

Welcome to the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays Swim Club

You and your child have chosen to become part of the finest youth swimming program in the area. We are proud of our program and delighted that you are a part of it. We wish you and your child a very enjoyable and rewarding experience in our program.

This booklet, for new swimmers and their parents, outlines some of the important information that our families need to know in order to better understand your club and the rules of competitive swimming.

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Introduction

The Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays (WARS), founded in 1980, is a non-profit organization offering a year-round competitive swim program to persons from the beginning swimmer to the most competitive and skilled swimmer. The Stingrays focus on the skills required for competitive swimming and should therefore not be confused with swimming lessons. Stingray swimmers must: be able to swim in deep or shallow water; be able to swim the front crawl and back crawl the length of the pool without resting; be mature enough to listen and follow directions.

Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays is a member of United States Swimming (USA). USA Swimming is a national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. The USA age group swimming program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health by teaching healthy fitness habits.

When a young person becomes a member of the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays he/she learns the values of sportsmanship and team work. Swimming with the Stingrays provides physical, emotional and intellectual skills that will last a lifetime.

Mission Statement:

To develop the character traits, technical skills and intense desire necessary for maximum realization of each individual's potential.

Why Swim?

Physical Development

Swimming is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth by many physicians and pediatricians. Why do doctors like it so much:

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swimming teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills.
- Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.
- Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.
- Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's Swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's.

Intellectual Competence

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self image.

Team Philosophy

The team philosophy is encompassed in the words COURAGE, PERSEVERANCE, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY.

COURAGE is the willingness to accept risk(s) and endure failings. Courage does not exist unless there is a situation that presents the opportunity for success. We encourage our athletes to embrace these opportunities and not fear the outcome.

PERSEVERANCE is the backbone of success in any endeavor in life. One cannot succeed at the highest levels without enduring some set-backs. These difficult times can create a lack of faith, low

self-esteem, and an obvious drop in enthusiasm. Perseverance is the quality that transcends these difficult times. It allows the individual to find the true strength of their character.

RESPECT is essential in any club. Respect for the coaches as well as for other swimmers helps to build a team where every swimmer can be successful.

RESPONSIBILITY to the team, your coach, your parents and most importantly to yourselves is essential. Behave in such a way that your actions, words and deeds reflect positively on you, your family, coaches and your club.

Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays believes that COURAGE, PERSEVERANCE, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY developed by swimming will prepare the individual for the challenges they will face in life.

Club Communication

Communication between club leadership, coaches, parents and swimmers is critical to the success of our organization. To that end, we communicate important information in a variety of ways.

- **Seasonal Registration/Parent Meetings** –At the beginning of each season we have a registration/parent meeting. Meeting dates are mailed in the newsletter.
- **Our Club Newsletter** – The *Stingray Splash* is published. Highlights of the newsletter include articles about swimmers success, fundraising, important dates and upcoming events.
- **E-Mail** – is our newest form of communication. We are moving into the electronic age by posting important information through a group e-mail system. All swimmer families with an e-mail address should include that information when registering.
- **Bulletin Board** –The bulletin board is located at the pool. Important information regarding upcoming swim meets will be posted and should be reviewed by the parents weekly.
- **Coaches**- Feel free to contact them about any questions you may have regarding your swimmer. (Please do this after practice so as not to interfere with practice)
- **Board Members** – Contact any board member with any questions that you may have regarding the club. They will be happy to answer your question or direct you to the individual that can answer it.
- **RADIO for Cancellations** – Listen to Q102 – 102.5FM for weather related cancellations.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Stingrays Club is a volunteer parent-run organization with paid coaches. Our parents volunteer their time to help our club run smoothly while our coaching staff works with our swimmers “in the water.” Our parent volunteers also assist us in keeping our program affordable. Volunteer opportunities with our club are numerous. The board members serve our club through elected positions. These include:

- President
- Vice President /President Elect
- Secretary
- Treasurer/Registrar
- Member at Large

The Stingrays would not function without help from its parent volunteer members. We need you to commit a few hours of service to your teams fundraising efforts. Each event offers a number of opportunities for you to get involved. There is something for everyone. Sign up sheets are available during registration night as well as posted on the bulletin board at the entrance of the Senior High Pool.

We must provide enough volunteers to operate the following:

- All Girls Varsity Home Swim Meets
- Girls Varsity Home Invitational Meet / Concessions
- All Boys Varsity Home Swim Meets
- Boys Varsity Home Invitational Meet /Concessions
- Other High School Meets hosted by Willmar (i.e. Sections, Conference etc.)
- Sanctioned USA Swim Meets for Stingrays
- Team Building/Social Functions
- Various Committees (Banquet, Video, Meals for registration nights etc.)

In exchange for providing workers for the Varsity High School Swim Meets we are paid by the school district or the Minnesota State High School League and we receive pool time for our swimming members to practice.

Swim Meet Volunteer Positions

The following positions are needed to run a successful swim meet.

- Set up:** We strive to put on great home meets. To get ready for each one, we need help with setting up and testing the electronic timing equipment, putting touch pads in the lanes, and setting up tables and the pool area.
- Timers:** We must supply timers for each meet. This position is a backup to the electronic timing system. You will be asked to push a backup button and run a stopwatch.
- Console:** This person runs the electronic timing system. It includes entering information unique to this meet and monitoring the system during the meet.
- Computer/Operator:** Works closely with the console operator. Duties would include entering data specific to this meet, monitoring the results, printing reports, etc.
- Scorers:** Work at the head table and take the times from the scoreboard and scores the meet. They will also verify their score with the head official and the console operator.
- Announcer:** An announcer is used at each meet to tell us what event is next and who is swimming.

Clean – up: After the meet, the pool deck area and the balcony must be cleaned up. Trash needs to be picked up, tables taken down, electronic equipment put away.

***Concessions**

Workers: Workers in this area can do any of the following: Assist with planning, setup, take-down, or selling of concessions to the public.

***Runners:** Take care of simple errands for the head table, timers, and /or concession people.

Other: Or share with us any other way you could help

***positions are only needed if the meet is an invitational, conference or section meet.**

Please take some time to consider your talents. If you would like to help, you can sign up during registration or on the Meet sheets on the bulletin board at the Senior High School or contact any Board Member.

We have been complimented many times for the excellent way we run the home swim meets. We will continue to run superb meets due to the talents of our Stingray Team Member Volunteers. Thank you!!

Practice Information/ Policies

Practice Groups

Swimmers are placed in practice groups, Minirays and Stingrays, based on the age and ability of the individual. The emphasis in the early stages of participation is placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport of swimming. Each swimmer will progress at their own rate and as the swimmer advances in ability they will be placed in a more challenging training group.

Fall, Winter, Spring Season:

Practices are held at the Willmar Senior High pool. The High School teams naturally have priority in scheduling of practices and meets. Many of the home meets for the High School are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. On those days we would not have practice. Here is the "typical" practice schedule for the fall, winter and spring seasons:

Monday	Stingrays	5:30-7:00PM	Minirays	5:30-6:30PM
Tuesday	Stingrays	5:30-7:00PM	Minirays	5:30-6:30PM
Wednesday	Stingrays	5:30-7:00PM	Minirays	5:30-6:30 PM
Thursday	Stingrays	5:30-7:00PM	Minirays	5:30-6:30 PM

Summer Season training

In the summer, the Stingray team train everyday at the Senior High. This schedule is subject to pool availability.

Practice and Attendance Policies

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the policies regarding practice. These policies have been developed and are designed to provide the best possible practice environment for all.

1. **Do not drop your swimmer off without confirming that there is swim practice.**
2. As a general rule, the least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success. The club does, however, encourage younger swimmers to participate in other activities in addition to swimming. The expectation level of the coaches to attend practices increases as swimmers move to higher groups.
3. For the swimmers protection, they should arrive on the school grounds no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their workout time. They should also be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their practice is over. Swimmers should be ready to swim within five minutes after they arrive at practice.
4. Plan to stay the entire practice. The last part of practice is very often the most important. Usually, there are also announcements made at the end of each practice. If you need to leave early, let the coaches know when you arrive at practice.
5. Swimmers are to enter the building at the Pool Entrance and go directly to the pool area. A swimmer found in any other part of the building could damage our relationship with the schools.
6. While on school grounds, the swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. During practice sessions, swimmers are never to leave the pool area without coach's permission.
7. The club has an obligation to act as guests while in the school (both swimmers and parents). Every member of the club needs to do everything possible to respect this privilege. Any damages to school property may result in financial liability of the swimmers parents. Any damage may also result in the swimmer being asked to leave the team permanently.
8. Parents are not allowed on the pool deck during practice unless it is an emergency.
9. Parents are allowed to observe practice from the bleachers just inside the pool area. Do not try to communicate with any swimmer from this area. This is not only distracting to the swimmer, but can also be distracting to the entire team as well as the coach.

Illness and Injury

Please inform your coach of any injury or illness that may affect your swimming performance in the pool, regardless of how serious or trivial it may be.

Any injury at practice should be communicated to the coach immediately.

If your swimmer will be out of the water over a long period of time with an injury or illness, please notify the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays coaches or one of the board members.

Swimmers Training Responsibilities

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases so does his/her responsibility. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her parents, and most importantly to themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for a 100% effort each time they come to practice.

Swimmers will be required to bring specified training accessories (i.e., goggles, flippers, etc.) to workouts. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure these items are properly adjusted and that spares are readily available.

Swimmer Conduct at Practice

The Stingrays follow the Minnesota Swimming, Inc. (MSI) Safety procedures at all times. This includes the following:

- Absolutely NO diving from the diving boards at any time, during or after practice.
- Slip-in entry into the pool. NO diving during the practice unless there is a coach watching or a coach has already told you to practice starts on your own.
- Never interfere with the progress of another swimmer during practice or otherwise
- Unsafe behavior will not be tolerated. Unsafe swimmers will be asked to leave the pool and parents will be notified
- Swimmers will remain in the pool area only. Swimmers are not allowed in any other part of the school building.

Parent Code of Conduct

As a parent of a swimmer and member of the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays, I will abide by the following guidelines:

- Practice *teamwork* with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of *Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment and Hard work*
- As a parent, I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting myself in a manner that earns the respect of my child, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets and practices
- Maintain self-control at all times. Know my role.

Swimmers – Swim Coaches – Coach Officials – Officiate Parents – Parent

- As a parent, I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward the coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
- Enjoy involvement with Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communication and actions.
- During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials are directed to a member of our coaching staff. Parents address officials via the coaching staff only.

Sanctions

Should I conduct myself in such a way that brings discredit or discord to the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays or USA Swimming, I voluntarily subject myself to disciplinary action. Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays maintains the right to terminate any membership with/without cause in the interest of our vision, mission and objectives.

Parent Responsibilities

Please make every effort to have your swimmers at practice on time. Realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. Encourage good diet and sleeping habits. They will serve your children well.

Your Athlete needs you: To have a successful program there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your youngster makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays and reacquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays parent.

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/hers children's athletics. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective and help your child reach his/her full potential as an athlete.

The coach is the Coach!: We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and oftentimes insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact the coach.

Best kind of parent: The coach's job is to motivate and constructively criticize the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition.

Ten and Under: Ten and Under are the most inconsistent swimmers and this can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and the swimmer alike! Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer first joins WARS, there may be a brief period in which he/she appears to slow down. This is a result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual.

Not every time: Even the very best swimmer will have meets where they do not do their best times. These "plateaus" are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season times should improve. Please be supportive of these "poor" meets.

The Ten Commandments For Parents of Athletic Children

Reprinted from The Young Athlete by Bill Burgess included in "The Swim Parents Newsletter"

I

Make sure your child knows that-win or lose, scared or heroic-you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.

II

Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/hers competitive attitude, their sports-manship, and their actual skill level.

III

Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.

IV

Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him-/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.

V

Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, sensitive free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you-win or lose-he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.

VI

Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.

VII

Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least with-in his/her hearing.

VIII

Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.

IX

Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.

X

Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches.

Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear or discomfort.

Handling Concerns

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but in fact this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising difficult issues with a coach:

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the other swimmers on the team. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short term inconvenience.
3. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.
4. If there is a difficulty with the coach go to the coach first. If you are unable to resolve the difficulty go to the head coach. If the difficulty is still unresolved go to a board member. If there are still concerns, bring them to the entire board at a board meeting.

Coaching Staff

Nothing has a greater influence on the quality of children's sports than the excellence of the coach. The Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays staff consists of certified coaches in USA Swimming with many years of coaching and stroke development experience.

Coaches Responsibility

The coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for youngsters that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself--"to be the best you can be." Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing youngsters in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach.
2. The coaches are responsible for stroke instruction and the training during the practices schedule.

3. The coaching staff and the board of directors will make the final decision concerning which meets Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays will attend as a team, other meets are available to the swimmers during the season. The coaching staff also makes the final decision concerning which events a swimmer is entered.
4. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer encouragement and constructive criticism regarding the swimmers performance. (It is the parent's job to offer love and understanding regardless of their youngster's performance)
5. The building of a relay team is the responsibility of the coaching staff.

The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays program. It is the swimmers and parents' responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.

Coaches Pledge

The Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingray Coaches will:

- Encourage good sportsmanship – Behave like a *Champion* whether you have a good swim or a bad swim. Respect officials, congratulate competitors, encourage teammates.
- Emphasize competition with oneself – The individual's improvement is our primary objective. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal.
- Believe all swimmers are winners –
 Winning is improving, learning, trying.
 Winning is the first time you get a good flip turn.
 Winning is finishing a race strong and well.
 Winning is performing better than you have ever performed before.

Board Responsibilities

The administrative functions of the club are overseen by the Board of Directors. The board consists of five parents elected for two year terms with half of the members being elected each year. The elections for board positions are held annually in November. The following are the board positions and their general areas of responsibility:

President

Responsibility: Conduct meetings, board/membership Call special meetings
 Hold elections Delegate authority and responsibility
 Board membership/job descriptions Conduct meetings, board and membership

Vice President/President Elect

Responsibility: Arrange pool availability Conduct meetings in absence of President
 Maintain contact with member Publicity

Treasurer/Registrar

Responsibility: Payroll/benefits Pay bills
 File taxes Maintain receipts
 Financial reports at board and registration meetings
 Billing and collection of registration and meet entry fees
 USS Registration – Club/Coaches/Swimmers
 Publish roster, club phone and e-mail list

Secretary

Responsibility:	Maintain handbook	Record minutes of meetings
	Send thank you notes	Maintain historical records
	Club mailings	Write newsletter and other correspondence
	Send gifts	

Member at Large

Responsibility:	Team Apparel sizing and try-on nights	WARS Caps
	Clothing: Shirts, Sweats, Parkas	Banners
	Team pictures	Team Paraphernalia
		Team Awards

Entries – Coach

Responsibility:	Meet articles	Distribution of meet information
	All entries	Pre-verification of times
	Keep best times	

Registration/Fee Structure

Seasons

Fall – September, October, & November

Winter – December, January, & February

Spring – March, April, & May

Summer – June & July

Swim Levels

We offer two levels within our Stingray program.

MINIRAYS – This level is for those who are learning the skills of competitive swimming

STINGRAYS – This level is for those who have developed their strokes and have endurance for the longer practices. The coaches determine when each Miniray swimmer is ready for the Stingray level. The decision will be made at the end of each season and will be communicated through the WARS Advancement Notice. All swimmers can swim 4 nights, Minirays will swim 1 hour and Stingrays will swim 1 1/2 hours.

Club Fees

Registration for each season takes place in the month preceding any given season. For example, registration for the fall season takes place in August and registration for the winter season takes place in November. Swimmers coming from another sport may register when the other sport is finished. However, all fees must be paid in full before the swimmer enters the water. The following fees will apply.

Seasonal

*(One season at a time paid in full by registration - fall
winter or spring- NO monthly payments)*

After Registration:

STINGRAY

\$115.00

\$125.00

MINIRAY

\$85.00

\$95.00

PARTIAL SEASON

*(1 or 2 months of any season paid in full by registration-fall
winter or spring- NO monthly payments)*

After Registration:

\$45/month

\$50/month

\$32/ month

\$37/ month

Annual

*(All three seasons paid in full by full registration-
NO monthly payments)*

\$315.00

\$230.00

Minnesota Swimming, Inc. (MSI) Registration

All Swimmers must be registered with MSI before entering the water, **No Exceptions**. We obtain our liability insurance through MSI therefore every swimmer is required to register. This program is secondary to other primary insurance in place through the athlete's employment, school, and parents or family. Annual MSI Registration is \$52.00 for a full year membership (good thru 12/31). Swimmers should pay this registration fee now if they have not registered for 2008. Seasonal MSI Registration is \$32.00 for the months of April-August only. The MSI fee for both annual as well as seasonal will be increasing one dollar a year through the year 2014.

Payments

All payment is due in full at the time of registration. No monthly payments will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.

Credit/Refund Policy

The board has agreed to issue credits to accounts for long term health related issues. Credits will be honored up to one year. No refunds will be issued.

Swim Meet Fees

At the beginning of the season you will receive a meet calendar for the remainder of the season. Parents are responsible for meet fees. Typically a swimmer will be given a registration form at swim practice for up coming meets. The entry fee must be paid with the registration. Typically, you can expect to be charged \$3.00 to \$7.00 per event that your swimmer is registered for, depending on the meet entered. This fee is non-refundable. In most meets, swimmers can swim three to five events per day. You may choose to swim one or both days.

Financial Assistance for Economically Disadvantaged Youth

USA Swimming/Minnesota Swimming as well as the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays provides reduced fees for Economically Disadvantaged Youth. Our policy is that no swimmer will be turned away because of an inability to meet the financial requirements of the club.

Requirements

All requests must be in writing and pre-arranged in advance of the start of the season with the club Treasurer.

Current evidence of participation in the school free and reduced lunch program.

*USA Swimming/Minnesota Swimming Inc. will waive all but \$5.00 of the MSI registration Fee.

*The Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays will also waive 50% of the club registration Fees.

Swimmer Advancement

The coaching staff evaluates each swimmer during the season. Each coach will consider the following guidelines when considering a move for the swimmer from Miniray to Stingray:

- Ability and willingness to focus on and following coaching instructions.
- Readiness for a greater challenge.
- Level of physical maturity
- Level of mental/emotional maturity

Swimmers and /or families should speak directly to their coach if there are any questions about your placement or movement.

Advancement Letter:

Each swimmer will be notified by mail before the beginning of any given season to notify them of their advancement from Miniray to Stingray.

Equipment Needed

Practice

- Swim Suit
- Swim Cap
- Goggles (2 pairs – swimmers should try to always have a back –up pair)
- Water Bottle

Swim Meets: (See Swim Meet section of handbook)

Where to get equipment: Swim suits, caps, goggles, and water bottles can be purchased at local sports, or purchased at swim meets.

Swimsuits- should fit SNUG. Swimsuits do stretch when wet. Do not buy the next size up to give the swimmer room to grow. Bigger suits often make it more difficult to swim properly as well as wear out much faster than a properly fitting suit.

Goggles – There is many styles, shapes and sizes. Each swimmer should choose a pair that fits comfortably to their face. The swimmer should try the goggles on before purchasing to assure that the goggles shape and size fit their eye socket comfortably. The gasket around each lens should have a sponge or rubber like cushion to protect the eye socket. Please do not purchase hard gasket goggles.

PLEASE LABEL ALL EQUIPMENT WITH YOUR NAME!!!!!!

Apparel

- Team Suits:** A team suit is usually chosen by the swimmers every two to three years. Suits may be purchased year round. Purchasing these suits is optional. However, it is suggested that the swimmers purchase team suits and wear them at meets to indicate representation of our club and to promote team spirit.
- Team Cap:** Team caps are usually available for purchase direct from the coaches. These caps help identify swimmers at meets as WARS team members. We strongly encourage swimmers to wear a team cap to all meets.
- Goggles:** Many swimmers find goggles desirable during practice due to the length of time spent in the chlorinated water. A limited number of these are available for sale from the coaches at the pool. They are also available for sale at several area stores.
- Team Shirts:** Team t-shirts and sweatshirts are also available. Remember that wearing our club shirts enhances team spirit and promotes our club. Shirts are available for parents and siblings, too.
- Team Towel:** Terry cloth swim towels are available to be purchased. The towels can also be monogrammed with the swimmers name. These are high quality towels and promote our club while keeping the swimmer dry and warm at the swim meets.

Scholarships for Swimmers pursuing Higher Education

The Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays Club awards up to four \$350.00 scholarships to qualified applicants. This scholarship will be a gift. A limit of one scholarship will be given per person. Each applicant needs to fill out an application and have two reference letters. The following criteria must be met in order for the applicant to qualify for the scholarship:

A graduating senior of the current school year and /or any student who has graduated from high school in the past two years.

A Minnesota Swimming, Inc. (MSI) registered swimmer in the Stingrays Club or has been MSI registered in the last two years.

Has a G.P.A. of at least a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent on a percentage scale.

Enrolled in one of the following:

- a. Accepted into an accredited college and enrolled at least part time
- b. Accepted into a Technical Institute and enrolled at least part time

Has swam competitively under MSI or a High School Program

Scholarship applications are available in January/February with the scholarships being awarded in March. Applications can be picked up from one of the Club Officers.

SWIM MEETS

Attending Your First Swim Meet

Swim meets are a great family experience! Here are some guidelines geared to help you through your first swim meet. Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other Stingray parent for help or information.

The Week before the Meet

You will receive a sheet from the coach giving you directions to the pool, a list of the events your swimmer will compete in, and the starting times of the warm-up sessions and the meet start time. Bring this along with you to the meet.

What Parents Need

The pool area is usually very warm so dress appropriately. Parents usually try to sit as a team in the bleacher areas but some meets allow you to bring folding chairs to sit on. Bring a highlighter and a pen/pencil for recording results. Bring your camera but remember not to take any flash photography at the start of the race. Bring along something to read or anything else to help pass the time between your child's events.

What the Swimmer Should Bring

- Apparel:** Swimsuit(s), latex or Lycra swim cap(s), goggles and two towels. A sweat suit or a pair of shorts and a T-shirt to slip on to keep warm between events and a pair of sandals.
- Food:** There is usually a snack bar at the meet but each swimmer is normally allowed to bring a small cooler. It is usually better to bring along your own *healthy* snacks.
- Drinks:** Water or fruit juices. If you choose sports drinks, be selective, not all of them are good for you!
- Snacks:** Include food high in carbohydrates, low in fiber and contain no protein or fat. This allows for rapid digestion, quick energy and little or no upset stomach.

Miscellaneous: A Blanket or sleeping bag to sit on between events. Games, coloring books, books or anything to pass the time while you are at the meet.

Transportation

The following is a transportation policy that is in effect for all functions related to the club: It is hereby the stated policy of the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays, effective immediately and until either revoked or restated by the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays Board of Directors, that transportation of swimmers and/or coaches to practices, meets, or any other event considered to be a club function by any non-public conveyance, as defined to include privately owned vehicles, is recognized by the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays as a purely private agreement between the parties involved and that neither the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays, nor the Willmar Aquatic Racing Stingrays Board of Directors, separately or as a group, except for the parties directly involved can be or will be considered as a party to such arrangement and that any liability in any form arising from such arrangement is purely and completely the responsibility of the parties involved.

Swimming: The Sport

The Skills

The four competitive strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly.

The Competition

Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances, depending on the age group and classification. Each swimmer may enter up to four individual events per day in a timed finals meet.

In *Freestyle* events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is the crawl which is characterized by the alternate overhand motion of the arms and an alternating flutter kick. The *Backstroke* consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick. On turns, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall.

The *Breaststroke* requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pulled from the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The elbows shall remain under the surface of the water except at the finish. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously, with shoulders in line with the surface of the water.

Some consider the *butterfly* to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous overhand stroke of arms combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs tighter and may not flutter, scissor or use the breaststroke kick. (The butterfly was developed in the early 1950's as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.)

The *Individual medley*, commonly referred to as the I.M., features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to the backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

In the *medley relay*, all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the final swimmer, freestyle.

The *freestyle relay* events consist of four freestyle swimmers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the event.

Starts, Turns, and Finishes

Many races are won or lost by the swimmer's performance in the start, turn and finish. In the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the starter who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the gun or starting horn is sounded to start the race. If the starter feels that one of the swimmers has moved, left early or gotten an unfair advantage, the race will be recalled. Under USA swimming rules, one false start disqualifies the swimmer.

Swimming: The Rules

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules, a disqualification will result.

Disqualification:

This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. Disqualifications may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, advancing themselves by walking on or pushing off the bottom of the pool, pulling on the lane lines or unsportsmanlike-like conduct. A disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. Disqualifications are also a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

<i>Freestyle</i>	Walking on the bottom Pulling on the lane rope Not touching the wall on a turn Not completing the distance
<i>Backstroke</i>	Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race
<i>Breaststroke</i>	Illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissor (sidestroke) Shoulders not level Alternating movements of the arms Taking two arms strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water Touching with only one hand at the turns or finish
<i>Butterfly</i>	Alternating movements of the arms or legs Pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (Underwater recovery) A breaststroke style of kick Touching with only one hand at the turns or finish

Officials

Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test and work meets before being certified. Officials may be Timers, Turn Judges, Stroke Judges, Relay Takeoff Judges, Clerk of Course, Starter, or Referee. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

Swimming Terms

Age Group Swimming: Provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and 15-18. Local meets may also include events for 8 and under, and single age categories.

Block: The starting platform

Bulkhead: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50 meter pool into two 25 yard courses.

Circle Swimming: Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

Code of Conduct: An agreement signed by a swimmer/coach/parent stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

Cut: Slang for qualifying time, a time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

Distance: Term used to refer to events over 400 meters/500 yards.

DQ: Disqualified. This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind; e.g., freestyle kick in butterfly. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the time be used as an official time. Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules.

Drill: An exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

Dyrland Training: Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching, calisthenics and/or weight training.

Entry Form: Form on which a swimmer enters a competition. Usually includes USA Swimming number, age, sex, event numbers and entry times.

False Start: Occurs when a swimmer is moving before the start of the race is sounded. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in disqualification

Final: The championship heat of an event in which the top swimmers from the preliminaries compete.

Finish: The final phase of the race; the touch at the end of the race.

Flags: Backstroke flags placed 5 yards (short course) or 5 meters (long course) from the end of the pool. The flags enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently.

Gutter: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is recirculated through the filtration system.

I.M. Slang for Individual Medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

Junior Nationals: National level meets held in both short course and long course seasons, one of each in the East and in the West, limited to swimmers ages 18 and under. There are qualifying standards, and swimmers are limited to four individual events and three relays.

Lap Counter: A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. (Also, the person who counts for the swimmer, stationed at the opposite end from the start.)

Long Course: a pool 50 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its summer competition in long course pools.

Long Distance: Term used to refer to events of 800 meters/1000yardsm to 1500 meters/1650 yards in lengths

LSC: Local Swimming Committee. Governing body for swimming at the local level. There are 59 LSC's in the country

Meet: Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmer test himself against the clock to see how he is improving.

Middle Distance: Term used to refer to events of 200 yards/meters to 400 meters/500 yards in length.

National Age Group Time Standards: Time standards derived from the previous years' results that are broken down by age and sex as well as C, B, A, Champ, Zone. The designations are National and should be used as motivational times.

National Reportable Times/Top 16: Time standards set for both short and long course based on previous years' achievements. Only times meeting these standards may be submitted for consideration each year. The Top 16 submitted times in each event are recognized.

Negative Split: Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.

Officials: A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and referees.

Open Water Swims: Any freestyle event over 1500 meters, normally conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river, or ocean.

Pace Clock: Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice; may also be digital.

Prelims: slang for preliminaries, also called Heats or Trials. Those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in the events.

Q-time: Qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

Relay: an event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Scratch: to withdraw from an event in competition.

Short Course: A pool 25 yards or 25 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in short course yards.

Split: A time recorded from the official start to the completion of an initial distance within a longer event. Also the time for one of the four individuals in a relay. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times, for example, the lead off swim in a relay, or the lead off portion of an event.

Sprint: describes the shorter events (50 and 100). In training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

Streamline: The position used by swimmers when starting or pushing off the walls designed to reduce water resistance.

Taper: The final preparation phase, sometimes referred to as "rest" Prior to major competitions, older, more experienced swimmers shave their entire bodies to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water.

Time Trial: A time –only swim which is not part of a regular meet.

Touch Pad: A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's finish is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

USS Number: A number assigned to a swimmer upon joining United States Swimming. The membership card with this number may be required at any given competition.

Warm Down: Low intensity swimming used by swimmers after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

Warm Up: Low intensity swimming used by swimmer prior to a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm. Warm up gradually increases heart rate. Respiration and helps to prevent injury.

Watches: Stopwatches used to time swimmers during a competition. When totally automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method.

Apparel Costs

Costs are approximate and vary based on swimmer preference. Cost change with the changes in apparel.

		Male (Avg.)	Female (Avg.)
Swimsuit	\$15.00 - \$60.00	\$25.00	\$45.00
Team Suit		\$25.00	\$35.00
Towel	\$26.00 (embroidered \$3.50 extra)		

Sweatshirt	\$25.00 (embroidered \$3.50 extra)
T-Shirt	Approx. \$10.00
Goggles	\$6.00 and up
Bungee Straps	\$5.00
Swim Cap	\$3.00 and up
Polo Shirts	\$25.00

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