

Southampton Swim Team Basics

What do those letters mean on the meet sheet or heat card?

JRAC (James River Aquatic Club) establishes time standards for swimmers to compete. N stands for novice, R for regular, R* is a novice swimming as a regular, X is for expert, and XX for double expert. Every time a swimmer ages up (May 31st of each year), they begin as novices again. However, they carry their best times with them and they could be N-XX. When Mites move up to Midgets and start swimming 50s instead of 25s, they do lose their times. Sometimes, the coaches will take a swimmer who may still be a novice but whose times are faster than the novice cut off, and swim them as an R*. This opportunity is often done because our coaches seed swimmers to have the best personal outcome as possible. One of SRA's greatest strengths is having lots of swimmers in every division for every stroke. A double X freestyler may be a novice butterflyer. Time standards can be found on www.jracsummerswim.org.

Additionally, some kids will have a QUA after their time. This designation stands for qualifying time for Champs. Not all swimmers with a QUA will have a spot at Champs.

The Five W's of Champs

Who: Swimmers with a qualifying time are eligible for Champs, but it does not ensure that your swimmer will swim at Champs. With such a huge team, our coaches work exceptionally hard to seed as many swimmers as possible while strategically planning to score as many points as possible. Coaches invite all swimmers (Mighty Mites and older) with qualifying times to continue with practices after our final regular meet of the season. Coaches determine what swimmers will attend Champs and in what events and post the list at the pool.

What: At SRA, Champs' week is fun for swimmers, parents and coaches. There are outings and events for each age group regardless of whether your swimmer is attending Champs. There is a pep rally for the entire team, complete with Mohawk shaving, carbo-loading and jello wrestling! The leads to the championship meet between all the JRAC teams in the league. We end the week with a celebratory dinner Friday at Jason's Deli and our annual banquet Saturday night.

When: Traditionally the fourth Thursday and Friday of July, Champs are held at NOVA Aquatic Center on Gayton Road.

Why: To compete, to have fun, and to celebrate a season of hard work and dedication.

What are the jobs on sign up genius? SRA wants YOU!

Running a successful home or away meet requires a lot of volunteers. Southampton parents always dig in and do their best to help, just as they encourage their swimmers to try their best in the pool. When you are new to swim team the jobs seem a bit overwhelming. Here is the low-down — if you can breathe and move, you are qualified to help! Yippee!

Each meet has a first and second half dividing the jobs into manageable chunks. Often volunteering allows parents to get an up-close view of swimmers' experiences. The best part of summer is watching a tentative swimmer barely dive off the block grow to confidently touching

Southampton Swim Team Basics

the wall at a final meet. Or those same swimmers learning to race hard and then turn to the person in the next lane to shake hands. Volunteering poolside gets you the inside view.

Timers*: At each home meet, we provide twelve timers per half with each lane having two SRA timers. One person has the task of writing down all the recorded times. The SRA head timers are Graham Parlow and Pete Svoboda who are also timing each heat so that if there is an error, there is another stopwatch to help out. Timing is as simple as hitting the start button when the light and buzzer initiate the race, and hitting stop when the swimmer hits the wall. A timer does receive heat cards from swimmers on which they record the times and then they pass those cards to card runners. At an away meet, we provide 6 or 8, depending on the number of lanes the pool has, per half with only one SRA timer per lane.

Starters: With training provided by JRAC at the start of the season, few volunteers have more power at a swim meet than the person who says “go”. This person tracks number of swimmers in each lane in case an errant swimmer has not arrived yet. S/he announces the race and the heat to the pool. This person manages the actual racing. It is fun job and good for someone who is comfortable using a mike and is willing to learn when to say “Swimmers take your mark,” or “Stand down.” Not a race happens without the starter having a view.

Card Runners*: Get your Fitbit out and crank those steps! Card runners are the willing folks who go behind each heat and collect cards from timers. They also deliver them to the head table in proper lane order. Runners are essential in allowing the meet times to be tracked and recorded. It is another wonderful spot to watch the meet!

Heat Card Table*: Before a swimmer can turn in a heat card to clerk of course, it must first be collected from the Heat Card Table. At SRA’s home meets, these volunteers sit on the rooftop, under an umbrella at a table and distribute all the heat cards to SRA swimmers. As events get closer, they help locate an occasional swimmer who has not arrived to collect his/her card. A job that allows you to encourage our youngest and perhaps bravest of swimmers as they begin their journey to the diving blocks. At away meets, these same volunteers work a table that is designated for SRA.

Clerk of Course*: Once a swimmer gets his/her heat card, they head to the clerk of course. Clerk of course workers can manage lots of questions and lots of kids. And numbers. They collect the cards that the kids turn in and organize the swimmers by seedtime. Typically the faster swimmers in the heat swim in the middle three lanes with slower heats beginning with novice and moving to XX. Clerk of course also knows that you create heats with X and XX swimmers if appropriately needed. Using these skills, volunteers create the exciting races the crowds love to cheer. While not a ringside job, persons who work clerk of course will always know when their swimmer is headed to the pool and can catch those races.

Caller*: For the person who has a sense of humor, patience and can either project his/her voice or use a speaker. Once the folks at clerk of course have the heat organized, someone needs to call those darling swimmers into a heat, hand out the heat card and have them line up on the benches. This job is lively and gives you one of the best views of our youngest competitors.

Southampton Swim Team Basics

Mite walkers*: Five year olds who attend an SRA meet with over 300 swimmers in the hot sun are seriously brave. Shoot, even the seasoned eight year olds are too. But an adult to walk them from the benches at Clerk of Course to the benches by the blocks is always a HUGE help. Not only does this walker get to hold hands with some super sweet kids, but also calms a few fears, helps with goggles, and gets to smile into faces that really need it. This job also lets you rack up some Fitbit steps.

Head table: Lots of places to plug in here. Computer guru. Great with numbers. Patient. Willing to stay after the meet to finish crunching the numbers. If this area is a place in which you feel drawn, or the snacks are just so tempting, reach out to the folks under there and consider shadowing. It is the nuts and bolts of a meet with a view of everything happening.

Announcer: You speak well, clearly and slowly over a mike. You can read. Consider this position. You get to announce everything that needs to be communicated from scores to what's for sale at the snack bar.

Strokes and Turns Judges: This job requires preseason training, but if you are interested, consider shadowing this summer. The strokes and turns judges learn what the JRAC considers the appropriate strokes and what counts as a disqualifying motion. It is a job for a person who likes details and is comfortable with making the disqualifying call.

Referee: Stalwart, calm, and willing to listen, the ref hears contended calls. Coaches are the only ones who can approach the ref about a call and they know how to approach the ref and conduct themselves. A ref watches each heat so that s/he has sense of how each heat was swum. Refs also help Strokes and Turns judges with questions.

Ribbons*: How do our darling swimmers get their ribbons? Volunteers take the printed out stickers and the sheets, and make sure all of our ribbons are labeled appropriately and all our mite participants get a ribbon recognizing their efforts. This volunteer has the opportunity to stay late and do this after the meet or in the comfort of their home the next day returned to coaches before fun practices begin. Coaches will pass out the ribbons.

Coaches meals*: We feed our coaches. It is that simple. There is a sign up genius to do this. You may partner with another family or go it alone. We have seven coaches who need food and drink during the long, hot meets.

Mite Party*: A chance to celebrate our youngest, sign up for popsicles or juice boxes or watermelon with several other families for each mite party.

Photographer/ videographer*: We have a team of almost 300 hundred swimmers. If you are a person who likes to click photos and you captured a super dear or awesome moment, PLEASE SHARE. There is the Facebook page Southampton Recreation Association. Also, if you are super handy with a video camera, we could use some video clips of meets and lip sync. We also have an end-of-season slide show. If this is a talent you have, please contact Susie Hudgins at susanhudgins@mac.com.

Look for the * in the list above. Those denote the jobs that are easiest for the first or second time meet workers. There are other volunteer opportunities for helping with Lip Sync, team

Southampton Swim Team Basics

events, pancake breakfast, Champs week activities, pep rally, champs, and our banquet. Truly the work is fun and one makes friends to last a lifetime.

What are Big Buddies and Little Buddies?

At SRA, we value the friendships between all ages of people. Our swim team fosters these special relationships with a big buddy/little buddy system that is crucial to the dynamic cheering we have and the fun team spirit. Southampton consistently has more senior swimmers than any other pool in Richmond because of the inspiration young swimmers get from the relationship with their buddies. This year, five older swimmers will be grouped together and assigned three mites. Each big buddy is responsible for each little buddy. Here is what a big buddy does:

Find your little buddy — Reach out and say hello, and ask what your mite thinks about swimming, summer, and school. Ask the coaches if you don't know who your little buddy is. Enlist the help of your parents. Parents, if this family is new to swimming, consider offering help to this new family.

Go to Saturday morning mite practice and find your buddy. Swim with your buddy. Play sharks and minnows with your buddy.

At the swim meet, find your buddy before and/or after a race - cheer and encourage your buddy.

Once we learn the theme, encourage your buddy to dress for the theme. Have fun with that.

Mite parties — find your mite if you can and sit with him or her. The mite practices are a great time to connect and have the coaches help you find your buddy.

For at least one meet, make a poster with your mite's name. Then give the poster to your mite.

Take a sharpie to the meet and write Don't Mess with the S on your mite's back.

If you will not be at a meet, let the little buddy know. That is the beauty of five big buddies. Hopefully a few of the others will be there to chip in. But, please, nothing is lonelier for a little buddy than to walk around a meet looking for a big buddy and finding there is no one.

And little buddy parents please do the following:

Let your big buddy know if your mite will not be swimming. The big buddies are also disappointed when their little buddy is nowhere to be found. If you don't know your big buddy, just ask a coach or a seasoned parent who a kid is, and they will direct you to the correct person.

Let your mite cheer for his/her big buddy! Help your mite find out what the big buddy is swimming, and encourage a cheer or a congratulations.

Let your big buddy know if you will not be at the mite party.

Parents do help make this happen but truly the kids work the magic.

Southampton Swim Team Basics

What is does it mean when SRA announces its theme?

The Saturday practice before the second home meet is the start of fun times at SRA. The coaches announce the theme. Themes are sometimes revealed through clues. It is fun and should you have swimmers at more than one practice, encourage them to keep the secret. Past themes have been Wizard of Oz, time traveling, movies, superheroes, Dr. Seuss, and many clever ideas supplied and played out by our coaches. Once the meet is announced, coaches typically dress in costume or in accordance with the theme. Many swimmers like to do this as well. There is no need to go to Party City or Premier Costumes to get ready, any thematically inclined outfit, hat or make up works great. Sometimes a white undershirt that the kids decorate is perfect. The point of the theme is to give our team more fun and something to help connect as many swimmers and coaches as possible. As with everything, use your discretion and most importantly have fun!

Does Jimmy Fallon really come for lip sync?

Well, no, but that is the general idea. So, get inspired. The final Wednesday of June, you will find Southampton lawn covered with towels in the morning as swimmers claim their spot before the evening's big show, LIP SYNC. All swimmers are welcome and encouraged to pair up or find a group or go solo, to stand up and lip sync a song for no more than three minutes. Songs are delivered to Karmalita Bawar on a disk or digitally. And, your coaches perform as well. The kids love to see the coaches sing out a skit. It is a great night of laughing and fun.

Southampton Team Spirit – In and out of the pool!

In addition to Lip Sync and the Champs Pep Rally, we have some other fun activities that help to forge our strong team bond. Enjoy some movie theater AC and an afternoon at the *Mite/Midget Movie* – an age appropriate movie showing at a local theater is selected, and our younger swimmers get a chance to enjoy the show and some non-pool time with the coaches. A parent must be on-hand to chaperone their child – the coaches are not responsible for watching or transporting the children. We accept donations to help pay for the coaches' tickets.

Water Country USA – Obviously the mighty Swordfish like all kinds of water. A date is selected in advance and you'll be given info on how to get your tickets. The club **does not** purchase a block of tickets. Ticket purchase is left to each family. Again, parents are responsible for transportation and on-site monitoring of their children. Coaches attend for a relaxed and frolic-filled day.

The Champs' Banquet – a Glorious way to close out the season

Don't let the name fool you. This event is for **all** swimmers and their families, regardless of whether they swam at Champs. Park your towel and lawn chair on the SRA lawn early. Pack a picnic dinner or just grab a pizza on the way. Listen to our Senior Swimmers say their goodbyes, applaud every hard working/hard swimming Swordfish from Mite to Senior, cheer the guidance and teaching of our coaches, dance until your heart is full and your feet are aching. The time the evening starts will be posted in plenty of time for planning. The evening wraps up when the dance floor closes, usually at 11pm.