



Dear MSL families, swimmers, and coaches,

The Marin Swim League Board welcomes all of you to the 2009 swim season! We are looking forward to another year of great fun and great competition.

Our league-wide **Championship meet will be held at IVC, on Saturday, July 11th**. The Championship meet is the final meet of the season, which determines each team's final league standings. Every swimmer in the league is encouraged to attend.

Every year, the MSL Board, in consultation with your local swim team boards, reviews the by-laws and league practices and makes changes that we believe will better serve the league and its mission. This year, the league held a "Coaches' Forum" in January to solicit input directly from our coaches regarding league-wide issues. The MSL board was very pleased with the level of participation from our dedicated coaches.

One change that will be adopted this year, on a one year trial basis, is a new format for All Stars, which will establish a system of recognition and reward for all of the All Star swimmers while foregoing the All Star meet. To be clear, achieving All-Star status will still be attained by meeting or beating a designated qualification time. Foregoing the meet will allow more swimmers to qualify in their age groups as the 'Q time' cut off will be July 4th; one week prior to Championships. The MSL recognizes the importance that All Stars has as an inspiration for the kids. While this new format will provide motivation and more opportunity for participation for the swimmers, it will also afford increased flexibility to teams and families in terms of valuable time and resources.

Here are a few noteworthy items for our MSL families:

Officiating in the MSL

The officials at every MSL meet are parent volunteers. The MSL holds a clinic in April to train these volunteers, to ensure among them clear and consistent knowledge of the swimming guidelines, and to strive for consistency among these officials working meets across the county. Representatives from ALL 10 teams attend. **This year we would like to encourage more attendees from every team**, so that we can build up a larger base of trained officiating volunteers (Stroke & Turn Judges, Referees, and Starters) within the league. No prior experience is required to attend the clinic.

The judges and referees are responsible for disqualifying swimmers who swim a stroke illegally. This season, DQ slips will be made more readily available to the coaches during the meet. The by-laws specify that 8 & under swimmers will receive advisory notes in lieu of DQ slips, provided that they are not scoring or swimming an All Stars qualifying time. **One important**

note for parents: Should you or your child have a serious question regarding any call made during a meet, please address your question to your coach. The coach can then approach the referee on the deck. It is the referee's job to see that all races are being judged fairly. Please do not ask a Stroke and Turn Judge for clarification of a call, particularly during a race, because they need to pay the same amount of attention to each and every race.

Championship Meet

The Championship meet is the exciting culmination of the MSL season. Each and every swimmer in the league is encouraged to attend, so plan your summer schedules accordingly. It is a long meet, with well over 1000 participants each year, and a pool deck that is well staffed with parent volunteers. This year, the meet will be divided into two meets as in the past, but the two meets will be arranged differently than they have been in recent years. **The morning meet, which will go from approximately 7:45 am to noon (warm-ups will start earlier), will be for swimmers ages 10 & under. The afternoon meet, which will run from approximately 1:30 to 5:30 pm (warm-ups will start earlier), will be for swimmers ages 11 & up.** Awards will be presented for the high-point scoring individuals after each meet, and for the top-scoring teams at the end of the afternoon meet. This year the Terra Linda Orcas will host the meet.

Additional reminders:

Age-up Rule: Swim league members often wonder when a swimmer ages up. The answer: "Swimmers move up on their birthday except prior to the Championship Meet for which they can swim at their age in last scheduled League Dual Meet used for seeding purposes." If an 8-year old will age up during the season, he/she should plan to practice swimming 50-yard races well in advance, as it can be a big leap to double the length of the race and add a flip turn.

Finally, we invite you to check out the **MSL website**. During the Dual Meet season you will find weekly results and meet summaries as well as triple winners and top 8 times for the week in each age group, posted as part of the Marin IJ blog. You will also find the MSL by-laws, directions to the pools, and special information about All Stars and Championships as it becomes available.

The MSL remains a vibrant place for swimmers and families to have fun together. It provides an opportunity for success for every participant through the achievement of personal "best times" throughout the season. Thank you to all the swimmers for your dedication to the sport, to the coaches for your commitment to our children and to all the hundreds of volunteers that work across the county each weekend during the season to keep our meets running smoothly. Swim fast!

The Marin Swim League Board 2008