

The Moses Lake Manta Rays

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CLUB ADDRESS

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Moses Lake Manta Rays is to provide the leadership and resources to promote swimming through training, competition and sport development for novice to elite swimmers.

The vision of the Moses Lake Manta Rays is to have a trained and motivated work force that will create opportunities to inspire and develop the physical, mental and social skills needed for swimmers to become lifelong champions.

The goals of the Moses Lake Manta Rays are to develop the character of each athlete in the following areas:

Self-Esteem

Goal Implementation Education

Time Management

Personal Accountability

Team Spirit

TEAM ORGANIZATION

Moses Lake Manta Rays trains youth swimmers and has all levels of swimming abilities from novice to the elite level.

Our foundation consists of three parts: Coach/CEO, Executive Committee and Parent Volunteers.

The **CEO/Head Coach** is responsible for anything involving the water, such as program development and implementation, training swimmers, swim meets, hiring & supervising assistant coaches and parent education etc.

The **Executive Committee** is responsible for the overall administration of the team, including hiring the head coach, budgeting, future planning, etc.

The **Parents** operate and volunteer for the committees that deal with the details of running the team on a day-to-day basis such as swim meet set up and take down, fundraising etc.

Welcome to our team!

The Moses Lake Manta Rays over the years have developed many great swimmers. Besides the great physical benefits of swimming our members develop skills in self-discipline, goal setting, and time management that they'll use throughout their lives. As part of our team they'll develop lasting friendships. We are proud that our swimmers grow into responsible and mature citizens.

We ask that every parent be involved in helping our team and our swimmers. With everyone's help we can build our club into a great swim team.

Please carefully read through this Handbook. It will answer most of your questions about our team. If you have any additional questions please ask the Head Coach or the Childs coach. For further information on volunteering please talk to the Booster Club President. Welcome to our team and all it has to offer!

The Moses Lake Manta Rays is one of the finest and most successful swim programs in Grant County, as well as in the state. Manta Rays swimmers, parents, and coaches are proud of all of our accomplishments, and we are pleased that you have taken an interest in our program.

We are a year-round age group and senior level competitive swimming team offering instruction, training, and competition to the youth of Grant County of all ages and ability levels. We feel confident that you will be proud to be a member of a growing program with the highest goals.

The Moses Lake Manta Rays is concerned with guiding and directing swimmers toward maximum use of their individual talents and abilities. We believe that realization of this potential in swimming is invaluable in many other areas of life. The Manta Rays program strives to instill in its athletes and parents a strong sense of commitment and strong values. Each level of this program, from novice to elite level swimmer, is designed with the conviction that each swimmer will reach his or her full potential. This philosophy is consistent throughout the program and every Manta Ray swimmer is encouraged, to be the best they can be.

The Moses Lake Manta Rays is a proud organization requiring support and energy from coach's, swimmers and parents. We encourage you to contribute your ideas, skills, and enthusiasm in an all-out effort to keep our team the very best in every respect. We hope that your affiliation with the club will be rewarding for all. We want to welcome you as a member.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. MONTHLY DUES

Monthly dues provide the financial base for Moses Lake Manta Rays. The yearly dues are divided into 12 equal payments, each of which must be paid **by the first of every month**. Swimmers whose dues are not paid by the 15th of each month will not be allowed to swim until back dues are paid. Even if swimmers are out of the water due to vacations, illness, or participation in high school aquatics, they are still members of the team and are responsible for their dues. Remember that the team pays for the coach and the pool whether or not the swimmer is there. Please refer to the Family Contract for details.

College students who were previously members of the team may return to the team after the college season is over, and swim during vacation periods. They will pay monthly dues, as well as their USAS fee (to cover insurance and eligibility to participate in USAS meets).

2. FUNDRAISING

Without fundraising options the dues would have to be greatly increased. The cost of administrative fees, travel, swim equipment, and coaching salaries and more comes from dues and fundraising. All swimmers and families are required to participate. The family limit is \$300 per year.

3. SERVICE HOURS

Besides monthly dues and fundraising each family is asked to volunteer 25 hours during the year to help the Club function smoothly. We need parents to make phone calls, prepare food for the snack bar at our meets, raise funds, join committees, become board members, do organizational work, work at meets, etc. Please contact any coach or Board member to volunteer

JOINING THE MOSES LAKE MANTA RAYS

Minimum requirements for the beginning group are one length crawl with some proficiency in breathing and stroke techniques. Knowledge of backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly is required for the more advanced training groups.

USAS CARD

United States of America Swimming (USAS) cards are issued each year by the Inland Empire Swimming (IES) office. All MLMR swimmers are required to have a USA card to compete in swim meets and to be covered by insurance at workouts and swim meets. The USA registration is paid at the same time as Club registration. Parents are encouraged to become non-athlete members of USAS. As a registered parent, you are able to function as a meet administrator, deck official, or marshal.

SWIM LEVELS

Swimmers compete on different levels at swim meets according to their abilities and experience. Swimmers will compete only at meets for which they have qualified by achieving certain time standards. The time standards and rules for all the different levels of competition are listed in a yearly *Swim Guide or online* printed by Inland Empire Swimming (IES). The swim levels are listed in the swim guide so please refer to the swim guide for eligibility and time standard qualifications.

A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

MLMR is a non-profit corporation with Internal Revenue Service 501(c)-(3) status. All charitable contributions and donations are tax deductible. Personal fundraising donations are deductible to you. Solicited fundraising donations are deductible to the person or business making them. Monthly dues are not deductible. For a final determination whether or not a contribution is deductible please check with your tax professional. The MLMR parents run our home meets and participate in fundraising as well as the planning of social functions.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is an essential part of our team. The **Head Coach** is responsible for all areas involving the water (such as hiring & supervising the assistant coaches, training, swim meets, discipline, etc.). The **Executive Committee** is responsible for all administrative areas (such as setting the budget, hiring the head coach, planning for the future, setting up committees, etc). The coaches are available before and after swim practice, but are not to be disturbed during practice. They all prefer an email contact or a

personal discussion during the day, not a phone call late at night. In an emergency they are all available any time, however normal business should be conducted during the day at their convenience. Other means of team communication include email, Club website, committee correspondence, team meetings, and coaches meetings.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

MLMR usually plans a variety of social activities for parents and swimmers during the season. Events such as awards dinner, parties, team trips and barbecues will be announced.

TEAM TRAVEL

Certain out of town meets will be designated as “team travel meets”. The swimmers share rooms, eat, and travel as a team. Parents may be called upon to help with transportation or chaperoning, but in general the head coach is in charge and assumes responsibility.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline problems will be dealt with individually. Swimmers must understand their responsibilities to their coach and the team. Attending practice regularly is expected. MLMR is an organization with high goals. Unacceptable behavior will be dealt with immediately in the form of a reprimand, temporary suspension, or permanent suspension. The Head Coach will be responsible for discipline of swimmers and parents when the problem influences the team in a negative manner.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Moses Lake Manta Rays has a scholarship program for deserving swimmers who cannot afford the monthly dues. The Head Coach will determine the swimmers eligibility and the amount of the scholarship.

Coaching Philosophy

Understanding the influence of the coaching philosophy will lead to the success of the Club

- Have a shared vision among the staff and board.
- Focus is on the kids as people before focusing on them as athletes.
- Emphasize the long-term development of the athlete.
- Consistent training philosophy of the coaching staff; role clarification.
- Importance of mentoring Assistant coaches yet giving them autonomy.
- Focusing on the TEAM.

Have a shared vision among the staff and board.

Without this explicitly stated vision, it could be very easy for things to go awry. With that, if there is a disagreement on how something should be handled it comes right down to the basic philosophy of the program. One of the things that allows the Board to be comfortable with the Head Coach making all the swimming decisions is the fact that we have a pretty clear understanding of what their role is, what the Head Coach's role is, and what we're all trying to achieve together. The idea of role clarification is important in ensuring the club runs smoothly and with a purpose and direction.

Focus on the kids as people before focusing on them as athletes.

The athlete is valued as more than just "a swimmer." The coaches view swimming as a tool for developing "life skills" in the athletes. Each athlete receives individualized attention and frequently the discussions centers on issues that are not swimming related.

The coaches will also make a concerted effort to develop the athletes in areas that transcend swimming. Leadership and accountability are two essential "life skills" that we try to develop in the athletes. As the swimmers progress through the program they will be given more and more responsibility for their swims and performance. This can range from making sure they are attending the appropriate number of practices to holding heart rate within a certain range during a set. However, the athletes are expected to "take ownership of their training and competition." Additionally, we like to see the athletes step into leadership roles on the team. When all is said and done, these are skills that the athletes will be able to use effectively in life outside of swimming.

Emphasize the long-term development of the athlete.

Every decision we make about practice groups, meets to attend, events to swim, we're looking at long range development of the swimmers. We are concerned with how the athlete will perform when they are 18 or 20 years old than they are with how the athlete performs at the age of 10 or 12. Younger swimmers will focus almost exclusively on developing proper stroke technique and actual training does not become the major component of workouts until the age of 13 or so. Additionally, younger athletes are encouraged to participate in other sports and activities and not make a commitment to swimming until 12 or 13 years of age.

Consistent training philosophy and clarified roles of the coaching staff

The "nuts and bolts" of the training philosophy that guides our swimming program (such as an emphasis on aerobic training and the implementation of a multi faceted program) will lead to the overall success of our Club. We emphasize how having a shared training philosophy and an understanding and appreciation of coaching responsibilities is critical to the success of the program. Put another way, it is not enough to agree on the athlete development process - - there also must be agreement on individual roles within the process.

All of the Coaches have a clear understanding of their individual coaching responsibilities and how they can influence the athlete's successful development. We do not try to out-coach each other, we are working together. The Coach's understand that they have a place, based on the way the team is set up. We all work together because we have a vision for the future of the Club.

In sum, we have a training philosophy that is embraced by all the coaches. And, the coaches understand where and how they impact the development of the athlete. Furthermore, and of utmost importance, is that the coaches take pride in their role within the program.

Mentoring, yet also giving coaches autonomy

While the club and training philosophies are clearly identified, it becomes evident that the coaches must have great latitude in how they implement the philosophy. This can be equated with driving cross-country in that there are a variety of roads one can take to get to the same destination. At MLMR, the destination is clearly defined but the coaches can choose how they are going to get there with their training groups. The day-to-day application of how we get it done varies from group to group. And, giving the coaches that autonomy allows them the chance to learn, it allow us to learn from each other. Flexibility in training also allows creativity to surface and gives coaches the opportunity to experiment with new things. So as not to think the coaches are left on their own, it is important to note that coach mentoring does also occur within the program. It is important to mentor and help develop younger coaches. The staff is provided with the opportunity to attend coaching clinics, spend time observing at other clubs, or participate in other experiences to enhance their coaching.

Focusing on the Team

Being a "team" with all components operating off of the same page is deemed critical to the program and the athletes within the program..

We try to stay focused on the team's overall accomplishments. It is much more difficult to do than in HS or college but I think it is part of what makes swimming fun. And, teaching team responsibility and team aspects of things is one of the valuable lessons gained. We do not ever want to lose that from our sport or our club. The effort is made to combine the practices of the groups that train at different sites through our guidelines and philosophy. This helps facilitate a sense of team as well as enables the athletes to develop relationships with their teammates prior to traveling together to competitions.

We always try to generate an atmosphere and "feel" of team. We want the swimmers to feel like they are part of a team in that each athlete is special to the team.

Summary

Club success . . . there are so many 'ingredients' that influence the success of a program. And, each club is probably going to have a slightly different 'recipe' based on their unique situation and external constraints. We will work together and strive to continue to offer the best program we can to meet the needs both of the individuals and the Team as a whole.

Athlete Placement into Training Groups

One unique aspect of any program is the approach to placing athletes in training groups and moving athletes between their various training groups. Much time and effort should be spent by the coaching staff to ensure that each athlete is in the training group that is most beneficial for their long-term development as a person and an athlete. In fact, this process of deciding what practice group each athlete should be in is "probably the most critical Thing we do".

When determining movement between training groups, the appropriate coaching staff will review the athlete and discuss the most appropriate group for the given athlete. Specific criteria used to evaluate each athlete have been developed to determine group placement.

Team Placement Criteria and Considerations

1. Level of commitment.
2. Practice attendance.
3. Training ability.
4. Stroke and skill development.
5. Level of maturity and personal responsibility.
6. Age and previous experience.
7. Meet performance and best times.
8. Space availability.
9. Satisfactorily completes placement test/tryout (if new to team).

Practice Groups Promotions

The swimmer under consideration:

1. Consistently makes choices that demonstrate the willingness to make the commitment level expected of swimmers at the next level.
2. Meets attendance expectations for current group; demonstrates the ability to make attendance requirements for the next level.
3. Consistently trains above the level of the current practice group.
4. Demonstrates ability to train successfully on base intervals at the next practice level.
5. Has mastered stroke and skill expectations of current practice group.
6. Exhibits level of maturity and responsibility typical of swimmers at the next level.
7. Fits age and experience parameters of the next training level.
8. Has demonstrated potential to compete successfully at general competition level of the next group.

Practice Group Demotion

The swimmer under consideration:

1. Has demonstrated that he/she is not willing to make the commitment level expected of the practice group.
2. Attends practice consistently less often than the group expectation.
3. Is not training successfully on base intervals for team level.
4. Needs injury rehabilitation at a less strenuous level.
5. Has seasonal sport or other activity conflict.

Process for Implementing Group Changes

1. Discuss potential change(s) with coach at the next level.
2. Discuss and receive approval for desired change(s) with Head Coach.
3. Process roster change form to notify appropriate staff of effective date of team change.

As you can see from looking through these criteria, it is not just about being able to swim fast or demonstrate appropriate technique. It is also about the athlete's ability to handle, physically and mentally the training, the increased responsibilities that come with promotion to the next group, and the higher commitment level that is required. So, while an age group athlete may be physically able to train at the senior level, if he or she does not yet possess the maturity and attitude to train at that level, they will remain at the age group level to allow time and experience for those necessary skills to develop. This is felt to be more important than simply having the physical ability to handle the training load at the next level.

It is our belief that numerous factors should be considered when deciding when an athlete is ready to move to the next level, especially the Senior level, first and foremost being the athlete's attitude and level of commitment. Being able to make such a judgment necessitates that the coaches know each and every athlete in their group; to be able to assess factors such as attitude, ability to train, level of maturity and skill development mandates that the coaches are familiar with the athletes they coach. This ties into a philosophy that places an emphasis on long-term development and on concern for development of the person and then the athlete.

There is no magic to this, it is common sense. It would be very easy to set objective criteria, such as, we're all going to swim a timed 500 and the fastest 25 get put in this group. But, that doesn't tell you what you need to know. This process we will use to place athletes in training groups is obviously not the easiest "route". But, it is one that is deemed to be most effective given that successful development of the person first and the athlete second is the goal.

To ease the transition between age group and senior level training groups, it is critical to educate the swimmer of this process. Such areas like the developmental issues, about what their physical development is all about as swimmers and to explain the differences in training and philosophy. It is also helpful to explain the competition philosophy, such as, the athlete not going best times every meet. It is also about a shift in responsibility where the swimmer needs to start pushing toward more personal accountability and making swimming their own responsibility, also to make decisions on their own and learn to speak openly with their Coach.

Athlete Development in our Age Group Program

The Moses Lake Manta Rays program has been structured on the premise that there are four basic phases of athlete development in age group swimming. At each level of the program, we continually try to evaluate and adapt to the multitude of factors, both scientific and sociological, that impact the growth and development of young athletes. Experience has taught us that the perfect age group program is a moving target that changes as the population we serve changes and as we learn more and more about the development of young people.

Following is an outline description of the four phases of development and the basic premises that currently guide our thinking at each of these levels.

Pre Competitive Program:

Basic Skill Development – Ages 10 & Under

This phase is the introductory level of competitive swimming. In order to begin in the novice levels of our program, swimmers must be able to swim a minimum of 25 yards freestyle and backstroke.

- 1) The focus is almost entirely on teaching fundamentals and developing basic motor learning skills, balance and coordination in the water.
- 2) We believe young athletes should begin swimming on a regular basis no later than age 9 or 10, ideally at age 7 or 8. How far they swim is not as important as the fact that they are in the water on a regular basis developing their feel for the water. We believe it is important that novice competitors swim at least 2 times per week for a minimum of 7-8 months per year.
- 3) It is vitally important to make swimming fun and enjoyable. We believe the most significant responsibility for novice coaches is teaching young people to love the water and to love the sport.

4) It is critical for novice coaches to emphasize correct fundamentals and to have the willingness to sacrifice speed for efficiency. This concept can sometimes work against a swimmer's short-term success at this age. At this level, we believe there is great merit in competition based on skill development.

5) The majority of yardage in the early years needs to be low intensity and technique-oriented. This is not necessarily as exciting or fun for swimmer or coach, as is swimming fast.

6) We believe that it is essential to teach, develop and promote all four strokes and all events. Age groupers should not be permitted to specialize in practice or in meets.

7) We should place a very heavy emphasis on kicking. Coaches should make kicking a high percentage of the conditioning work done at the novice levels. Kickboards are the only training aids used at this level.

8) Swimmers are readily encouraged to participate in other activities and sports. We believe physical activity and the experience of other sports increases the number of learned movement patterns and general athletic development of the child. Sports such as gymnastics and soccer have excellent carryover value. The better the athlete, the better the swimmer is the usual case.

9) At every level, but particularly the novice level, we take a long-term approach to swimmer development. Once swimmers begin in our program, we want to give them the preparation and tools they will need to make swimming a lifetime activity.

Competitive Age Group Program:

Basic Training Development – Ages 8 to 14

Swimmers at this stage move into second level of our age group program. Swimmers who move into these practice levels are able to swim all four strokes and maintain good technique on low intensity interval work. This phase is a transitional level where the emphasis begins to change from primarily teaching to a relatively equal balance of technique work and physiological development.

1) The focus is still centered on teaching fundamentals and developing a strong foundation in all strokes.

2) The number of practices per week offered at each team level increases to 5-6 and swimmers are encouraged to attend as many practices as possible but no fewer than 4 per week.

3) Low intensity aerobic conditioning is emphasized and athletes begin to do more mileage on a weekly basis. It is important that the fundamental skills developed in Phase I not be compromised as swimmers begin to swim farther in practice.

- 4) At this level, the training program focuses on preparation for the 200 IM and 200/500 freestyle events. Even if swimmers show promise in specific events, we do very little specialty work. We have developed a program that we call "IM Tuff" to promote interest and participation in the IM and, eventually, the distance freestyle events.
- 5) A high priority continues to be placed on kicking all four strokes.
- 6) Beginning with this phase a high priority is also placed on maximizing the number of training weeks per year. Peak performance efforts are put off until the latest point possible in each season. Likewise, the importance of swimming through the year is emphasized. This training philosophy carries through to the higher levels of the program.
- 7) Swimmers are still encouraged to participate in other activities and sports. However, we are hopeful that participation in other activities allows them to meet the minimum attendance expectations for swimming. In a perfect program, the swim team would provide opportunities for crossover training and exposure to other sports.
- 8) Although the overall level of training expected of swimmers increases during this phase of the program, coaches are charged with being creative and making the experience fun and enjoyable. Great age group coaches have the special ability to make hard work be fun.

Senior Development: Junior Group

Progressive Training – Ages 13 to 18

Most swimmers should move into the senior level of our program at age 13. The quantity and intensity of the training program increases. For the first time, the program structure calls for more time to be devoted to physiological conditioning than to teaching fundamentals.

- 1) In this phase, the mileage completed each week begins to be an important consideration. We want to take advantage of the pre-pubescent window of opportunity to more fully develop aerobic capacity.
- 2) Although low intensity aerobic conditioning is still the highest priority, we have athletes begin to do more anaerobic threshold work. As swimmers swim faster in practice a greater percentage of the time, it is critical that technique is not compromised.
- 3) At this level, the training program focuses on preparation for the 400 IM and middle distance freestyle events. Even if swimmers show promise in specific events, we do very little specialty work. The IM Tuff program is a prominent focus within these practice groups.

4) We believe that to be as successful in long course swimming as one is in short course swimming requires approximately 10-15% better conditioning. The training program in the practice levels of Phases III and IV is designed to emphasize and promote long course swimming throughout the year.

5) Swimmers are encouraged to attend as many practices each week as possible. AM practices during the school year are introduced at the top level of this phase. All groups are provided the opportunity to do two-a-day practices during the summer months. Swimmers at these senior levels are encouraged to begin to make a choice between swimming and other activities.

6) Beginning in this phase, careful attention is given to maintaining aerobic fitness levels from one season to the next. Breaks between seasons are limited to avoid significant deterioration of aerobic fitness.

Senior Training Program: High Performance

Advanced Training – Ages 14 & Over

Swimmers with the appropriate dedication, desire, experience, and talent move to the advanced training level of our program at 14-15 years of age. The training program in Phase IV is very demanding with a heavy emphasis on distance-based physiological training.

1) Success over the long-term remains a high priority. Although we could train high school age swimmers in such a way that they could swim faster in the shorter events during their teenage years, we believe it is our responsibility to provide an aerobic-based training foundation that will allow them to achieve ultimate success in their college years.

2) Work within various energy systems becomes an important component of the overall training program. Emphasis is still heavily aerobic, but specificity of training for stroke and distance becomes part of the regimen.

3) While mileage completed is an important consideration, attention to detail and improvement in stroke technique is very highly valued. Coaches continually stress efficiency and technical precision as key components to success at the elite levels.

4) Swimmers are still encouraged to train and compete in a wide variety of events. We believe there are many instances in this country where 14-17 year-old swimmers begin to specialize too early in their careers.

5) The commitment level required at these levels of the program is very high with swimmers expected to attend 8-11 practices per week during the school year and during the summer.

Training Groups and Advancement Criteria

The following are guidelines for entry and advancement for each Training group. It is important to note that these are just guidelines and that the coaches have the discretion on whether to promote a swimmer to the next Training group. There are several factors to consider in making the decision to advance a swimmer to the next Training group.

- Is the swimmer physically and mentally ready for advancement?
- Can the swimmer meet the minimum Training requirement for the next group?
- Is the Coach confident that the swimmer is ready for the advancement?
- Friendship Circle. At times it is important to move a whole group together.
- Does a slower swimmer in the group exhibit leadership skills and if so they also will be considered for advancement if within the Circle of Friends.

The Coaching staff makes every effort to ensure that each swimmer is placed in the training group most appropriate for them, based on what the Coach feels is best for that swimmers career and their long term success. If you have any questions please ask your swimmers Coach.

Age Group Pre Competitive (AG III Bronze)

Entry Requirements:

- Must be at least 7 years old (6 year olds maybe the exception in some cases)
- Beginning pace clock skills.
- Demonstrate positive attitude.

Training Requirements:

- Demonstrate working knowledge of Freestyle and Backstroke drills and strokes.
- Must be able to swim 25 yards of each.
- Recommended 3-4 days attendance per week.
- There are no attendance requirements for this group.

Swimmers in this group have some competitive swimming experience. The focus of this group is to improve the swimmer's stroke skills, conditioning and endurance. Swimmers in this group generally compete in swim meets locally. This group does swim year round and is offered 5 training sessions each week of 60 minutes in length. Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least three of the five 60 minute training sessions offered each week. Please note that the better the attendance the greater the opportunity for improvement and that there is a direct correlation between attendance and performance.

Age Group Competitive (AG II Silver)

Entry Requirements:

- Must be at least 10 years old.
- Basic pace clock skills.
- Demonstrate positive training habits.

Training Requirements:

- Must be able to perform Freestyle and Backstroke proficiently.
- Must be able to swim a legal Breaststroke.
- Must be able to swim 25 yards of Butterfly.
- Demonstrate basic understanding of Breaststroke and Butterfly drills and strokes.

Swimmers in these groups have a higher level of competitive swimming experience. Endurance, conditioning and stroke refinement continue to be emphasized. In addition, race strategy, competitive skills, goal setting and an understanding of time standards are introduced. Swimmers in this group generally compete in ability level swim meets locally. This group does swim year round and is offered 5 training sessions each week of 75 minutes in length. Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least four of the five 75 minute training sessions offered each week. Please note that the better the attendance the greater the opportunity for improvement and that there is a direct correlation between attendance and performance.

Age Group Competitive (AG I Gold)

Entry Requirements:

- Must be at least 11 years old. NOTE: Swimmers may be 10 years old to enter this group if the Coach determines their skill level meets the criteria of the group
- Must be able to perform all the club stroke drills.
- Must have good pace clock skills.
- Demonstrate consistent and regular positive training habits.

Swimmers in this group have a high level of competitive swimming experience. The focus of this group is to improve the swimmer's stroke skills, conditioning and endurance. Swimmers in this group generally compete in IE/USAS locally and regionally. This group does swim year round and is offered 6 training sessions each week of 90 minutes in length.

Junior Training Group (Senior Development)

Entry Requirements:

- Must be in the 8th grade or higher.
- Proficient understanding of all club stroke drills.
- Demonstrate consistent and regular positive training habits.
- Must have good pace clock skills.

Train Training Requirements (minimum):

- Swimmers must demonstrate that they are able to consistently perform the following sets:
2000-3000 yard freestyle sets on the 1:35 to 1:30 send off (base per 100 yards).
Ex: 20-30x100 Freestyle on 1:35 or 1:30, 10x200 Freestyle on 3:00 etc.
10x200 IM 3:30-4:00 send off
Kick sets on 1:05 send off (base per 50) without fins.
- **Attendance Expectations:** 5-6 training sessions per week. Please note that the better the attendance the greater the opportunity for improvement and that there is a direct correlation between attendance and performance.

Swimmers in this group have a high level of competitive swimming experience. This group is designed to transition swimmers from age group swimming to senior swimming through an increased volume and intensity of training. The focus is to improve cardiovascular fitness, refine stroke skills and gain competitive experience. Swimmers in this group generally compete in swim meets locally. Occasional travel meets may be attended when and if the Coach assigns or approves of such meets. This group does swim year round and is offered 6 training sessions each week of 120 minutes in length.

Senior Training Group I (Senior High Performance)

Entry Requirements:

- Must be in the 8th grade or higher.
- Proficient understanding and demonstration of all club stroke drills.
- Demonstrate consistent and regular training habits.
- Must possess advanced pace clock skills.

Training Requirements (minimum):

- Swimmers must demonstrate that they are able to consistently perform the following sets:
3000-4000 yard Freestyle sets on the 1:25 or better send off (base per 100 yards).
2000-3000 yard Stroke or IM sets on the 1:40 or better send off (base per 100 yards).
Kick sets on the 1:00 or better send off (base per 50 yards) without fins.
- **Attendance Expectations:** 8-11 training sessions per week. Please note that the better the attendance the greater the opportunity for improvement and that there is a direct correlation between attendance and performance. If you are unable to

attend any training session please let your Coach know. NOTE: Morning training sessions are not the equivalent of an Afternoon training session and should not be substituted as to attain 8 or more training sessions each week for Competition at this level. Morning training sessions are in addition to the Afternoon training sessions.

Swimmers in this group have a high level of commitment and also a high level of competitive swimming experience. The focus is to gain Regional, National and International competitive experience, improve cardiovascular fitness, and refine stroke and racing skills. Swimmers in this group generally compete in the highest level swim meets for which they are qualified, including the Olympic Games, Olympic Trials, Nationals, Junior Nationals and Senior Sectionals. This group does swim year round and is offered 6 training sessions each week of 120 minutes in length and 5 training sessions of 90 minutes in length each week.

If you have any questions please contact your swimmer's Coach or the Head Coach.

- **Attendance Expectations:** There are 11 training sessions offered per week. Swimmers who swim distances of 500 yards or greater are expected to attend 9 training sessions per week. Those swimmers who swim distances of 500 yards or less are expected to attend 8 training sessions per week. NOTE: The better the attendance the greater the opportunity for improvement and that there is a direct correlation between attendance and performance. Therefore, swimmers must participate in a minimum of 90% of the training sessions, on average, per week, in order to remain as a member of this training group. Morning training sessions are not the equivalent of an Afternoon training session and should not be substituted as to attain the minimum attendance of 90% of the training sessions offered per week. Morning training sessions are in addition to the afternoon training sessions and have a different training function than the afternoon training sessions. The Senior I Coach retains discretion of accepting absences which do not count against the attendance figure of the swimmer.

Swimmers in this group have a high level of commitment and also a high level of competitive swimming experience. The focus is to gain Regional, National and International competitive experience, improve cardiovascular fitness, and refine stroke and racing skills. Swimmers in this group generally compete in the highest level swim meets for which they are qualified, including the Olympic Games, Olympic Trials, Nationals, Junior Nationals and Senior Sectionals. This group does swim year round and is offered 6 training sessions each week of 120 minutes in length and 5 training sessions of 90 minutes in length each week. Swimmers must maintain, on average, 90% attendance in order to train in this group.

Competition Philosophy

Athletes are constantly bombarded by portrayals of athletic competitions in the media and in their everyday lives. However, they seldom see the hours, days, weeks, and years of training leading up to those competitions. From personal experience, we know that it takes a lot of practice, commitment, and hard work to be successful. While training is important in the development of an athlete, competitions are where an athlete has the opportunity to showcase all of this hard work. How a team approaches competition in many instances determines how well athletes are able to take the skills learned through training and apply them in a pressure situation.

Importance and Goals of Competition

The emphasis placed on competition varies according to the training group that each swimmer is in. The approach to competition is another tool to achieve aspects of the club mission and goals. Competition is used as a learning tool and the swimmers are given feedback on their races in order to achieve even better swims in the future.

Stroke quality and race strategy are emphasized during competitive performances. While success is often judged by best times, swimmers should focus on the development of good race strategy and stroke skills. The basics of each stroke are consistently reinforced; it is important for the swimmers to have good stroke mechanics so they can build on that in the future. As the season progresses, race strategy becomes increasingly more important.

Swimmers realize success as a result of their commitment level. Part of that commitment is attending a number of meets, the caliber of those meets and the commitment you put into those meets. Not only is the commitment to competition emphasized but character development, meet preparation, and the technical issues of racing are also important. In contrast to that the daily routine becomes more important than what you do at the meet. If you do it correctly daily, then at the meet it should be done correctly.

The competition goals for swimmers vary for every meet depending on the person. A Coach might have 10 people at a meet and have 10 different strategies for that meet for those individuals as far as what we want to walk away with when the meet is over, the strategies might have nothing to do with time. However, ultimately it does have something to do with time. One race strategy that swimmers strive to achieve during competition, especially at the beginning of the season, is negative splitting. This particular strategy gives the swimmer a positive feeling by coming back strong and helps keep them a little less fearful and more engaged in races later in the season. Emphasis is also put on, progressively adding speed to the front of the race throughout the season and maintaining the back part of the race. Just to mention a couple of examples.

Event Specialization

The degree of event specialization varies according to training groups with age group swimmers being the least specialized and the Senior group being somewhat more specialized. Our swimmers are expected to do the 500 free, 200 IM and 200 Free in every meets as age groupers. Early in the year they will swim a wide range of events. While swimmers in the Senior group often swim their best events at the top-level competitions, they are also encouraged to swim events outside of their range during the season. It is our belief that challenging swimmers to compete in events outside of their range, makes them race hard but there really is no stigma attached, whether they succeed or fail. You compete and challenge your character, but you do not necessarily challenge your ego. Keeping those two things separate can be good sometimes. Furthermore, swimming a wider range of events is important at the age group level because, most swimmers at that level still aren't at the point where they know what their best event is, only what their favorite event is. While it is ok to specialize a little bit, there is an important balance between specialization and occasionally challenging the swimmers with different events.

Tracking of Performance Progression

The coaches may vary in the ways that they track competitive performances of their swimmers. They range from computer related tracking of times to subjective tracking to the kids keeping a logbook. Each swimmer is responsible for maintaining his or her logbook that may include personal thoughts, quotes and a lot of handouts such as time standards, goal sheets and individual split sheets. This helps to give them the tools for goal setting and to learn to track their own swims. This logbook can also be used to track performance in practice and competition, whether it is time, stroke development, race strategy or mental skills.

Role of Coach at Competitions

Coaches often have common approaches to coaching their swimmers on deck at competitions, yet they each have their own unique style. Coaches may emphasize the importance of addressing team effort and togetherness at competitions, but also treating each swimmer as an individual. Each swimmer has their own goals, so it is necessary to deal with them separately. Each coach gives their respective swimmers individual feedback based on their race. Feedback can include analysis of their splits, technique, race strategy, mental skill usage before and during the race, and how the swimmer looked in the water. Since every swimmer is different in their use of these skills at competition, they need individualized feedback based on their own strengths and weaknesses.

Coaches all like each swimmer to communicate with them before and after their swims. Swimmers are reminded of the last minute details to remember in their races such as driving off the walls and keeping their elbows up or to receive that last boost of confidence before they head to the blocks.

How to Handle a Disappointed Swimmer

Competing in swim meets can be a true test of a person's character. While goals are to be strived for, they are purposefully set to be challenging and to push people to their own potential. Sometimes goals are achieved, while other times they remain in the distance. It is the determination and commitment to reach those goals that tests a person's character. Competition is viewed as a learning situation regardless of whether a swimmer attains his or her personal goals or not. Swimmers are taught if they are doing everything asked to do in practice, then success will come to them, whether it is at the end of the season or two years down the road, eventually they will get what they deserve. However, there is always a reason for a disappointing race. It is important to point out aspects of the race that were both done well and could be improved upon. The swimmers should learn from their mistakes and look forward to the next opportunity to swim. If a swimmer has made a bad decision in a race, they can re-evaluate their plan and make a good decision for the next time with their Coaches help.

Role of Parents at Competitions

Parents do play an important role in competitions. Listed below are a few qualities that make an "ideal" parent at competitions:

- Parents should be great cheerleaders. They should support and encourage their child at competitions regardless of their performance.
- Parents should tend to their child's life and development and use the swimming and the coaching staff as a tool to assist in that development. Swimming can help empower their child to be a champion in life through excellence in swimming.
- Parents should provide a healthy environment for their young athlete. Parents can help develop good nutritional, academic, and lifestyle habits to ensure a well-rounded environment for their child.
- Parents can take advantage of having a professional coaching staff that is telling them not to worry about their child's swimming, the staff will do that. The coaching staff is responsible for aiding in the development of young athletes into champions in life and swimming.

When choosing to become part of swimming with the club, a child is making a commitment. Parents should make their child aware of this commitment and their responsibility to fulfill it. Rather than focus on their child's athletic ability, parents are encouraged to use swimming as a catalyst for developing life skills, such as a positive work ethic and finishing what they start. To this end, we stay dedicated as Coaches of this club.

Parents: Your athlete needs you!

To have a successful program there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your youngster makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join the Moses Lake Manta Ray swim club and reacquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning Moses Lake Manta Ray swim club parent.

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

The coach is the Coach! We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and oftentimes insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact the coach. The coach's job is to motivate and constructively criticize the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition.

Ten and Under Swimmers

Ten and under swimmers are the most inconsistent swimmers and this can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and the swimmer alike! Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer first joins the Club, there may be a brief period in which he/she appears to slow down. This is a result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual. Even the very best swimmer will have meets where they do not do their best times. These "plateaus" are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season times should improve. Please be supportive of these "poor" meets. The older swimmers may have only two or three meets a year for which they will be rested and tapered.

Problem's with the coach?

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

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or a training group that can range in size from 10-50 members. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short term inconvenience.
3. If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask that the head age group coach or head coach to join the dialogue as a third party.
4. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

The Ten Commandments: For Parents of Athletic Children

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Make a point of understanding courage and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear of discomfort.

The Overzealous Parent

With so many great things happening, it's important to take the time to address the issue of parents unknowingly preventing their child from achieving swimming success (and possibly even success in other areas).

Coaches often refer to problems caused by 'over-zealous' or pushy parents, who get pre-occupied by their child's performances, mentally 'pushing' them to do better, and even worse, telling them that their performance 'was not good enough'. This is a highly damaging approach which hugely increases the already-considerable pressures a young competitive swimmer must face. This pressure eventually forces most of these swimmers to give up swimming altogether (often around 13-16 years old), simply to escape from the pressure they receive from their well-meaning but overbearing parents).

These are not your 'everyday' parents - these are the ones who give their child instructions before they go out for every race, put them through the 'third degree' when they put in a bad performance, sometimes even argue with officials or coaches at meets, and will often continue the 'lecture' for their child when at home. This attitude gradually deteriorates their parent/child relationship, as the parent becomes more of a 'manager' than a true parent.

Children need un-conditional love and support from their parents, regardless of their performance. When this happens, the swimmer feels safe enough to make the scary steps towards excellence. When parents attempt to coach or push even well meaning parents can risk making their child feel that the support of their parents is conditional upon the child winning races. The child/parent relationship must be the platform from which the child learns to stand on his/her own two feet.

It's easy to fall into the trap of beginning to 'push' for your own child to make sure they don't get left behind. We have all seen the swimmer who has had a bad race walk off so they do not have to speak to their parents for half an hour because they know they will receive an 'earful' of lectures. This child may begin to mysteriously get injured or sick as simply find a way of escaping the swimming that they are no longer enjoying.

There are 5 essential keys to swimming success.

The swimmer must:

- Love swimming passionately. Even if viewing swimming as a vehicle of self-expression. This is mine not my parents'.
- The swimmer must: Be self-motivated to train hard. Find the fun in being with friends and pushing beyond barriers.
- The swimmer must: Have unconditional support at home
- The swimmer must: Be praised for their achievements by their coaches and be praised for their comportment by their parents.
- There are only a small number of parents who fit into the 'over-zealous' category. It is also not a phenomenon limited to swimming.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Some specific parent responsibilities are as follows:

- Pay monthly dues on time.
- Keep lots of healthy snacks on hand for after practice munching!
- Help provide transportation to practice and swim meets. See that your swimmers are at workout and meets on time and ready to swim. Pick up your swimmer immediately after practice. Coaches should not be expected to baby-sit.
- Stay informed by reading all club communications and attending parents' meetings.
- Support your coaches and team with a positive attitude.
- Notify the coach in the event of a prolonged absence of your swimmer from practices or if he/she cannot participate in a required meet.
- Keep track of swimmer's times in a logbook.
- At swim meets, cheer from a distance, not poolside where you can distract or embarrass your swimmer.
- Parents who want to watch practice are welcome to observe from the bleachers. Encourage your swimmers, but do not try to coach them.
- If you want to talk with your child's coach, please make an appointment. Don't try to talk with the coach during practice when the coach's full attention should be devoted to the swimmers.
- Volunteer to time at meets when our Club is assigned a lane or chair on the timing line.
- Volunteer to be on a Committee. Our team will be as good as we make it!

SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each swimmer must share in the following responsibilities:

- Attend practice on a regular basis.
- Arrive at all practice sessions on time prepared to swim.
- Obey all instructions of the coaching staff and the pool rules.
- Attend all required meets.
- Arrive at all meets on time.
- Communicate with your coach when you cannot fulfill your obligation.
- Take an active role in advertising the positive aspects of MLMR swimming.
- Participate in and support all fundraising activities.
- Wear the team suit and team cap at all meets. Wear the team sweat suit and/or team T-shirt if you have one.
- Keep a log of times achieved at swim meets.
- Aid in setting up and putting away all equipment.
- Compliment others on their achievements.
- Approach all situations with a **positive** outlook. Encourage others!
- Support your coach and his/her training program. Remember that there are different approaches to training and it is important to be consistent with your coach's philosophy.
- Establish high goals and actively train to achieve them.
- **HAVE FUN!**

How do you prepare for the meet?

Make sure that you know what the rules are for the events that you have signed up to swim. (For example: two-hand touch for Fly and Breast turns and finishes) Then be sure to practice the correct way at workouts.

- It is a good idea to make as many workouts as possible before a meet. It will keep your mind and muscles ready to perform.
- Swimmers should always wear MLMR apparel at the meet (e.g. swim suit, cap T-shirt, sweatshirt, parka, jacket, hat etc.) so that you can be recognized on the blocks and to show team spirit. Even the parents are encouraged to wear MLMR apparel. If you do not have any, get some before the meet.
- Have your swim bag packed the night before. (Team suit, goggles, team cap, at least two towels, time logbook and team apparel. Shoes and socks)
- Know what time you are supposed to be at the meet. If you use an alarm clock, set it so that you will wake up in time to eat breakfast, drive to the meet, and arrive on time.
- Nutrition - The healthiest way to prepare for a meet is to eat well-balanced meals. Meals that have items from the five food groups (cereal and grain products, fruits, vegetables, milk and milk products, meat poultry and fish) At the meet stay away from greasy or oily foods and sugary snacks. Stick with carbohydrates (bagels, pasta, etc.) fruits and vegetables; also remember to drink plenty of fluids.
- Let your coach know you are here, and check-in with the meet clerk of course. [If you don't know where that is, check with your coach. There should be a check-in table, where you will tell them your name and the events you are checking -in to swim.
- Many swimmers write their event numbers on their hand, so they know each event that they are swimming that day.
- Shortly after you check-in, you should find your coach so you can stretch or get in the water with your group, get any announcements regarding the meet, and get ready to get in the water for warm up.
- When getting into the water for warm up, you must always enter feet first after sitting on the deck. No diving is allowed during a swim meet warm up. Until a sprint lane is open and your coach is supervising you.
- Make sure that your parent has signed up to time.

- Follow the meet and know what event is in the water so that when your event is close, you will be able to check on the posted sheets to see what heat and lane you will be swimming. Tell your coach what event you are about to swim and give her your heat and lane numbers. He or she can give you advice about your race.
- Keep warm until right before your race. Have your suit, cap and goggles on, but have something covering your feet and body, up until you get on the blocks.
- After your race, ask the timers what your time was and tell your coach. He or she should give you feedback regarding your race.
- Remember, the time that the timers give you is not official. You must wait until they post the official results to get your official time. This is the time you put in your time logbook.
- You may not scratch any events without the coach's approval.
- When you are done with all of your events, check in with your coach before you go home, because you may be in a relay.

Reminder: Swim meets are a time to “show off” all the hard work you have done at workout. The better you prepare yourself, the more fun the swim meet can be.

ENTERING A SWIM MEET

Open to all swimmers holding current USAS registration cards.

- **Procedures.** Obtain meet forms from your coach. The meet form will contain information such as location, time, fees, eligibility, entry deadlines, etc. List the events the swimmer will enter on the entry form provided by the Coach, the time achieved for that event, and the identifying data.
- **Eligibility.** Any swimmer may enter any swim meet that does not have qualifying time standards or age restrictions. A swimmer may enter only those events in which he or she has achieved qualifying time, if times are required for entry in the meet. Qualifying times must have been achieved in a previous USAS sanctioned meet. Practice times (those done in workout) are NOT official times. If a swimmer entering an event has not previously swum that event, he/she should enter NT (no time). NT swims are not allowed at swim meets that have qualifying time standards. When a swimmer ages up prior to a meet, all times achieved in the previous age group are considered official times and must be listed on meet form. Do not enter swimmer in the first swim meet after aging up with NT.
- **Read the meet form carefully.** Pay particular attention to the entry deadline and return the entry form and all fees associated with the entry prior to or on the date listed on the meet to your Coach. All fees must accompany the entry form. The Coach will have written a date for returning the information back to them on the meet form. Do not mail entries in on your own.

Age Group Championship Swim Meets

Open to all swimmers holding current USAS registration cards that have equaled or bettered the listed time standards. Follow the entry procedures listed above. For some meets Coach will handle the entire entry procedure for these meets.

Senior Championship Swim Meets

Open to all swimmers holding current USAS registration cards that have equaled or bettered the listed time standards. The Coach will handle the entire entry procedure for these meets. There is no age limit for senior level swim meets.