

# COTTONTAIL COBIA TEAM HANDBOOK

This handbook was developed to assist in understanding summer swimming. Inside this guide you will find general information, a description of our swim leagues, and a description of various meets. There is helpful information on many of our activities, the various strokes and associated rules, and detailed information on the different meet officials and their responsibilities.

We hope that every family, new and returning, will take time to read the handbook and become familiar with its contents. Additional seasonal information will be handed out annually at registration.

## CONTENTS

A. GENERAL INFORMATION .....	3
1. The Cobia .....	3
2. The NVSL .....	3
3. Membership .....	3
4. Mini Cobias .....	3
5. Philosophy and Expectations .....	3
6. Parent Participation.....	4
7. Coaching Priorities .....	4
8. Team Representative .....	4
B. TEAM RULES and POLICIES .....	5
1. Code of Conduct .....	5
2. Apparel and Accessories .....	5
3. Attendance .....	6
4. Absences .....	6
5. Away Meet Caravan .....	6
6. Coach Conversations .....	6
7. Communications .....	6
8. Swim Meets .....	7
9. DQ Reviews .....	7
10. Swim Ladders .....	7
11. Swimmer Age Groups .....	7
C. MEET INFORMATION .....	7
1. General .....	7
2. Time Trials .....	8
3. Dual Meets (A Meets).....	8
a. Swimmer Selection .....	9
b. Dual Meet Events and Distances .....	9
c. The Meet Sheet .....	10
4. Developmental League Meets (B Meets) .....	10
a. Developmental Meet Events and Distances .....	10
b. "B" Meet Swimmer Eligibility Guidelines .....	11
5. Relay Carnivals .....	12
a. Divisional Relay Carnival .....	12
b. All Star Relay Carnival .....	12
6. Individual Championships .....	12
a. Individual Divisional Championship Meet .....	12
b. All Star Individual Championship Meet .....	13

7.	Special Meets .....	13
a.	Rally in the Alley Relay Invitational .....	13
b.	Individual Medley Carnival .....	13
8.	Arrival and Warm-Up Times for Swimmers .....	13
D.	COMMUNICATIONS .....	14
E.	SOCIAL EVENTS.....	14
1.	Kick Off Party .....	14
2.	Pep Rallies .....	14
3.	Team Pictures .....	14
4.	After Meet Outings .....	15
5.	Other Outings .....	15
6.	End of Year Awards Banquet .....	15
F.	AWARDS.....	15
1.	Most Improved Swimmers .....	15
2.	Cottontail Sportsmanship Award .....	16
3.	Coaches' Award .....	16
4.	High Point Award .....	16
5.	Ribbons .....	16
G.	MEET OFFICIALS and Other Key Personnel .....	16
1.	Meet Officials .....	16
a.	Marshall .....	16
b.	Referee .....	16
c.	Starter .....	16
d.	Stroke and Turn Judge .....	16
e.	Chief Timer .....	17
f.	Timers .....	17
g.	Relay Take-off Judge .....	17
h.	Clerk of Course .....	17
i.	Announcer .....	17
j.	Runners .....	17
2.	Table Workers .....	17
a.	Data Coordinator. ....	17
b.	Time Recorder .....	18
c.	Awards Clerks .....	18
H.	THE BASIC STROKES AND THE RULES .....	18
1.	Freestyle .....	18
2.	Backstroke .....	18
3.	Breaststroke .....	19
4.	Butterfly .....	19
5.	The DQ .....	19
	GLOSSARY .....	20

# **A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **1. The Cobia**

A large, swift-moving, predatory, spiny-finned fish usually found in warm waters. It can also be found in Northern Virginia pools. Cobias are known to feast on other fish, such as Marlins, Piranhas, Tiger and Hammerhead Sharks, Barracudas and even Dolphins. They also are famous for surviving severe weather conditions such as Tsunami's, Tidal Waves, and Hurricanes.

## **2. The NVSL**

The Northern Virginia Swimming League (NVSL) was founded in 1956. Today, it is the largest summer swim league in the United States. Approximately 17,000 swimmers are part of over 100 teams who compete in 17 divisions, comprised of six teams each. The teams are seeded by overall "speed" rather than by size or location, with the fastest teams in Division I. The NVSL reseeds teams each year to keep each division as competitive as possible. Cottontail joined the NVSL in 1980 and celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the league!!

## **3. Membership**

The Cottontail Swim Team is open to all children who are members of the Cottontail pool and who are no older than 18 as of June 1<sup>st</sup>. Swimmers who are able to swim multiple laps and have the endurance for 45-60 minute practice sessions will practice with their age groups according to the season schedule. Beginning swimmers and/or those who are not able to swim multiple laps of the pool will be placed in the Mini (ages 8 and under) or Junior (ages 9 -18) Cobia practice groups.

While camps, summer school and family vacations scheduled during the season (June through July) do not prevent eligible children from joining the team, we do want swimmers to understand that joining the team is a commitment and regular participation is preferred, though certainly not required. If a swimmer is going to be gone for any meets or for an extended period, it is essential that the Team Representative be notified.

## **4. Mini and Junior Cobias**

The Mini and Junior Cobia programs were established for kids who are just learning to swim and/or who have started swimming but are not yet able to swim multiple laps of the pool and participate in the full 45 or 60 minute practices. The swimmers are part of the team, and participate in all team events and activities. The goal for this group of swimmers is that they be able to compete in at least one meet in at least one stroke (generally freestyle) by the end of the season. At the Head Coach's discretion, the swimmers may move to the regular age-group practices as soon as they are ready.

## **5. Philosophy and Expectations**

The NVSL's philosophy is to develop in the children participating in the program: "A love for the sport, advanced aquatic skills, teamwork, and the principles of good sportsmanship". The Cobias strongly support this philosophy.

The swim team provides many wonderful benefits to the kids and families of our community. Summer swimming is unique in that there is a place on the team for kids of all ages and abilities. All swimmers are offered the opportunity to compete, improve their performance, and have fun! It also provides parents, friends, and neighbors the chance to join together and cheer for the team.

Our expectations are consistent from year to year and apply to parents and swimmers alike:

- Cobias should be supportive of all swimmers, promote leadership and good sportsmanship, and assist all athletes in adapting to an individual yet team-sponsored competitive sport.

- Cobias should demonstrate good sportsmanship as specified in the NVSL Code of Conduct and should conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times.
- Cobias must keep their commitments. The team can be flexible and accommodating, but if you've made a commitment (to swim, to work the meet, etc.) please know that the team is counting on you!
- Cobia swimmers should do their best—it's much more important than being the best.
- Cobias should have fun!

## **6. Parent Participation**

Volunteers are critical to the success of the swim team. Unlike other youth sports (where generally a handful of people can run the team), you simply can't run a swim program without parental help, and lots of it! Every Cobia family (except those with only Mini/Junior Cobia swimmers) is expected to volunteer **a minimum of 1.5 hours for every meet in which one (or more) of their swimmer(s) participates.** All Cobia families are expected to volunteer during Time Trials if their swimmers are participating. Typically, this means a family will volunteer 9-21 hours of time over the course of the season.

A refundable volunteer fee is collected each season and will be returned to those families who:

1. Complete their minimum volunteer hours requirement **and**
2. Document these hours by completing and returning (to the Team Rep folder in the swim team box) a volunteer log sheet at the end of the season.

There are many ways to complete the volunteer hours requirement. First, all Cobia families must help out at meets. It takes more than 40 individuals to officiate, time, write ribbons and score a typical swim meet!

Additionally, there are numerous other "behind the scenes" jobs including both meet and non-meet activities that may match your interests or schedule. Examples include pool set up and take down, running the concession stand, and volunteering at social activities.

## **7. Coaching Priorities**

To make each summer a great experience, the Cobia coaches focus on several priorities:

- To emphasize great team spirit and enthusiasm while promoting good sportsmanship among teammates and opponents. This is perhaps the greatest asset that any team and swimmer can have.
- To make the season enjoyable for all participants. The Cobias believe that in order to be the best you can be you must enjoy what you are doing. The coaching staff is dedicated to making each summer a successful one through hard work in the pool and fun-filled activities out of the pool.
- To improve swimming strokes, swimming times, and overall confidence of all swim team members.
- To have a winning season. While this is certainly not essential to a successful season, it certainly adds to the overall enjoyment!

## **8. Team Representative(s)**

The person or persons you'll run into the most in your swim team dealings are the Team Reps. The Team Reps are responsible for running every aspect of the swim team and are the representatives of the Cottontail Cobia team to other swim teams in the NVSL. It's a job that is impossible to do successfully without help from many parents and volunteers.

## ***B. TEAM RULES and POLICIES***

### ***1. Code of Conduct***

One of the main goals of the swim team is to promote good sportsmanship. The NVSL has adopted a Standards of Conduct to “promote respect, fairness, civility, honesty, responsibility, and appropriate behavior.” Our goal is to make sure that the Cobias are leaders in this endeavor. The Cobia Code of Conduct is consistent with and in addition to the NVSL Standards. It describes behaviors that are considered essential and expected of all Cobia swimmers and their families. Though the Code is intended to be a positive document, parents and swimmers need to know that a swimmer’s failure to uphold the Code of Conduct could result in a warning and repeated failures or a particularly egregious incident could result in suspension or disqualification from participation in swim team activities, including meets.

Good sportsmanship from officials, parents, coaches, swimmers, and even spectators is vital to the team and sets the correct example to follow.

#### **Cobia Code of Conduct**

- Cobias are expected to demonstrate positive and appropriate behavior at all times (e.g. profanity and other offensive language are not tolerated).
- Cobias are expected to promote team unity and spirit through active participation in practices and spirit events.
- Cobias are expected to show respect to coaches by listening attentively to coaching instructions during meets and practices, discussing concerns directly with the coaching staff, supporting coaching decisions, and maintaining flexibility as swimmers.
- Cobias are expected to show respect to officials and other volunteers at all times by supporting decisions, recognizing that all volunteers are doing their best, and by assisting parent volunteers when needed.
- Cobias are expected to promote team unity by watching and cheering for other teammates during meets and by assisting those younger or newer to the team.
- Cobias are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship toward other teams by choosing positive cheers, applauding the efforts of other teams/swimmers, **remaining in the pool until all swimmers have finished the race**, and graciously accepting both wins and defeats.
- Cobias are expected to demonstrate respect for the Cottontail community and other host communities by keeping their team areas clean and using equipment and facilities safely and appropriately.

### ***2. Apparel and Accessories***

There are NVSL rules for attire at meets and failure to adhere to these rules could result in a swimmer being disqualified. The team suit or a plain black suit is preferred. No school, club, or other organization attire/names/logos should be worn on either the swimsuit or the cap.

Generally, competitive suits are available for one or two seasons from the manufacturer. Every effort is made to find a reasonably priced team suit that is popular with the swimmers and to use a ‘two-year suit’ for the team when they are available. The team suit is our team’s “uniform.” **We strongly urge all swimmers to wear the team suit and ask that a plain black suit be worn if the swimmer chooses not to wear the team suit.** The team cap is required for swimmers who choose to wear a cap at a meet. An NVSL All-Star cap may also be worn by Cobia swimmers.

Every swimmer needs a towel: the bigger and thicker, the better. Other accessories that swimmers should have are goggles, a sweat suit (for cool days), a hat or other sun protection, bug spray, and a bag to carry everything. Swimmers should also have liquid refreshment and a light snack (such as fruit, granola bars or other healthy foods) for during the meet. Save the sweets at the concession stand as a reward for swimming a great swim.

### **3. Attendance**

Swimmers are strongly urged to attend all practices although we understand that it is often not possible to do so. Those swimmers participating in USA Swimming (USS) year-round programs should notify the Head Coach if they will be attending USS practices instead of Cobia practices, but are required to attend **at least one** Cobia practice each week. USS swimmers are expected to participate in and contribute to the team in other ways mutually agreed upon with the Coach.

Swimmers having practice schedule conflicts (camp, summer school, etc.) should notify the Head Coach of these conflicts and should attend the Tues/Thurs evening practice sessions during the time this conflict exists. Swimmers should arrive on time for their designated warm-up/practice times and need to allow time to adjust goggles, put on caps, etc. before the practice begins. Although we seed our dual meets according to the team ladder, swimmers who consistently miss practices (e.g. more than 2 practices each week) on a continuing basis will not be entered regardless of their position on the ladder.

### **4. Absences**

If your swimmer is going to miss **any** meet due to a planned activity such as vacation, camp, etc., **you must submit an absentee form to the Team Rep** so that the scheduled absence can be entered into the database. Failure to notify the Team Rep in writing could result in your swimmer being seeded into a meet that they cannot attend, which could then prevent another swimmer from swimming and cost the team points at the meet.

### **5. Away Meet Caravan**

A caravan is encouraged for traveling to away meets. All cars will rendezvous at the Cottontail pool parking lot at a predetermined time. The caravan helps those drivers who have never been to the host pool before as well as encourages team unity. Directions to the host pool for away meets will be sent out by email prior to each meet and can be found on the host pools' websites.

### **6. Coach Conversations**

Coaches report to the Team Representatives. Their main responsibility is to help swimmers improve their strokes and times, and to ensure a fair and fun season. The coaches will make every effort to provide time where parents and swimmers are free to ask questions and discuss anything related to swimming. **Coaches should not be interrupted during practices**, so they can devote their full time and attention to the needs of the team. **Therefore, we ask that all parents stay off the pool deck during practices. Parents are welcome to attend and observe, but please do so from the areas behind the ropes (e.g. grassy area and back patio).** Swimmers are responsible for listening for information passed along from the coaches at their practices and for being familiar with the team calendar of activities throughout the season.

Questions or problems relating to coaching, meets, or practices should be addressed first to the coaches themselves. If the issue cannot be resolved through discussion with the coaching staff, the Team Representative(s) should be consulted.

### **7. Communications**

The Cobias have a number of communication vehicles: email, bulletin boards, and a website. **Email is our primary means of communication and we strongly urge all parents to read the emails from the team and**

**to respond promptly when necessary.** Parents and swimmers are expected to know about meets and events, utilizing one or more of the communication tools provided.

### **8. Swim Meets**

All swimmers will have the opportunity to swim in a dual or developmental meet each week, as well as special meets in which they are qualified to swim. Those swimmers not selected for that week's Saturday dual meet should plan to participate in the developmental meet held on Monday evening.

### **9. DQ Reviews**

DQ Reviews will be held throughout the season with those swimmers who have been affected. The coaches will emphasize proper techniques and will work individually with swimmers who may have been disqualified or experienced other problems during a previous meet.

### **10. Swim Ladders**

The team ladder is simply a list of all of our swimmers, organized by gender and age group, and their fastest times in each stroke for the season. Seeding for our NVSL meets will be done based on the fastest official times earned during the current season. These times are taken from dual meets, developmental meets, and time trial times only. Swimmers who are absent or ill during time trials may request that the Head Coach obtain a 'practice time' prior to the first dual meet for any event in which they feel that they may be competitive. *Use of such 'practice times' for seeding the first dual meet will be at the discretion of the Head Coach and Team Representative.* Swimmers' best times are maintained in the team database throughout the season. Swimmers or parents wishing to know their current best times and standing on the team ladder should ask the Team Reps during practice.

### **11. Swimmer Age Groups**

Swimmers compete in age groups based on gender and age (as of June 1<sup>st</sup> during the current season). The age categories are:

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

There is also a 6 and under group for freestyle and backstroke events at the developmental meets.

## **C. MEET INFORMATION**

### **1. General**

The Cobias participate in two different, but related, swim leagues:

- Northern Virginia Swim League (NVSL) – Dual meets (“A” meets)
- Springfield-Burke Developmental League (SBDL) - Developmental meets (“B” meets)

A description of the NVSL may be found earlier in this handbook.

The Springfield-Burke Developmental League (SBDL) is comprised of local teams. Its purpose is to provide a similar, but less competitive environment than the NVSL so that all swimmers have the opportunity to compete and measure their progress. Most Cobia swimmers will participate primarily in the developmental “B” meets due to the limited number of dual “A” meet slots. Developmental Meets ensure that all swimmers have the

opportunity to swim, compete, and improve their times. Finally, this league allows our dual meet swimmers to achieve times in strokes that they cannot swim at dual meets and provides an opportunity for our newer officials to learn their responsibilities. Generally, all NVSL rules are followed for these "B" meets.

During the season, the Cobias compete in all NVSL and Springfield-Burke Developmental League sponsored events. These events include:

NVSL:

- 5 weekly (Saturday) Dual Meets
- Divisional Relay Carnival
- All-Star Relay Carnival
- Divisional Individual Championships
- All Star Individual Championships

SBDL:

- 4 weekly (Monday) Developmental Meets

The Cobias may also participate in invitational meets and special meets throughout the season. Some of these types of meets in which the team has participated in recent years are:

- Relay Championship Meet
- "Rally in the Ally" Developmental Relay Meet
- IM Carnival Meet

## **2. Time Trials**

On the Saturday before our first dual meet, Time Trials are held at Cottontail Pool. The purpose of this meet is to provide an opportunity for the swimmers and the officials to participate in a trial run of a meet. Each swimmer's goal is to obtain times in all events/strokes which they are capable of swimming. Time Trials must be conducted prior to the first meet in order to obtain an official baseline time for each swim team member in each individual event/stroke. These times are then used to select swimmers for the first dual meet, which is held the following Saturday.

## **3. Dual Meets (A Meets)**

Dual meets (commonly referred to as "A" meets) are held on Saturday mornings from 9:00 AM until approximately 11:45 AM. There are five of these meets and they are competitions with the other teams in our division. These are referred to as "dual meets" because there are two teams swimming against each other. Two or three of these meets will be held at Cottontail each season. All five scheduled "A" meets will be held each season, rain or shine, although thunder and/or lightning at the host pool may result in a delay. In the extremely unlikely event that extraordinary circumstances require an "A" meet to be cancelled, it will be rescheduled and conducted prior to the end of the current NVSL season.

**The coaches assume that all team members will be available for dual meets unless they have been informed in writing by submitting an absentee slip that a swimmer will be absent.** If a child who is scheduled to swim becomes ill on the morning of a dual meet, please call the Team Rep at home or by cell no later than 7:00 AM.

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

NVSL events are swum in the order of: freestyle - backstroke – breaststroke – butterfly - relays.

### **a. Swimmer Selection**

Swimmers are selected for dual meets by the coaching staff. Although the team ladder is the basis for selection, there are many other criteria which must also be evaluated. Each week, we swim a different team from our division, and each team will have different strengths and weaknesses. Since our goal is to **win the meet**, we need to try and match up our swimmers with those of our opponent so as to maximize the points we score.

The Coaches and Team Reps are responsible for developing the list of swimmers and their assigned events, called the “firm entries”, each week for the following Saturday's dual meet. Our opponent's previous meet results are reviewed, and swimmers are placed in strokes where they have the best opportunity to score the most points for the team. Creating a winning meet sheet (see section c. below) is a little bit like trying to put together a new complicated puzzle each week. This may mean that the coach will have a swimmer swim in an older age group event (“swimming up”) or swim a stroke that is not their strongest or favorite. Swimmers need to understand that seeding decisions are made for the benefit of the team as a whole. Parents and swimmers alike are asked to support these decisions.

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

Each week, the meet entries are approved by the Team Representative and are announced to the team at Friday morning practice and then posted at the pool and sent out to the team by email. **Swimmers are expected to check the posted meet sheet and/or the email copy if they miss practice and all swimmers (and their parents) are expected to know their assignments.** If a swimmer will not be available for a Saturday meet, he/she should notify the Team Reps and coaching staff before the season begins or as soon as the family is aware that an absence may occur. The only exceptions for this requirement are injury, illness, or family emergencies. Failure to give the Head Coach and Team Reps timely notification could result in our team having an empty lane at the meet which can cost us points. Another consideration is that if a seeded swimmer fails to attend a meet, they are depriving one of their teammates of an opportunity to swim in a dual meet. The Head Coach and Team Rep may choose to no longer seed a swimmer who is a ‘no show’ without notice at a dual meet, unless that absence is due to an emergency.

At the meet, swimmers need to know what events they are swimming, and be ready when the event is called. **Swimmers should stay in the team area during the meet**, but may leave to see parents if they tell a coach they are leaving. If any swimmers need to depart before the meet is over, **they MUST tell the Head Coach first.** In general, swimmers are expected to stay for the entire meet to cheer for their team and teammates.

### **b. Dual Meet Events and Distances**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>FREE</b>	<b>BACK</b>	<b>BREAST</b>	<b>FLY</b>	<b>Freestyle Relay</b>	<b>Medley Relay</b>
8 & Under Boys	25M	25M	25M	25M	100M	
8 & Under Girls	25M	25M	25M	25M	100M	
9-10 Boys	50M	50M	50M	25M		100M
9-10 Girls	50M	50M	50M	25M		100M
11-12 Boys	50M	50M	50M	50M		100M
11-12 Girls	50M	50M	50M	50M		100M
13-14 Boys	50M	50M	50M	50M		100M
13-14 Girls	50M	50M	50M	50M		100M
15-18 Boys	50M	50M	50M	50M		200M
15-18 Girls	50M	50M	50M	50M		200M
Mixed Age Boys					200M	
Mixed Age Girls					200M	

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

Type of Race	1 <sup>st</sup> Place Points	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Points	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place Points
Individual	5	3	1
Relay	5	0	N/A

The score is generally announced during the meet at the completion of each stroke. Ribbons are awarded for 1st through 6th place finishes. The meet date; teams competing; and the swimmer's time, event and age group are recorded on the back of the ribbon. At the completion of the dual meet season, the NVSL awards a trophy to the team with the best win-loss record in each division.

### **c. The Meet Sheet**

The meet sheet is simply a list, organized by event, which shows all of the swimmers who will be competing in a swim meet. Information included will be the swimmers' names, ages, and lane assignments for each event. Typically, NVSL meet sheets do not include the swimmers' seed times. While NVSL meets have an announcer, the best way to follow the meet is with a meet sheet.

### **4. Developmental League Meets (B Meets)**

Developmental meets (also referred to as "B" meets) are held on Monday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m. There are four of these meets and they are conducted with other teams from the developmental league. Two of these meets are held at Cottontail. The same format and rules used for dual meets apply, except that there is an additional 6 & under age group category for freestyle and backstroke, no relays are included, and there is an Individual Medley (IM) event.

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

Swimmers participating in developmental meets must make their stroke selections any time before **11 AM Monday** prior to each Monday meet. [We ask that all swimmers sign up at the pool after their Monday morning practice. Those who are unable to attend the morning practice may email the Team Rep before 11 am.](#) Coaches may encourage the swimmers to try different strokes and discourage strokes that will result in a definite disqualification.

### **a. Developmental Meet Events and Distances**

Age Group	FREE	BACK	BREAST	FLY	Individual Medley
6 & Under Boys	25M	25M			
6 & Under Girls	25M	25M			
8 & Under Boys	25M	25M	25M	25M	
8 & Under Girls	25M	25M	25M	25M	
9-10 Boys	50M	50M	50M	25M	100M
9-10 Girls	50M	50M	50M	25M	100M
11-12 Boys	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M

### ***Developmental Meet Events and Distances (cont'd)***

11-12 Girls	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M
13 & Up Boys	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M
13 & Up Girls	50M	50M	50M	50M	100M

Developmental meets are not scored and do not affect our NVSL standings, or the NVSL division in which we compete. However, they are a crucial component of our summer swim program, allowing our swimmers the opportunity to improve their individual times in events. The format is essentially the same as a Saturday meet, except that there are generally multiple heats of each age group event. Whenever possible, swimmers are placed (“seeded”) with other swimmers based on their previous times.

Ribbons are awarded to all participants - first through sixth place - in each heat. If a swimmer is disqualified, or is swimming unofficially, a participant ribbon is awarded. Ribbons record the date of the meet; the teams participating; and the swimmer’s time, event, and age group on the back.

### ***b. “B” Meet Swimmer Eligibility Guidelines***

The Springfield-Burke Developmental League has established guidelines to determine swimmers’ eligibility to participate in developmental meets. The purpose of these guidelines is to keep the focus of these meets on those swimmers who do not usually take part in the dual “A” meets.

#### 1. Swimmers who DID NOT participate in the previous Saturday’s dual meet

- May choose any two events in which the Head Coach has certified them ‘legal’ (able to perform the stroke without disqualification). All events will be swum officially.

#### 2. Swimmers who DID participate in the previous Saturday’s “A” meet

- Swimmers who swam in TWO individual events in the previous Saturday’s “A” meet:
  - and placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> in both events may swim one event unofficially other than the events they swam on Saturday. Additionally, they may swim the IM officially.
  - and placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> in only one event, may swim one event officially and one event unofficially (they may not swim the event that they placed in on Saturday). If they swim the IM, that must be their official event.
  - and did not place 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> may swim two events officially.
- Swimmers who swam in ONE individual event in Saturday’s “A” meet:
  - and placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> in their event may swim one event officially and one event unofficially (they may not swim the event that they placed in on Saturday). If they swim the IM, that must be their official event.
  - and did not place 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> may swim any two events officially.

#### Additional Notes:

- No swimmer may swim more than two events.
- The Head Coach will observe all swimmers to determine their ability to swim each stroke in accordance with the NVSL and USA Swimming technical rules. Each Monday, the Head Coach will update a list of which strokes each swimmer is ‘legal’ to swim in the Developmental Meets. Swimmers may not choose events in which the Head Coach has not certified them ‘legal’ to swim.
- Unofficial swimmers are not eligible for place ribbons and may be swum at the end of the meet in mixed heats with various age groups, genders, and events swimming at the same time.
- Upon approval of the Head Coach, an 8 & under swimmer may choose to swim IM.

## **5. Relay Carnivals**

### **a. Divisional Relay Carnival**

The Divisional Relay Carnival is held on a Wednesday evening in early July and is a highly spirited and competitive meet. The Cobias may enter one relay team per event to compete against all other teams from our division. There are medley and freestyle relays for each gender and age group, as well as boys and girls mixed age relays. The Team Rep and coaches select the swimmers for the relay teams based on fastest times, and an additional practice may be required. Swimmers must swim in their own age group. Each event is scored: 1<sup>st</sup> place earns 14 points; 2<sup>nd</sup> place 10 points; 3<sup>rd</sup> place 8 points, and on down to 6<sup>th</sup> place which earns 2 points. A trophy is awarded to the team accumulating the most points at the end of the meet.

### **b. All Star Relay Carnival**

The eighteen fastest relay teams in each event from all divisions in the NVSL compete against each other the Wednesday following the Divisional Relay Carnival. The Division Coordinator represents the six teams at the seeding meeting and notifies the Team Representative of any team qualifications. One alternate team is selected for each event. There is one substitution allowed for each relay team only for illness, injury or absence.

## **6. Individual Championships**

### **a. Individual Divisional Championship Meet**

On the Saturday following the last Dual meet, each division conducts a "Divisional" meet consisting of the fastest swimmers from all of the teams in the division. Swimmers may compete in at most two events. The individual medley event is included in this meet. There are no relay events. As per NVSL rules, swimmers are entered into this meet based on their times achieved in NVSL (dual meet) competition in the current season whenever such times are available. If a dual meet time is not available, swimmers may be entered based on their best time in other competition during the current NVSL season (e.g. "B" meets) as certified by their coach and Team Representative.

Eligible Cobias with the fastest times in each event (with the exception of Time Trials) may be asked by the Head Coach to select their preferred two strokes or may be seeded at the Head Coach's discretion. Swimmers who choose to be unavailable/absent for more than two dual meets over the course of the season will be entered into the Divisional meet as alternates only, regardless of their position on the team ladder. When seeding this meet, every effort is made to give swimmers their preferred strokes while also including as many swimmers as possible in the meet and providing each swimmer their best opportunity to qualify for Individual All-Stars. This process continues until all of our allotted slots are filled.

Next, a divisional seeding meeting is held and is attended by the Team Representatives and Division Coordinator. Each team submits its Firm Entries (two swimmers per event) and a list of alternate swimmers with their best times to the Division Coordinator. The Firm Entries are seeded according to NVSL rules, but if a team does not have two swimmers for an event, the empty lane is filled by the fastest alternate in the division (this is called a 'bid-in'). We often have the opportunity to bid-in more swimmers at the seeding meeting. Our goal is to have as many Cobias as possible have the opportunity to compete in this meet.

On the day of the Divisionals meet, the Team Reps and Division Coordinator meet briefly prior to the start of each stroke. At this time, if a previously-seeded lane is empty, the team whose swimmer is a 'no-show' is given the opportunity to fill that lane if the missing swimmer was originally one of the team's firm entries. If the team does not have a swimmer, or if the lane was filled by a 'bid-in' at the seeding meeting, that lane will be filled by the next fastest available alternate in the Division. Thus, **it is essential for families to notify the Head Coach and Team Representative(s) if a swimmer will not be available for this meet, even if they are not originally seeded as a firm entry.** With proper notification, we can develop an accurate list of available alternates, and another Cobia swimmer may be substituted for a firm entry or bid-in to an empty lane on the day of the meet. Without such notification, we will lose that spot to another team. Plaques are awarded to the top six finishers in each event and ribbons to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> place finishers.

### ***b. All Star Individual Championship Meet***

After all of the divisions in the NVSL hold their Individual Championship Meets, the eighteen fastest swimmers and two alternates in each event are chosen to compete in the All Star Individual Championship Meet. These selections are based solely on times posted from Divisional Individual Championships. This meet is held on the Saturday following the divisional meets. Medals and ribbons are presented in award ceremonies following each event.

## **7. Special Meets**

### ***a. Rally in the Alley Developmental Relay Invitational***

Each year, Orange Hunt Swim and Tennis Club hosts an invitational relay meet for swimmers (12 & under) who do not get the opportunity to participate in dual meet relay teams. The meet usually consists of both freestyle and medley relays for each gender and age group, plus a coaches' and a parent's relay. No judges (Stroke & Turn or Relay Take Off) are used at this meet. The Head Coach forms relay teams based on those swimmers who sign up for this meet. [Swimmers wishing to participate must have at least one individual \(parent, older sibling, or other adult\) willing to volunteer as a timer, marshal, or other official. Volunteering at this meet is a prerequisite for participation and does NOT count toward fulfilling a family's seasonal volunteer hours requirement.](#)

### ***b. Individual Medley Carnival***

The individual medley is the only event at this meet. Swimmers who want to participate must notify the Head Coach in the week prior to the Monday evening on which this meet is held. The head coach must approve all swimmers for this meet. This meet provides an additional opportunity for swimmers to improve their times in the IM before Individual Championships, since the IM is not included in the Saturday Dual Meets.

## **8. Arrival and Warm-up Times for Swimmers**

Time Trials	Home	Arrive	7:20 am
		Warm-Up	7:30-7:50 am
		Meet Starts	8:00 am
Saturday "A" Meets	Home	Arrive	7:40 am
		Warm-Up	8:00-8:20 am
		Meet Starts	9:00 am
	Away	Arrive	8:00 am
		Warm-Up	8:20-8:40 am
		Meet Starts	9:00 am
Monday Developmental Meets	Home	Arrive	5:10 pm
		Warm-Up	5:30-5:50 pm
		Meet Starts	6:30 pm
	Away	Arrive	5:35 pm
		Warm-Up	5:55-6:15 pm
		Meet Starts	6:30 pm

Any changes to these times will be sent by email prior to the affected meet. For all away meets, we normally meet at Cottontail and caravan to the host pool. Departure time from our pool will be announced by email. If you choose not to caravan with the team, you need to be at the host pool **no later than 8:15 AM** for dual meets.

## D. COMMUNICATIONS

The Cobias offer a number of ways for parents, coaches and swimmers to share information:

1. In order to keep everyone up to date and save on copying expenses, most of our information is transmitted via email. **A correct email address is essential for all team families.** Changes in email addresses should be forwarded to the Team Rep.
2. Each family has been assigned a “mailbox” (a file folder) kept at the pool. This folder is your ‘In-box’ during the season and communications such as flyers, order forms, and swim-a-thon forms will be distributed to these folders. Most importantly, your swimmers’ RIBBONS will be placed in the family folder after each meet.
3. The Cobias have a dedicated team website at [www.cottontailpool.com](http://www.cottontailpool.com). The NVSL also has a website (<http://nvsl.nvblu.com/plasma/core/site/nvsl>) where you can find swimmers’ times, League standings, and other important information. Please bookmark both sites and visit often. It’s a great way for out-of-town friends, family, and former Cottontail members to keep up with their favorite swimmer!
4. The pool bulletin boards are another source of information for such things as upcoming events, directions to meets at other pools, etc.

## E. SOCIAL EVENTS

*The Cobias are an active and social group! Throughout the season, we undertake a wide variety of fun activities are part of what makes summer swimming at Cottontail such a wonderful experience. All of our swimmers, including Mini and Junior Cobias, are invited to our social events; however, coaches and team reps are NOT a child care service. **The Team Reps and Coaches will take reasonable steps to supervise our group of swimmers, but WILL NOT be responsible for your swimmers’ actions or their safety at any social event.** For some events (e.g. Midnight Swim Party) we will specify an age cut-off under which swimmers must be accompanied by an adult. **If a cut-off age is not specified (e.g. Splashdown, Kings Dominion Day), each parent must judge their own child’s level of responsibility and make appropriate arrangements to provide the level of adult supervision that the parent deems appropriate.***

Some of the regularly-scheduled Cobia social events are listed below, but each year may bring new and fun activities for the team:

### 1. Kick-off Party

The kick-off party is an event held to create team unity and celebrate the beginning of the season. It is usually held the Friday before time trials.

### 2. Pep Rallies

We hold a Pep Rally at the pool every Friday evening before home “A” meets. Coaches lead team members in activities such as making posters, learning cheers, decorating the club entrance and team area, and mentally preparing for the upcoming meets.

Attendance is voluntary, but all team members are encouraged to attend. Besides, you won’t want to miss out on the fun!

### 3. Team Pictures

We take a team picture every year and we’d like all swimmers to be in it. You are not obligated to purchase the picture, but please do try to attend so that your swimmers will be included.

#### **4. After Meet Outings**

After dual meets, many of our families get together to eat lunch and celebrate the meet. Win or lose, we always find things to celebrate! For home meets, we generally stay at the pool and enjoy our very own Concession Stand. For away meets, we often gather at an area restaurant. All are invited, but attendance is strictly voluntary, depending upon a family's schedule, budget, and endurance.

#### **5. Midnight Swim Team Party**

For one Saturday evening in July, the Cobias sponsor a Midnight Swim Team Party, keeping Cottontail open after regular hours for members of the team and accompanying adults only. Snacks and drinks are served, and fun activities are planned. In past years, these have included karaoke and movie screenings. This is a highlight of the season, so please plan to attend!

#### **6. Other Outings**

In past years, the Cobias have gone bowling, played mini-golf, attended movies, gone to Kings Dominion for NVSL day, played laser tag and had fun at Splashdown. The social committee also tries to plan some creative events to be held closer to home. Again, attendance is strictly voluntary, depending upon a family's schedule and budget.

#### **7. End of the Year Awards Banquet**

On the final weekend of the season, the Cobias take time to recognize all swimmers for their participation, effort and accomplishments throughout the season. Dinner will be served and awards given...a great way to end the season! Funds for this event are collected prior to the banquet and allow families several options with regard to dining.

## **F. AWARDS**

Swimmers are recognized throughout the season and at the End of Season Party/Awards Banquet. All swimmers are given a participatory trophy to acknowledge the hard work and dedication that the swimmer has shown during the season. In addition, at the End of Season Party/Awards Banquet, the Cobias grant a number of special awards, which are listed and defined below.

There are many factors evaluated in determining who receives special awards, including:

- Dedication to swimming - seen through effort, improvement, etc.
- Total individual points
- Overall contribution to team effort
- Spirit and sportsmanship

It's important to note that for several of our special awards, swimming ability is not the most important ingredient. Awards may vary from year to year but usually include the awards listed below.

#### **1. Most Improved Swimmers**

This award is given to those swimmers whose hard work and improved swimming skill over the course of the season is reflected in the greatest overall improvement in each age group/gender and stroke. These awards are based solely on percentage time improvements as reflected by the team database.

## **2. Cottontail Sportsmanship Award**

The Cottontail coaches and the Team Rep select the recipients of this award. This award is granted to swimmers who consistently demonstrate strong leadership qualities, are role models for the team, have great team spirit, and demonstrate a commitment to swimming and to the team.

## **3. Coaches' Award**

Selected by the coaches, this award is granted to those swimmers who consistently work hard, demonstrate leadership qualities, and demonstrate team spirit throughout the summer season.

## **4. High Point Award**

This award is given to the swimmer (or swimmers in the case of a tie) who earned the most points for the team in their individual events during the dual meets for the season.

## **5. Ribbons**

Ribbons are awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> place at all meets. In addition, ribbons may also be awarded during the season every time a Personal Best time is swum in any event.

# **G. MEET OFFICIALS and Other Key Personnel**

## **1. Meet Officials**

Officials help to ensure that the swim meet takes place in an organized manner and that it is fair for all competitors involved. Meet officials represent the NVSL or SBDL, not their individual swim teams and must therefore act in a fair and unbiased manner toward all teams and individual swimmers. Meet Officials should be dressed in white shirts with navy shorts/pants/skirts. No official should wear any attire that includes a team logo, name or slogan. They are parent volunteers, without whose help a swim meet would not be possible.

### **a. Marshals**

The Marshals are charged with maintaining order among swimmers and spectators at the meet. They will control traffic flow and ensure that quiet is maintained at the start of events so that swimmers can hear the starting device.

### **b. Referee (One per meet)**

referee (an NVSL certified official) is the chief official for each meet. His/Her principal function is to ensure that the meet is properly conducted within the NVSL rules, and that swimmers have uniformly fair competitive conditions. The referee serves as the final authority on the interpretation and enforcement of all swimming rules.

### **c. Starter (One per meet)**

The starter (an NVSL certified official) makes sure that all swimmers are given a fair and equitable start. The referee uses a series of whistles to signal the beginning of the next event. The starter then informs the swimmers of the stroke and distance to be swum and instructs the swimmers to take their mark. After all swimmers are ready and still, the starter starts the race using an electronic starting device. If a false start occurs, the starter will notify the referee as to their judgment that a DQ is necessary.

### **d. Stroke and Turn Judge (Four per meet)**

The Stroke and Turn Judges (NVSL or USS certified officials) ensure that swimmers obey all the rules for the stroke that they are swimming, including the appropriate turn or finish designated for the event. If a stroke and

turn judge observes improper technique, they will disqualify (DQ) a swimmer in that event. All DQ's are submitted to the Referee who has final authority.

***e. Chief Timer (One per meet)***

The chief timer is responsible for ensuring that all timers are ready before the start of an event, maintaining back-up stopwatches, and ensuring that the swimmers' official times are correctly recorded by the head lane timers. The chief timer also ensures the delivery of all time cards to the time recorder. The Chief Timer acts as Assistant Chief Timer at away meets.

***f. Timers (18 per meet)***

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

***g. Relay Take-Off Judge (Eight per meet)***

These judges observe all relay take-offs and ensure that each swimmer touches the wall prior to the next swimmer in the relay leaving the deck.

***h. Clerk of Course (Two per dual meet; four per developmental meet)***

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

***i. Announcer (One per meet)***

The Announcer is important for meet management and control. He/She announces the events and the swimmers as well as providing the names of event winners, the meet score, and other pertinent information.

***j. Runners (Two per meet)***

The runners are charged with taking completed time cards from the chief timer to the time recorder and/or taking completed DQ slips from the chief judge to the referee.

***k. Chief Judge***

The chief judge is a referee-certified official who works on the opposite end of the pool from the referee. He or she will control the start for 25 meter events; assess DQ slips from the stroke and turn judges on his/her end of the pool and recommend approval or disapproval of those DQs to the referee. A chief judge is most often used at large meets (e.g. "B" meets, Relay Carnival, Divisionals) and/or at pools where the physical layout makes movement from one side of the pool to the other difficult or time-consuming.

***2. Table Workers***

***a. Data Coordinator***

The Data Coordinator manages the team's database. They produce draft meet sheets, final meet sheets, and other reports as needed. They print time cards for all meets and prepare disks or other information needed for pre-meet and post-meet meetings. They also insure that results of the dual meets are reported to the league. They are the official scorer of all NVSL meets as of 2013.

### ***b. Time Recorder***

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

### ***c. Awards Clerk***

The Awards Clerks receive pre-printed adhesive labels from the Data Coordinator after the times have been entered into the database. They then select the appropriate award and affix the label. The awards clerks will organize the ribbons from each meet and ensure that they are placed in the correct family folders in the swim team boxes at Cottontail.

## ***H. THE BASIC STROKES AND THE RULES***

If you're not a former swimmer, the strokes and their rules can be bewildering and most people do not own a copy of the USA Swimming Rules. The strokes are briefly described below. The rules are the USA Swimming rules as modified for use in the NVSL. Teams in other leagues may have slightly different rules.

In swimming, the rules must be followed in total or a disqualification, or DQ, is committed. This can be traumatic the first time a swimmer is DQ'd for just one mistake, but it isn't fair to other swimmers who swim the entire race per the rules to do otherwise.

### ***1. Freestyle***

The Freestyle is defined as any means of swimming across the pool. Any stroke and kick are acceptable. There are, however, a few do not's associated with this stroke. You cannot walk on the bottom or pull yourself along using the lane lines, and in a 50-meter race you must touch the wall at the 25-meter turning end before touching the wall at the end. (This may seem obvious, but sometimes swimmers miss the wall at the turning end of the pool.)

The common Freestyle DQ's:

- Failure to touch the wall at the turning end of the pool
- Walking or pushing off the bottom of the pool
- Pulling on the lane lines
- Exiting the pool before the specified distance

### ***2. Backstroke***

Like the freestyle, almost anything goes on the backstroke as long as you stay on your back. Watching swimmers learn the backstroke is a perverse sense of fun as they bounce off lane lines and wonder where they are. Eventually, they will learn to guide off the lane lines, use the overhead backstroke flags and the line markings to know where they're at in the pool, and count strokes from the flags to the wall.

Backstroke starts are different from all others because the swimmer is in the water, planted against the wall, and hanging on to either another swimmer's legs or the lip on the pool awaiting the starter's signal. "Legs" must be grabbed below the knee. Persons serving in an official capacity (such as timers or coaches) may not serve as "legs".

If your swimmer is a backstroker, he or she will eventually learn the backstroke flip turn. This is the one exception to staying on your back and can be used only as part of a turn (not a finish) at the pool wall.

The common Backstroke DQ's:

Past vertical towards the breast at any time except during a flip turn (not on back)  
Leaving the wall after a turn past vertical towards the breast  
Improper flip turn

### **3. Breaststroke**

The Breaststroke has two components, the kick and the arm pull. The pull and its recovery must both be under the breast and cannot extend further back than the waist area. The kick is a “frog” kick and the toes must be pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick. The arm pull and kick must be in an alternating sequence and the elbows must stay below the water except for tagging the wall at the finish. Breaststroke turns and finishes require a simultaneous two-hand touch.

The common Breaststroke DQ's:

- Incorrect kick, such as scissor kick or flutter kick
- Toes not pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick
- Non-simultaneous two-hand touches at turn or finish
- More than one stroke underwater with arms fully extended at start or turn
- Arm recovery past waist except on first stroke or turn
- Head didn't break surface by end of second arm pull underwater after start or turn

### **4. Butterfly**

A well-executed butterfly (or Fly) is the most beautiful exhibition of power you'll ever see in a swimming pool. The fly is probably the hardest stroke for most swimmers to perfect and while they are learning, it may look like they are drowning. There are two components of the fly: the arm pull and the kick. The arm pull must be an over-the-water recovery (arms above the water from shoulder to wrist) with the arms moving simultaneously. The kick is a dolphin-style kick with both legs moving simultaneously. Unlike the Breaststroke, there is no requirement to alternate the kick and pull. Turns and finishes require a simultaneous two-hand touch at the wall.

The common Butterfly DQ's:

- Non-simultaneous or one-handed wall touch at turn or finish
- Non-simultaneous leg movement during kicks
- Arms don't break water surface during recovery (judged at the elbows)
- Non-simultaneous arm movement during recovery

### **5. The DQ**

When a Stroke and Turn Judge observes a violation, he raises his/her hand to signify that he/she has observed a violation, and then writes it up on a DQ Slip. This slip is passed to the Referee, who verifies that a rule has been broken and can question that Stroke and Turn Judge to insure that he was able to see the violation that was cited. The Referee then gives one copy of the DQ slip to the Team Rep and another to the Time Recorders.

Every Official on the deck will always give benefit of the doubt to the swimmer. Although the difference between legal and ugly verses illegal is sometimes a very close call, any violation called by an official must be an “I saw” not an “I think I saw”.

The Team Rep is the only person who can officially question a disqualification or any other call by an Official.

Swimmers who DQ in their event will receive a purple (girls) or orange (boys) “Competitor” Ribbon for that event.

## **GLOSSARY**

**CT** – is the NVSL ‘shorthand’ designation for Cottontail. Each pool/team has such a designation and these abbreviated forms are often used in meet announcements and NVSL communications. The list of current NVSL teams and their 2 or 3 letter designations is found in the NVSL Handbook.

**DQ** - is short for disqualification. A DQ is any violation of swimming rules observed by any appropriate official.

**False Start** - Any time a swimmer moves after taking his/her mark, but before the starting signal sounds. A false start is a disqualification.

**Free Relay** - A relay consisting of 4 swimmers, all of whom swim a freestyle leg (25 or 50 M depending on age)

**IM** - is short for individual medley. This is an event where swimmers swim each of the four strokes in a particular order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. In the NVSL, a 100 meter IM in which the swimmer completes one length of the pool in each of the four strokes is the only IM event.

**Medley Relay** - A relay consisting of 4 swimmers each of whom will swim a different stroke in a specific order (back, breast, fly, free) in a 4-leg relay

**NVSL** – Northern Virginia Swim League

**Swimmer’s Ear** - Swimmer’s Ear is an infection of the outer ear canal. This infection is outside the eardrum, and is not the same as an inner ear infection or otitis media. The symptoms are ear pain and itching.

To prevent this infection, dry ears thoroughly after each swim, but not with a cotton swab. Hold a hair dryer 18 to 20 inches from your ear set on warm or cool setting, hold the ear open and let the dryer blow for about 30 seconds. You can also use an acidic solution in the ear after swimming. You can buy an over-the-counter preparation at any drug store, or make your own by mixing white vinegar diluted by half with either water or rubbing alcohol. Plug up the problem with wax or silicone earplugs that can be softened and shaped to fit your ear.

**Swimming Up** - A swimmer may be asked to compete in an older age group than their chronological age at one or more meets. For example, a 10 year old may be asked to swim in the 11-12 age group, if in the opinion of the team representative and coach, that swimmer can be competitive in the older group and/or a swimmer of the appropriate age is not available.

**Unofficial Swim** – when a swimmer is allowed to compete in a stroke at a “B” meet in order to get or improve their time on the team ladder for that stroke, but NOT to be awarded a place ribbon in that event. [See: “B” Meet Swimmer Eligibility Guidelines on page 10] Unofficial swimmers will receive a light blue ‘Competitor’ ribbon which tells them the time that they achieved in their event.

**USA Swimming (USS)** - The governing body for swimming in the United States. USA Swimming establishes rules for the strokes and for the conduct of competition. The NVSL swimming rules are USA Swimming rules with minor changes to accommodate the facilities and skill levels found in our league.