

# Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

We have attempted to provide as much information as possible on the MTSP webpage/swim team tab, <http://www.mountainspringspool.com/swim-team.html>, including this FAQ document. If you have a question that is not addressed on the webpage, nor listed here, please contact the swim team coordinators/ reps at [stingraystsp@gmail.com](mailto:stingraystsp@gmail.com).

## What is the Rocket City Swim League?

Also known as the RCSL, it is the summer swim league in which MTSP competes and is a member. The RCSL establishes the Articles, By-Laws, and Rules of Competition. It consists of an Executive Board and League Council. The League Council is comprised of a representative from each member organization/pool.

- The annual membership dues are \$425.00.
- Details can be found on the RCSL webpage: <http://www.swimrcsl.org/>

## The Rules of Competition (ROC) for additional details:

<http://www.swimrcsl.org/formsanddocs/rulesofcompetition/2017%20Rules%20of%20Competition.pdf>

## Who are the Stingrays?

The Stingrays are MTSP's awesome competing team division.

- Child's parent/guardian must be a member of Mt. Springs Swim Club.
  - Parent/guardian's membership and any related fees must be paid in full to participate.
- Child must be age 4-17 years old.
- A child 8 years old and younger must be able to swim one lap (25 yards) across the pool without assistance.
- A child 9 years old or older must be able to swim 50 yards without assistance.
- A child who participates in the 6 & under individual Freestyle event (only event in 6 & under group) may also compete in two 8 & under individual events (other than Freestyle) and all 8 & under relays.
- Cost (per child):
  - Members of Mt. Springs Swim Club
    - \$75.00 (cash/check)
    - \$77.25 (if pay online)
  - Non-members may not participate.
- Season: mid-May – mid-July
- Registration: Online registration opens by May 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Register by due date to ensure your child's name is on the team t-shirt.

## Who are the Little Stingrays?

The Little Stingrays are MTSP's pre-team division.

- For children 4-8 years old
- Our Little Stingrays group is where swimmers can develop skills and confidence and still feel like they are part of the team and can move up to our Stingrays group when ready.
  - **Note**: One must be a Mt. Springs Swim Club member to join the Stingrays group.
- For children who can swim independently across the pool demonstrating basic stroke technique.
- The goal is to further develop stroke proficiency and endurance and will include basic diving.
  - For children who can swim independently across the pool demonstrating basic stroke technique.
  - Swimmers must be comfortable with their faces under water and able to move across the water surface without touching the bottom of the pool.
  - The goal is to further develop stroke proficiency and endurance and will include basic diving.

# Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

- Children will be assessed and grouped by ability.
- **Cost** (per child):
  - **Member** of Mt. Springs Swim Club
    - \$125.00 per child (cash/check)
    - \$128.75 (if pay online)
  - **Non-member**
    - \$150.00 per child (cash/check)
    - \$154.50 (if pay online)
- **Season:** May (after Memorial Day) – mid-July
- **Register:** Online registration opens by May 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Register by due date to ensure your child's name is on the team t-shirt.

## Who are the Little Rays?

Little Rays refers to MTSP's swim lessons program. Visit MTSP's webpage for details.

<http://www.mountainspringspool.com/swim-team.html>.

## Who answers swim team questions?

- Swim team coordinators/ reps are a parent's/guardian's primary point of contact
- One may speak in person during swim team practice (most mornings) or by scheduling a time.
- One may send an email to [stingraystsp@gmail.com](mailto:stingraystsp@gmail.com).

## Who answers question about coaching and how my swimmer is doing?

- The coach
- Please do **NOT** talk to the coach during practice or during swim meets. Our coach needs that time to focus on our kids.
- One may email or schedule a time to meet with the coach at [stingraystsp@gmail.com](mailto:stingraystsp@gmail.com).

## Where can I find the swim team practice times, meets and events schedule?

Please visit our webpage <http://www.mountainspringspool.com/swim-team.html>.

- The swim meet schedule is posted on the swim team page.
- The practice times & events schedule is in a printable document, "Swim Team Practice Times." (Scroll to the bottom of the page. It can be found in the documents section.)
- You can also view the calendar under the Calendar tab on the MTSP webpage.

## We already have a vacation, VBS, camp, etc. planned for one week. Do my kids have to attend every practice to be able to participate?

No, but given that the swim season is such a short season it is best if team members regularly participate in practice.

## Is there a minimum attendance requirement?

No, but to improve it is best to regularly participate at practice and in swim meets. Also, to compete at City Meet a swimmer must have competed in two dual meets.

## Is there a way to make-up for a missed practice?

Yes, see schedule on webpage under the swim team tab for evening practice times.

# Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

## Do we have an official team swim suit for meets?

Yes. Our official MTSP's team swim suit can be purchased from First Place Athletics or at our kick-off party. (Swimmers can also wear a previous year's team suit.)

- It can be viewed on the MTSP's webpage/swim team tab.

## What are time trials? Why do we have time trials?

Time trials are held before the first dual meet.

- Times are needed to create or "seed" the first dual meet of the season.
- It's important to get accurate times to benefit individual swimmers and the team.
- Time Trials help determine in which events your child will swim.
- Time trials give all swimmers the opportunity to swim all four swim strokes; freestyle "free", backstroke "back", breaststroke "breast" and butterfly "fly."

## What is a dual swim meet?

A dual swim meet is an organized competition between two swim teams in a designated division of the Rocket City Swim League (RCSL). Teams compete within their designated division, A, B or C.

- There are five scheduled dual meets. Refer to the swim team webpage for the complete schedule.

## When are the dual swim meets?

Dual swim meets are typically held on Wednesday nights. Some years we may have a dual meet on a Tuesday depending on where the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday falls.

- Visit the MTSP webpage/swim team tab for the current year schedule.  
<http://www.mountainspringspool.com/swim-team.html>
- Start time is 6:30 p.m., unless both teams agree to start earlier. (The earliest start would be 6:00 p.m.)
- Meets usually end by 9:30 p.m.
- **Home meets** - Stingrays have early warm ups, arrive 1 hour & 15 minutes before start time. (Refer to the appropriate parent check list on the swim team webpage.)
- **Away meets** - Stingrays have late warm ups, arrive 1 hour before start time. (Refer to the appropriate parent check list on the swim team webpage.)

## How is a swim meet organized and how long is it?

A dual meet consists of 42 events. Individual events may have several heats (races in the same event) since there are often more swimmers than there are lanes. Our pool has six lanes, so if 10 swimmers are swimming in an event, there will be two heats. A dual meet takes 3-4 hours.

### Order of Events:

<http://www.swimrcsl.org/formsanddocs/2016%20Dual%20Meets/2016%20Official%20Score%20Sheet.pdf>

## What distances do swimmers swim?

- Swimmers 6 years old and younger swim 25-yards & only swim freestyle.
- Swimmers 8 years old and younger swim 25-yards.
- Swimmers 9 years old and older swim 50-yards.

### Notes:

- A child, whose birthday is during the RCSL season, might 'age up' into the next age group mid-season.
- A child who ages up from 8 to 9 years-old will go from swimming 25-yard/meter distances to 50-yard/meter distances.
- A child 'ages out' of the league upon turning 18 years old.

# Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

## What are the age defined competition groups?

- 6 & under (4-6 years old)
- 8 & under
- 9-10 years old
- 11-12 years old
- 13-14 years old
- 15-17 years old

## What is a heat sheet?

A heat sheet is a list of all the events, the swimmers assigned to compete in each event, and the heat and lane number assignments for each swimmer.

## How will I know in which events my child will swim?

They will be posted at the pool a day or so before the meet. A digital copy of the heat sheet will also be provided to our swim team families for home meets.

## What is a mixed relay?

A mixed relay consists of 2 girls and 2 boys.

## What is a medley relay?

A medley relay is an event with 4 swimmers (all boys or all girls) where each swimmer swims a different stroke; back, breast, fly and free.

- The stroke order for the medley (as required) is back, breast, fly and free.
- Each member of an 8 & under relay swims one length of the pool (25 yards/meters).
- The other age groups swim 50 yards/meters.

## Why is my child not swimming in a relay?

Four swimmers participate in each relay. If there are only three swimmers in your child's age/gender group, then there are not enough swimmers to make a relay team. If there are more than four swimmers, but less than eight, then there are only enough swimmers to make one relay team. In the latter case, generally the swimmers with the top four individual times are chosen for the relay team. Only "A" relays from each team are awarded points during a dual meet, however, "B" and "C" relays are a great way for our swimmers to gain experience.

## How can I tell which event we are on at a dual meet?

The Starter (officiator with the bullhorn that starts each race) will announce the event and heat number before each race. Also, our meet announcer will announce upcoming events over the loud speaker to keep everyone informed, so they do not miss an event. One can also follow along using the heat sheet.

## Why are there freestyle exhibition swim events?

- Note: Freestyle is the only exhibition stroke.
- Exhibition events allow every swimmer on the team an opportunity to swim in a dual meet.
- Why are exhibition events important?
  - Provides swimmers opportunities to practice swimming in a swim meet and improving personal best times.
  - Helps the coaches track our swimmers' progress.

# Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

- Please help your child understand the importance of focusing on setting and achieving personal improvement goals, AND make sure to celebrate their efforts! (Their times will be shared a day or so after each meet.)
- Personal best ribbons will be awarded when swimmers improve their times and when a swimmer wins the heat in which they swim.
- Non-exhibition ribbons are awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> place finishes.

## My child was disqualified (DQ'd) during an event. What does that mean?

For all swim strokes, except the freestyle, there are technical ways that the stroke must be swum for it to be “legal.” For example, in butterfly and breaststroke, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously during the turn and at the finish wall. If the official notices that a swimmer is doing something illegal, they can disqualify the swimmer.

- The coach will find out exactly what was illegal and work with the swimmer to prepare for the next meet.
- If your child is DQ'd please provide encouragement and do not make a big deal about it. Even the very best swimmers have been DQ'd.

## How do we know who won the swim meet?

All events are placed and scored, except exhibition events. A place judge for each team sits at the finish line and observes and calls out to the scribe, who notes which swimmers touched first, second, third, etc. Points are assigned based on place and tallied by the scorekeepers at the score/computer table as the meet progresses. At the end of the meet, the team with the most points wins.

- The final score is announced at the dual meet shortly after completion of the final event.
- Official dual meet results are usually posted on the RCSL webpage within 48 hours after the meet.

## Official Score Sheet and order of events:

<http://www.swimrcsl.org/formsanddocs/2016%20Dual%20Meets/2016%20Official%20Score%20Sheet.pdf>

## What is City Meet?

“City Meet” is the RCSL City Championship Meet. It is a fun, family friendly, league wide, two-day (weekend) event. It's held at the end of the season at the Huntsville Aquatic Center. (A, B, and C RCSL subgroups compete together.)

- Swimmers must swim in two dual meets to qualify to swim in City Meet.
- Placement at City Meet determines in which subgroup each team will compete the following season.
- Refer to the appropriate parent check list on the swim team webpage.
- Order of Events: <http://swimrcsl.org/forms.php#C>

## Will my child participate in City Meet?

Not all our swimmers will swim a stroke other than freestyle in the city meet. Currently, each swim team is allowed three swimmers for each event except in the exhibition freestyle event. The top three MTSP swimmers in each event will swim that stroke in the city meet. Ribbons or medals are awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> place finishes. Your child must swim in 2 dual meets to compete at the city meet.

# Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

## How can parents help?

RCSL swimming is run entirely by volunteers at every level. (Note: MTSP Coaches are paid employees.) We need volunteers to help prepare for home meets, time, officiate, record times, label ribbons and collect cards for timers, etc. at home meets and City Meet. Our kids are proud when their parents participate. It also nurtures a family/community spirit that everyone can feel good about. Parents can also help by being supportive and encouraging of their swimmer as well as other swimmers. The goal is for our kids to have fun, be competitive, and develop a lifelong love of swimming and great memories.

## How do I sign up for a parents' relay (City Meet)?

Sign up when you register your child/ren for swim team. Or, ask the swim team coordinator/rep.

## How do I become a swim meet officiator?

The RCSL and MTSP relies on parent volunteers to officiate dual and city swim meets. This includes starters, referees and stroke and turn judges. Please consider volunteering as a meet official! It's an easy online process and is critical to your team. MTSP cannot host home swim meets without officiators! → Visit <http://www.swimrcsl.org/officiating.htm> for the complete details.

## Will the Swim Team Kick-off party be relaxed and just play, or structured activities?

There will be a mix of structured activities and free play.

## Are younger siblings allowed to come and swim at Swim Team Kick-off Party?

The kick-off party is for swim team members only.

## Can I start my 6-year-old off in Little Stingrays and move him/her into the competitive Stingrays group if he/she begins swimming at a higher level later in the season?

Yes. The coaches will discuss with you to determine what is best for your swimmer.

- **Note:** One must be a Mt. Springs Swim Club member to join the Stingrays group.

## I won't have time to buy the team swim suit before practice starts. Can my child wear something from home in the mean time?

Yes. A swimmer is welcome to purchase the new team suit or wear a previous year's team swim suit.

## My older child (9-12-year-old range) has never been on a swim team and is not familiar with most of the swim strokes, block starts or flip turns. Will the coaches help my child along even though he/she may be way behind the other kids in his/her age group?

- E-mail the coaches at [stingraystmsp@gmail.com](mailto:stingraystmsp@gmail.com) to determine the best fit for your swimmer.

## Purpose of the MTSP GroupMe (IF UTILIZED – Swim Coordinators/Reps will let members know.)

- Communications will be strictly about the cancellation of swim team practices, meets and other time sensitive matters.
- This is NOT the place to chat.
- Consider it READ ONLY.
  - Why? Every comment one makes goes to everyone and can easily result in messaging overload. Consequently, folks are likely to opt out which defeats the purpose of utilizing GroupMe messaging.

## Who can be part of the MTSP Stingrays GroupMe?

- Stingray parents
- Stingray swimmers
- Stingray coaches

# Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

## Who will post notifications?

- Coach, or designee.
- Swim team rep/coordinator
- **Note:** If the post/response does not come from the swim team coordinator/rep or the coach it may not be accurate and lead to misinformation and misunderstandings.
  - Also applies to Stingrays FB page

## How do I ask a question?

- Email [mtspringspool@gmail.com](mailto:mtspringspool@gmail.com) (preferred) or post on the Stingrays FB page.
- Time sensitive questions will be answered as quickly as possible.
- **Note:** Worth repeating, if the post/response does not come from the swim team coordinator/rep or the coach it may not be accurate and lead to misinformation and misunderstandings.

## How do I join MTSP Stingrays GroupMe?

- Visit: <https://groupme.com/en-US/>
- If you do not wish to be included simply opt out.

## Little Stingrays Facts

- Little Stingrays is geared toward children 4-8 years old who have not been on swim team and/or are not ready to compete.
- Little Stingrays do not start practice until after the school year ends.
  - Refer to the Swim Team Practice Times document under the swim team tab on the MTSP webpage for details.
- This is a great way to be part of the swim team without the pressures of volunteering or competing.
  - Please come and watch a home meet to start to gain an understanding of how meets are run.
- Children will be assessed and grouped by ability.
- Swimmers can move up to the Stingrays competing team during the season if approved by the Little Stingrays lead instructor and the Stingrays head coach.
- Purchase of a team swim suit is optional (not required).
- Little Stingrays' names will be on the swim team t-shirt.
- Little Stingrays are welcome to attend team outings and the kick-off party.
- Little Stingrays invited to the kick-off party if the Little Stingrays lead instructor will be there to meet and interact with your Little Stingray. (Check with the Little Stingrays instructor.)
- The end of season banquet is limited to the Stingrays competing team, unless a sibling is a Stingray.
  - We may have a separate end of season social event for the Little Stingrays, but no plans have been made yet.
  - Let us know if you would like to coordinate such an event.

## Mountain Springs Swim Club Swim Team Parent Expectations

As a parent of a swimmer and/or member of Mountain Springs Swim Club please abide by the following guidelines:

1. Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment, Team Spirit, Good Sportsmanship, and Respect.





## Swim team FAQs, Little Stingrays Facts & Parent Expectations

2. Refrain from coaching or instructing the team or any swimmer at a practice or meet (from the stands or any other area) or interfering with coaches on the pool deck.
3. Refrain from talking to the coaches during practice or meets. They need that time to focus on our kids.
  - a. One may speak with the swim team coordinator/representative.
  - b. One may email questions to [stingraysmtsp@gmail.com](mailto:stingraysmtsp@gmail.com).
4. Model good sportsmanship by conducting one's self in a respectable manner with one's child, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets, practices & events.
5. Know your role.
  - a. **Swimmers – Swim**
  - b. **Coaches – Coach**
  - c. **Officials – Officiate**
  - d. **Parents – Parent**
6. Understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward the coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be tolerated.
7. Enjoy the RCSL summer swim season with our Stingrays and Little Stingrays by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communication and actions.
8. During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials are directed to the swim team representative or his/her designee.

**We're making memories. Let's make them good ones!**