**2024 Summer Swim Team Handbook**

Welcome to the Lake of the Woods Barracudas.

We look forward to having your swimmers join us!

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a basic reference and help you navigate the season, as well as parent and swimmer responsibilities. We hope it will answer most of your questions.

**Team Description and History**

The Lake of the Woods Barracudas are a member of the Rappahannock Swim League (RSL) – a recreational summer swim league for the greater Fredericksburg, Virginia region. Over 2,500 swimmers participate in this league ranging in age from 5-18. This year, the 25 teams in the league are broken down into 4 divisions. The Barracudas are in the American Division for the 2024 season. There will be six dual meets. The RSL swim season culminates with a Division Finals Meet held Saturday the 20th of July.

**Swim Team Board**

President – – Lindsey Hopewell Vice President – Amy Tuttle

Treasurer – Heather Lowe Secretary –

Data– Erik Powers Fundraising/Apparel – Claire Schietinger

Volunteer Coordinator- Greg Frey Concessions/Events – Christine Porter

RSL Representative – Eugene Slagle

The Board can be contacted by email at [lowswim@gmail.com](mailto:lowswim@gmail.com), or by the individual email addresses listed on the contact page of the website.

**Mission Statement**

We believe in providing an atmosphere where children can grow and thrive. Our hope is to provide lake youth with a life-long love of swimming and encourage all to improve and reach their potential through a program that encourages team spirit, good sportsmanship, hard work, character development, and fun.

**Team Symbol and Colors**

Our team symbol is the Barracuda - the fierce, predatory fish. Young barracudas travel in large ‘schools’ and work together to take down predators. Our team colors are black, aqua, silver, and lime green.

**Team Location**

The Barracudas practice and host all home meets at the Sweetbriar Pool within Lake of the Woods, in Locust Grove, VA. The address of the pool is 101 Sweetbriar Park Rd, Locust Grove, VA 22508.

**Team Website address** - <https://lowswim.org>

**Swim Season**

Our 2024 swim season will run from our first practice, Tuesday, May 28, 2024, through the finals meet held on Saturday, July 20, 2024.

**Requirements**

The Lake of the Woods Barracudas Swim Team is open to any swimmer whose parent, grandparent, or legal guardian is a resident of Lake of the Woods. We reserve the right to request proof of residency.

**Prerequisites**

Participants must be able to swim the width of the pool unassisted, WITHOUT stopping, or grabbing the side. Please note: Swim team is not a swim lessons program. Therefore, participants must be able to swim in deep water comfortably and have a basic knowledge of the components of a swim team. Evaluations will be held the first week of practice to determine swimming ability and placement on the team.

The head coach reserves the right to ask that a child be placed in swim lessons to improve his or her skills before being admitted to the swim team. If swim lessons are recommended, the registration fees will be refunded minus the $20 RSL fee as that goes directly to the league.

- Swimmers must be 5 years old by June 1st

- Swimmers must be water safe and have already mastered basic skills like bobbing and floating

- All potential Barracudas must be able to swim 10 yards without assistance and have the potential to swim 25 yards without stopping

- Parents are required to pick up swimmers promptly after practice. Coaches and Board Members are not babysitters and are not responsible for swimmers outside of their specific practice time.

Only swimmers capable of swimming 25 yards (10 and under) or 50 (11+) yards will be entered in swim meets.

**Registration**

Registration will be online, returning swimmers registration will be held April 21st-27th, new swimmer registration will be held April 28th-May 19th

In May we will hold an information session and parent meeting date, time, and location are to be determined.

(At this time we have not finalized the cost for registration)

The cost of registration is used to pay for:

● Dues to the RSL ● Insurance for each swimmer ● End of Season awards ● Equipment and supplies

● Coaches’ salaries

Membership of the Team will consist of swimmers whose parents, grandparents, and/or guardians live in or own property in Lake of the Woods.  The Team shall have one class of membership, with each family having one vote.  General membership for a member who is not a Board Member will commence each calendar year on May 1st, or such other later date that the member fulfills the requirements of the Bylaws and will end on August 30th of the same calendar year.

**Communication**

The dissemination of information to all members and families on the swim team and the feedback of data are of paramount importance to us. The following methods are used to “get the word out”:

● Coaches- email them or talk to them at an appropriate time (not when there are swimmers in the water)

● Team Handbook- available online, it contains useful information for both new and older team members

● Website- Our webpage is https://lowswim.org The site has general team information, alerts, team records, meet and practice schedules, and other useful information

● Facebook- Find us on Facebook at: Lake of the Woods Barracudas

● Email- Email is our primary form of communication. It is imperative you check your email regularly for information about upcoming meets, schedule changes, etc.

● Swimtopia – app used by the team to manage dual meets. The app allows you to mark attendance for meets and events, gives swimmer times for the season, keeps track of personal bests, etc.

Problems and questions should be directed to the person who can answer it best. Questions regarding practice, stroke instruction, etc. should be directed to the coaches. All other concerns should be directed to the main email – [lowswim@gmail.com](mailto:lowswim@gmail.com)

**Team Apparel**

To build team spirit, it is important for each swimmer to have a team suit, t-shirt, and cap. T-shirts and caps will be provided before the first meet. Additional team apparel/caps for practice will also be available for purchase online and throughout the season.

Our team suit is a plain black suit. For girls, it needs to be a one-piece competitive swimsuit (usually a racerback or flyback suit). For boys, it needs to be a black jammer or racer brief.

Please ONLY have your swimmer wear the team suit during swim meets if possible. The chlorine in the water shortens suit life spans. Rinsing your swimsuit in cold water only and hang drying will prolong the life of your suit.

RSL rules state that swimmers on year-round, high school, or college teams cannot wear those team suits or caps to RSL meets. Swimmers can turn non-RSL caps inside out, if in a pinch.

**Equipment**

Each swimmer must have a swimsuit and cap as discussed above. Each swimmer should also have goggles, and a water bottle to stay hydrated. The team will collect donations of gently used goggles, caps, and suits (team and practice) and do our best to distribute them to those expressing need, so please fill out a wish list form if you are looking for any of these items.

It is important your swimmers wear appropriate swimsuits for practice. While swim trunks may be fashionable for young male swimmers, the drag caused by them increases the difficulty of a practice. Similarly, one piece suits are required for females, as two piece suits are not suitable for this type of practice. All swimmers with hair longer than ear length, should wear a swim cap to all practices and meets to keep hair out of their face and protect it from chlorine.

**Practice Structure and Schedule**

All practices are held at the Sweetbriar Park Pool. Practice will begin Tuesday, May 28th. Please do your best to attend practice. All practices will be held in the morning. Practices are held Monday through Friday, with the exception of the day after a meet (no practice on Saturday or Sunday). We require that year-round swimmers that have summer swim practice attend at least one practice a week.

During practice, only swimmers that are swimming or sitting waiting with a parent will be allowed on deck. We have a large team this year with overlapping practices, and extra kids that are playing or fooling around on deck tend to be distracting.

We remind parents that do decide to sit on deck to please keep in mind that the coaches and guards have a short period after practice ends to get the pool ready for opening, so please do not move the tables and chairs, and please clean up anything you bring.

Our practice times are as follows this year\*: ( times are to be determined by registration numbers)

May 28th thru 31st – Practice begins and Evaluations will be held. For evaluations, we ask that all swimmers show up to the time slot based on their current age, regardless of previous years practice assignment. The coach will adjust times as necessary.

Swimmers will be split according to age and ability. All decisions regarding appropriate practice groups will be determined by the coach.

\*Practice times are subject to change depending on number registered and swimmer ability.

\*\*All decisions regarding swimmer ability and placement will be made within the first week. Refunds will only be given for those that leave before the first meet on June 5th. Refunds will not include the $20 RSL fee as that is collected independently by the RSL. No refunds will be issued after June 5th.

**Swimmer Responsibilities**

● Be prepared and poolside at practice start time and try to make it every day. 4

● Keep a positive attitude and listen to the coaches for instruction and suggestions during practice.

● Leave the pool deck when your practice is finished.

● Please notify the coaches of any conflicts with practice or swim meets.

● Swimmers must check-in by 4pm at home swim meets and 5pm for away ones for event assignment or they

may be scratched from their events.

● Remember to use good sportsmanship not only at practice, but at swim meets as well.

● Most of all, do your best and have fun!

● Attend at least two swim meets

**Parent Responsibilities**

● Support the coaches and our team with a positive attitude.

● Must be available to work at every meet their child swims.

● Family must attend at least 2 meets

● Notify Coach if your swimmer cannot attend practice or a meet.

● Try your best not to cancel last minutes for swim meets (unless in an emergency). The coach spends hours

figuring out the meet lineup and a missing child changes lane assignments, relay teams, and other aspects of the meet outside of simply individual swims.

● Use Swimtopia to indicate swimmer availability for meets.

● Be on time to practice and for pickup (if your child is old enough to be dropped off).

● Keep your swimmer home if they have had a fever or thrown up in the last 24 hours, or if they are not feeling

well in any way.

● Volunteer for at least half of any swim meet your child is participating in (at least 2 during the season)

**Swim Meets**

All home meets will be held at Sweetbriar Park Pool. There are two kinds of meets: Regular meets (aka Dual Meets) and the RSL Division Finals. Dual meets start promptly at 6pm. Swimmers should arrive at 4:00 pm for home meets and at 5:00 pm for away meets. The results of each meet will be posted on our Swimtopia page.

**Meet Entries**

The team coaches and head data person are responsible for deciding which meets and events swimmers should participate in. The Head Coach has final discretion in making all individual and relay entry changes on Swimtopia. Swimmers should attend all meets and participate in all assigned events. Families are required to attend at least 2 meets. If they fail to do so, they will not be allowed to register the following year. If a problem arises, the swimmer or parent should notify the coaching staff as soon as possible.

**Age Groups**

Swimmers compete in age group categories as follows: 6 and under; 7-8; 9-10; 11-12; 13-14; and 15-18. Your swimmer may be asked to swim “up” at the coach’s discretion. Age as of June 1st determines age group.

**Meet Procedures**

Swimmers’ meet event assignments are provided the day of the meet. There will be several copies of the meet entry sheet available. Sharpie markers are also available to write down the events on the back of your child’s hand if you choose to do so. Meet entries will also be posted online.

Other general meet procedures:

1. For Regular Season meets, arrive at the pool at 4:00 pm for home meets and 5:00 pm for away meets. Report to your coach with your suit, cap and goggles on. Warm-ups will begin shortly. Be ready!

2. Each group has its specific warm-up time as designated by the Head Coach. Become familiar with your assigned warm-up group.

3. All swimmers must wear the team cap and team suit. Wearing the team uniform promotes team unity, pride and greatly improves spectator recognition.

4. Each swimmer is responsible for knowing which events he/she is swimming in and to be present at the “Clerk of the Course” station at the appropriate time prior to the event.

5. The Clerk of the Course will give swimmers their heat and lane assignments. Relay Events do not report to the Clerk of Course. Please see one of the coaches for lane assignments for relays.

6. Hand timers are used. The official time is recorded and entered by scorekeeping personnel that are then posted as final results.

7. In between races, swimmers should rest and stay warm. Store up your energy for your next event or to cheer on your teammates.

8. Drink and eat throughout the meet. Go easy on ‘heavy’ foods. Avoid milk products.

9. What to bring to a meet: swim suit, 2 team caps, 2 pairs of goggles, 2 towels, deck chairs, sun block, team shirt, sweatshirt, water bottle/drinks, snacks, money for concessions, outfit for the ride home, and something to do.

10. If you know you will miss a meet, please give the coaches notification ahead of time. Please remember to mark your swimmer’s availability in Swimtopia for events. These will close 5 days before the meet so the coach can set up the events

11. A swimmer can compete in a maximum of 3 individual events and 3 relays, with one of those relays being the all age groups “Graduated” Relay

12. Each team can enter an unlimited number of swimmers in 25/50 freestyle events

13. All other individual events are limited by the number of lanes in the host pool, typically 6 lanes allowing 6 swimmers per team.

14. Teams are limited to two relay teams per relay event unless otherwise agreed upon by teams.

15. To qualify for Championships, the swimmer must have competed in at least two meets and have received a legal time in at least one individual event.

**Meet Behavior**

● Remember, when you wear our team colors, you represent the Lake of the Woods Barracudas Swim Team. Please let your actions reflect well on your team and your community

● As a matter of courtesy and proper procedure, all questions swimmers or parents may have during a meet concerning results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet should be referred to the coaching staff only. They in turn will pursue the matter through proper channels.

● For home meets, deck space is limited, so please be mindful. We also ask that if parents are at the meet until the end, please assist in clean up and set up for the next day.

● When at an ‘away’ meet, leave the team area in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of the meet. Police your own area.

● The Head Coach has final say on which event a swimmer competes in. Swimmers are never to add or scratch or change relay team assignments without first consulting with a team coach.

● Alcoholic beverages and smoking are prohibited by RSL and LOW on the pool deck.

**Volunteer Policy**

This sport requires parents to be participants, not spectators. Parent volunteers are needed to run the swim meets. There are many volunteer opportunities that can be learned “on the job.” There are RSL-hosted training clinics for volunteer positions such as referee, starter, stroke and turn, clerk of course, computer data entry, and timer. Swimming is like no other sport. It not only requires dedication and hard work on the part of the athlete, but also on the part of you, the parent(s). This is a family sport, where both coaches and parents work together, for the benefit of the children.

**One member, age 16 or up, of each team family is expected to work each meet their child swims and the Championship meet.** Families sign up on-line for the meets and volunteer slots using Swimtopia.. Volunteers are responsible for finding their own substitute if they are unable to fulfill their commitment and to communicate the change to the Volunteer Coordinator. If a volunteer does not fulfill a scheduled volunteer slot, and has not made a switch with another volunteer, their swimmer(s) will not be allowed to participate in the next swim meet. Potentially, based on the number of families participating on the team and swimmers swimming at a meet, volunteers may need to work both sessions of the meet to fill all needed spots. If you do not fulfill your volunteer obligation and have not discussed it with the volunteer coordinator or another board member, your child may not be eligible to swim the following year.

**Parent Volunteer Requirements**

All Parents must be available to work any meet that their child swims in. Parents will be asked to volunteer for finals if their child(ren) is swimming. All parents that are scheduled to work at a particular meet are to report to the Meet director on deck when you arrive. Meet set up begins at 4:00 pm on meet days.

Whether or not you have experience with swimming, you must train for one of the jobs listed below. At least one parent must work at least ½ of each meet if their child swims. We do our best to accommodate parents with younger swimmers and have them work the first half whenever possible. In some cases, both parents may have to work if we are short-handed. The number in the bracket represents the number of volunteers per position to run one shift (1/2) of a meet.

There are six positions which require RSL Clinic Training: Referee, Stroke and Turn, Starter, Clerk of Course, Timer, and Data. We cannot run a meet unless those positions are filled, so we expect one parent from each family to be trained in these critical positions. Stroke and Turn online training has a cost of $25.00. The team will reimburse at the end of the season any parent or guardian who takes the training and works at least ½ of three meets as a stroke and turn judge.

**Training for the 2024 season:**

This year, the RSL has moved all training online. They take anywhere from 25 minutes to two hours. They can be found at <https://rsl.swimtopia.com/training>

The clinics will instruct you on the rules and responsibilities of these jobs. The training is not difficult and is vital to ensure that meets run more smoothly. A complete description of the job responsibilities can be found on our website. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of training for these positions. The more people we have qualified to work these jobs, the more flexibility we have when running a meet.

Swim meets and our swim team cannot function if ALL of the volunteer positions are not filled for EACH shift (half) at EACH meet. If at any point you have volunteered for a position and later feel that you cannot fulfill your duties, please promptly inform the Volunteer Coordinator.

Those volunteering for stroke and turn will be reimbursed as long as they work at least 4 meet halves during the season. We strongly encourage anyone with a swim background to consider being a stroke and turn judge, as we need 4 per meet.

**Inclement Weather**

● In the event of inclement weather, check emails and the Barracudas social media pages prior to the event

● If thunder and/or lightning occur during a meet, the head referee and RSL reps from each team will decide what will occur in accordance with section 8.6 of RSL rules.

● There is a minimum delay of 30 minutes in the event of lightning and/or thunder.

● Occasionally, at meets, the need to seek shelter in your car will be necessary. However, please do not leave until told to, since often times the meet will restart after the storm passes.

● If a meet is postponed, the meet will typically continue the next day, unless the host pool schedules otherwise.

**RSL Division**

Patriot

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AH – Aquia Harbour Dolphins |  |  |
| AR – Austin Ridge Rapids Swim Team |  |  |
| FL – Fawn Lake Fliers Swim Team |  |  |
| FF – Ferry Farm Flying Fish |  |  |
| LOW – Lake of the Woods Barracudas |  |  |
| LS – Leeland Station Leeland Express |  |  |

**Swim meet dates for the 2024 season:**

WED June 5th Home Exhibition Meet vs CC (Country Club)

WED June 12th @ LS (Leeland Station 115 Riggs Rd Fredericksburg, VA 22405)

MON June 17th @AH (Aquia Harbor 204 Bow Cove Stafford, VA 22554)

WED June 26th Home vs. Austin Ridge

MON July 1st @FL (Fawn Lake 11300 Longstreet Dr Spotsylvania, VA 22551)

MON July 8th Home vs Ferry Farm

SAT July 20th RSL Finals TBD

**VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS (\*positions require training)**

Announcer (home meets only)

● Announces events to report to the Clerk of the Course and scores.

Head Timer\*

● Ensures all watches are operational and maintains extra watches.

● Briefs timers about procedure before the meet.

Timer (3 per lane, with one as a recorder, 9 total)

● Checks swimmer’s name prior to start.

● Starts stopwatch on flash of light of starting device.

● Stops stopwatch on contact with wall

● Records times on timesheet

Referee\* (home meets only)

● Ensures safe and fair competition.

● Keeps meet moving.

● Enforce RSL rules.

● Overall manager of meet.

Admin Referee\* (home meets only)

● Assists Referee.

Stroke and Turn Judges\* (2)

● Ensures that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are observed.

● Observes swimmers and applies the rules fairly and consistently at all times, using common sense and good judgment.

● Determines if stroke was performed legally and properly completes DQ cards.

● Uniform coverage around the pool is needed.

Starter\* (home meets only)

● Starts each event after the referee signal.

● After referee whistle indicates ready to start, The starter takes control and consistently instructs swimmers, Event\_\_\_, Heat \_\_, Boys / Girls, \_\_\_meters Freestyle, \_\_length of pool, and in a calm voice…”Take your mark”

● Keeps meet moving and on time.

Head Clerk of the Course\* Clerk of the Course (4)

● Organizes swimmers for events/heats.

● Keeps meet moving and on time.

Runner (2, home meets only)

● Picks up time sheets from timers at the end of the event /heat and turn sheets into the scorers.

Head Data\*

● Responsible for all team records and information and data checking.

Data Checker

● Reviews times and scores.

● Discrepancies are brought to the referee for decisions.

Heat Ribbons (home meets only)

● Distributes ribbons to heat winners

Ribbons (2)

● Places stickers on backs of ribbons

Set-up/Breakdown (home meets only)

● Sets up tables and chairs on pool deck, concessions area, and data entry area.

● Sets up lights, starter equipment, and canopies.

● Breaks down the pool deck and disposes of trash at the end of the meet.

Concessions (2, home meets only)

● Prepares food and drink

● Assists Head Concessions in designated tasks.

**RSL Meets**

We have six dual RSL meets this year, three at Home and three Away.

**RSL Finals**

The Rappahannock Swim League American divisional championship meet runs most of the day on Saturday, July 20, 2024. The finals meet is likely to be broken down into two halves; older age groups in the afternoon, and the younger age groups in the morning session given that it will be six teams competing rather than 2.

**Recognition/Place Ribbons**

All swimmers will receive an official RSL ribbon if they place in the top 6 in any dual meet event. Divisional Championship finals awards may include ribbons and medals at the discretion of the RSL.

