroke correctly, the Strokes/Turn judge will disqualify the swimmer.
- **Starter/Referee:** (Certified Position/Home Meets Only). He or She signals the start of each event and heat. Electronic starting equipment will be used.
- **50/50 Sales:** (Home Meets Only) Sells 50/50 tickets throughout the meet.
- **Announcer:** (Home Meets Only). Announces swimmer lane assignments prior to the start of a race and makes all other announcements required during the meet.
- **Scoring Table:** Organizes timing slips, place judge cards, and officials' disqualification slips for proper scoring of the meet. Audits any events in which place judges disagree.
- **Computer Entry:** Inputs times and placement into computer. Checks records.
- **Set-Up/Clean-Up:** (Home Meets Only) Help prepare the pool and pool area for the meet AND put away equipment and supplies after the meet. Note that volunteers signing-up for this position should be available for both before meet set-up and post meet clean-up.

Is there a fee I can pay instead of volunteering? The volunteer opt-out option is expensive and is discouraged. Information is included in the registration materials which are posted on or around mid March each year. It takes so many volunteers to run a swim meet that we really encourage all WST families to volunteer rather than buying out. Most parents are able to find a job that they enjoy doing and find that it helps the meet pass more quickly.

What is the best source of information throughout the season and/or I still have questions after reading this document what should I do? Please review all pages of the website for further information and details. The parent handbook is posted and is a good source of information. During the season, much information and many instructions will be communicated via email, posted to the website, posted at the pool, or flyers located in the swimmer folders. Coaches may choose to communicate last minute changes via apps such as Remind or others they chose (may vary by season). We highly encourage all parents and swimmers to opt into any and all apps or social media related sites so information is not missed. To the extent that posted and emailed information does not answer your questions, please use the contacts page of the website to email a board member.

Why must swimmers arrive so early for meets? It is important for swimmers arrive on time and check in with coaches upon arrival. All swimmers must have an opportunity to warm up and adequately prepare for their races for the day. With so many swimmers and so little space in the pool it is necessary to break up the team into three warm ups. This way everyone gets to properly warm up and prepared to swim fast. Swimmers, therefore, must arrive early to have time to be checked in with a coach, find out the events they are swimming, and be there for their warm up time.

Why was my swimmer entered in to a without a time (NT) when they did swim that event at another meet during the season? This can happen for one of the following reasons: (1) your swimmer swam the event in a yards pool, but the pool they are swimming in for a meet is in meters. Times are typically not converted (there may be an exception to this for league finals, but the league will decide this). LBSL has both yards and meters pools. Please see LBSL website for specific pool information. (2) Summer swim season is very short and turnaround times are very fast. All positions, aside from coaching staff, are generally unpaid volunteers. The scoring table of the home pool is responsible for getting the meet results to the league in a timely manner, but not required to provide them to the coaches. It is generally done as a courtesy, but there are times that the scoring table and/or coaches cannot get the updated times in our home computer database fast enough.

Can my swimmer pick the events they want to swim? Swimmers can choose their events for invitational meets only (several are offered throughout the season & we encourage participation in these – especially our Cold Water Classic meet). Dual meet events are the coaching staff's decision. The coaching staff writes lines ups based on the entire team in order to have a competitive contest between the two teams. Swimmers may indicate to coaches the desire to swim a certain event and they will consider this when writing the line up, but it is not always possible to accommodate such requests.