

MCSL MEET MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
ORGANIZATION OF LEAGUE	3
DUAL MEETS	5
DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP MEET (DIVISIONALS)	17
DIVISION RELAY MEET (RELAY CARNIVAL)	26
MCSL TEAM REPRESENTATIVE	36
MCSL CHECKLIST FOR COACHES	38
COMPETITION AND GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP	40
SOME FRIENDLY ADVICE ON “B” MEETS	44
GOOD NEIGHBOR	48

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is an attempt to collect, update and expand guidance for running MCSL meets. We hope it will serve as a guide for both the new and the experienced team representative (rep) or meet manager. Please let us know of anything you find unclear, inaccurate, or missing, and give us any tips that you've found helpful in running your team, so we can share those in future editions. Send your comments to:

Sally MacKenzie
1502 Aintree Dr.
Rockville, MD 20850
Email-- prep4mom@comcast.net

During the season, you may also want to consult the MCSL homepage at MCSL.org.

ORGANIZATION OF LEAGUE

ORGANIZATION OF LEAGUE

The Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL) is made up of more than 80 teams. Teams are grouped for competition based on the times swum by each team in the previous season. “A” Division has the teams with the fastest times from the previous season; “B” Division, the next fastest; and so on down the alphabet. New teams enter the League in the lowest division, because they have no previous MCSL season times.

Each complete division has 6 teams, ranked 1 (fastest) to 6 (slowest). As the League grows, the bottom 1 or 2 divisions may have less than 6 teams. You need to know your ranking so that you can figure out your meet schedule. For example, suppose Division “K” had these teams:

1. Long Branch
2. Bannockburn
3. Norbeck Hills
4. Northgate
5. Rockshire
6. Pleasantview.

Rockshire is the number 5 team. Using the grid below (which is also found in the MCSL handbook), Rockshire has the following schedule: meet 1—home vs. #3 (Norbeck Hills); meet 2—home vs. #2 (Bannockburn); meet 3—away vs. #1 (Long Branch); meet 4—away vs. #4 (Northgate); and meet 5—home vs. #6 (Pleasantview).

DATE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5
TEAM	H-V	H-V	H-V	H-V	H-V
1	1-4		1-5		1-2
2			2-4	2-3	
3		3-1	3-6		3-4
4		4-6		4-5	
5	5-3	5-2			5-6
6	6-2			6-1	

These 5 meets are the “A” dual meets and are swum on Saturday mornings. In addition, each division hosts two meets during the season that all teams in the division attend: the division championship meet (divisionals) and the division relay meet (relay carnival). Most of the summer schedule, including the date that the season starts, is determined by all league “A” reps voting at the July MCSL meeting. The date for the division’s relay carnival is determined by the “A” reps of each division at the April MCSL meeting.

Many teams also have “B” dual meets. These meets are separate from the MCSL meets. They are set up by the teams themselves and are usually swum in the evenings during the week. Many teams are in a “B” league; other teams call around each season to set up meets. ***This guidance is only for MCSL, or “A,” meets.*** Teams decide their own rules for “B” meets; however, they may wish to refer to this guidance, especially “Some Friendly Advice on “B” Meets” at the back of this book, in setting up their “B” meet rules.

DUAL MEETS

DUAL MEETS

Before the season starts:

As soon as you know your home meet schedule, share it with your larger pool community. Highlight times the pool will open late or close early and put it in your pool community newsletter, if you have one, and post it at the pool on opening day. Share it with your pool committee or board of directors. The more people know the dates when the pool will be in use for a swim meet, the fewer surprised and unhappy pool members.

Week before:

About a week before a dual meet, the home rep should call the visiting team rep to discuss some or all of the following:

1. Directions to the pool, including parking and handicapped accessibility.
2. Friday exchange of entry reports, rosters and disks. Often the coaches will handle this, but now is a good time to confirm the details.
3. Team areas.
4. Duration and time of warm ups.
5. Exhibition swimming. Exhibition swimming is allowed if a swimmer false starts or if the reps agree and the exhibition swims will not add any new heats.
6. Equipment. Ask the visitors to bring a back-up starting machine. Let the other team know if your backstroke flags are 5 meters or 5 yards from the end of the pool.
7. Officials.
8. Noise restrictions. The county noise ordinance cautions all pools to keep noise low until after 9 a.m. on Saturdays. Some pools may have covenants that further restrict noise levels; for example, some pools may not be allowed to have a P.A. system.
9. Any other unusual things about the host pool or site, for example, an odd pool configuration or gutter design.

Begin lining up your officials. The following chart shows which officials you will need. (A description of what some of these officials do appears later in this handbook.) If someone other than your coach will acknowledge DQs during the meet, identify this person now. Sometimes you will need to confirm your officials after the meet line up is finalized.

Position	Home team	Visitor
Certified Referee	1	
Certified Starter		1
Certified Stroke & Turn	2	2
Announcer	1	
Clerk of Course—Head	1	
Clerk of Course—Asst		1
Head Timer	1	
Asst Head Timer		1
Timers	9	9
Scorer		1
Computer Operator	1	
Verifiers	1	1
Ribbon Writers	1	1

Teams may use a Chief Judge by mutual agreement.

The home team will need 2 or more runners, depending on the layout of your pool, to move time sheets around and to help the clerk of course. If parking is a problem at your pool, you should designate someone to direct cars Saturday morning and to guide visitors to dressing, swimming, and spectator areas.

Thursday before dual meet:

Thursday night for many teams is the night that the line-up for Saturday's meet is finalized. The coach, alone or with the rep and/or the computer operator, makes the line-up selections in the team manager program and produces the required meet entry reports (one set for girls and one set for boys), the meet entry disk, and the roster on disk. Detailed instructions for producing these items are found in the League's **Computer Operations Handbook**. You should have an "A" and a "B" relay for the relay events (events 3, 4, 49 and 50). It is also a good idea to confirm that your swimmers will indeed be present at the meet. After the Friday exchange of meet entry reports, you will be limited to 3 scratches. Remember also that all swimmers entered in the meet need to be on your roster. A swimmer added to the roster after noon on Friday cannot swim in that Saturday's meet. Your roster on disk must be submitted with your meet entry materials at the Friday exchange. This procedure is explained in the **Computer Operations Handbook**.

If each team agrees, line-ups and rosters may be exchanged by email. If email exchange is agreed upon, the emailed roster and line-up are the official entries for the meet and no changes will be allowed subsequent to the electronic exchange without the consent of both teams.

The Board does not recommend email exchange. We feel that there is too great a risk for mistakes, since often the coach is not the person emailing the line-up. He or she may not have communicated last minute line-up changes to the automation person. Because in the past we have found teams making errors on disks, we have made the paper copy, which can be reviewed by coaches and reps easily, controlling when the exchange is made in person. Teams lose this protection if they choose to use email for entries. In addition, we feel that emailing entries provides an opportunity for one team to change its line-up to reflect the line-up of the other team, since it is unlikely that entries would be emailed simultaneously. Unlike large USA Swimming meets, lanes are assigned by team, not time, so the visiting team's coach still needs to visit the home team to choose odd or even lanes. However, we recognize that sometimes due to time and travel constraints, teams may wish to agree to use email to exchange entries.

Friday morning before dual meet:

The rep or the home coach should contact the visiting rep or coach to arrange a time to meet at the home pool to exchange meet entry reports, disks, and team roster. (The person setting up the meet will need the team roster to incorporate any hand changes made on the entry sheets that are not included on the disk--See the **Computer Operations Handbook**.) If the home team forgets to call, the visiting team needs to contact the home team. The exchange should occur before or very close to noon.

When the visiting coach arrives, the home coach should get two copies of the visitor's meet entry report (2 copies of the boys' report and two copies of the girls' report), a disk with the visiting team entries and team roster, a paper copy of the team roster, and 6 blank relay cards. (The relay cards can be exchanged Friday or brought to the meet Saturday.) The home coach should give the visiting coach 1 copy of the home meet entry report (1 of the boys' report and 1

of the girls' report). If there are last minute changes Friday morning before the teams exchange meet materials, those changes can be made by hand to the meet entry reports and roster. Those hand changes then supersede the entries on the disk. No changes can be made *after* the meet entry reports are exchanged. However, the team automation person who is setting up the meet should notice obvious errors and can fix them with the other team. Be sure to include with your paperwork the name and phone number of a coach or rep who can be reached Friday afternoon or evening in case of any entry questions. Other mistakes can be adjusted if both teams concur. The goal is always to have the best meet for both teams, with healthy competition, fun, and good sportsmanship.

The home coach or rep shows the visiting coach or rep the pool and team areas. The visiting coach or rep chooses odd or even lanes. (Lanes are numbered from the *swimmer's* right, as the swimmer faces the pool at the start of a 50 or 100-meter race.) The home coach or rep needs to write the visiting team's choice clearly on the visitor's meet entry report, so that the team automation person who seeds the meet knows which team to assign to the even lanes and which to the odd lanes.

Friday evening:

It is a good idea, if possible, to get the pool set up the night before. Move tables and chairs as needed. Consider team areas and spectator needs. The clerk of course and announcer areas should be near each other, as should the computer and the awards tables. If these areas are on deck, both should have some kind of sun screen—umbrellas or tent. Be sure you have adequate electric outlets—you may need to invest in a power strip. A heavy duty extension cord for outdoor use and extra cartridges for printers are also good ideas. If the visiting team is bringing a printer that you intend to use either as back up or to run results and labels simultaneously, be sure you have a driver for that printer.

It's helpful if there is space by the clerk's table to line up benches or chairs for the swimmers where they can wait in lane order for their events. However, to avoid noise from hampering the start of a race, this area should not be near the starter's position.

If possible, set up the lane lines and backstroke flags as soon as the pool closes. Remove ladders, diving boards, and other detachable obstructions if they interfere with the racing lanes or officials' duties. Talk to your referee beforehand about any equipment issues. Be sure to charge your starting machine, if needed. Check the locker rooms to be sure that an adequate supply of toilet paper, paper towels, soap, and any other supplies is available. The more you get done Friday night, the less you have to do Saturday morning.

Saturday morning:

County noise ordinances seek to limit the level of noise in the community early in the morning. On Saturdays, "early" is before 9 a.m. Try to be a good neighbor. Limit your use of the P.A. system before 9 a.m. and keep any other noisemaking for later in the meet. Minimize noise as much as possible.

Finish setting up the pool by 8 a.m. Set up and check the starting machine. Lay out clipboards and pencils. Have your automation person set up the computer and printers. Whoever set up the meet manager program Friday night should appear with the following paperwork:

1. Meet entry sheets for both teams (the coaches exchanged these on Friday).
2. Team rosters and any relay cards exchanged Friday.

3. Meet programs (heat sheets)—2 copies for the clerk, 1 for the computer operator, 1 (single column preferable) for the announcer, 1 for the starter, 1 for the referee, 1 for the head timer, 1 for the assistant head timer, and 4 for the stroke and turn judges. It is also helpful to have a copy for each of the head coaches and team reps.
4. Timer sheets sorted by lane.

Gather all the paperwork at the clerk of course table. Put the ribbons at the awards table. Bring some extra ribbons in case of ties. You should have a box for your team's ribbons—the visiting team should bring a box for its ribbons (but it is always nice to have an extra box handy in case your visitors forget).

Be sure all officials have the supplies they need to do their jobs. The computer table may need paper for the printer, ribbon labels, a stapler and staple remover, scissors, and an MCSL handbook. The scorer will need paper and pencils to keep the DQ log. The clerk, announcer, and ribbon writers may need pens or pencils. The timers will need sharpened pencils. (Each team supplies its own watches.)

Greet the visiting team and introduce team reps and key officials to each other. If you have nametags, distribute these to all officials as they arrive. (You can give the visitor's nametags to their rep to distribute.) Take this time to fill out the cover sheet. You will need to list teams, coaches, and officials. Leave this sheet at the computer/awards tables. At the end of the meet, you will need to fill in the score and have each rep sign it.

Plan warm ups so that all swimmers are out of the pool by 8:45. If the teams want a 30-minute warm up, the home team should get in the pool by 7:45 a.m. The home team can then warm up from 7:45 to 8:15 and the visiting team can get in from 8:15 to 8:45.

The head timer and assistant head timer should assign the timers to lanes—each team has two timers on the other team's lanes and one on their own. For example, if the home team has the even lanes, there are two home timers on the odd lanes, and one home timer on the even lanes. The referee will want to have the starter and head timer give instructions to the timers at a meeting to be held approximately 30 minutes before the start of the meet. Therefore, be sure your timers know to arrive at the meet no later than 8:25. As soon as the swimmers are out of the pool, the starter, head timer, or referee can do a time check.

Hold the scratch meeting by 8:50. Call the first heat to the clerk no later than 8:55. At 9 a.m. play the *Star Spangled Banner* and start the first event.

The scratch meeting:

Ten to 15 minutes before the meet begins (e.g. at about 8:45 or 8:50 a.m.), the referee should hold the scratch meeting. At the scratch meeting should be: the referee, both clerks, both team reps, a coach from each team, and the computer operator. The announcer and the assistant computer operator may also attend. This is the time to introduce to the referee the person who will be acknowledging DQs for your team during the meet, if that person is someone other than the team coach. The referee will want to know whom to seek out if a DQ occurs and where on the pool deck that person will be located during the meet.

Each coach is allowed to scratch 3 swimmers and replace them with other swimmers. (TIP—It is helpful if the coach also tells the clerk about any “no shows”—swimmers in addition to those being scratched who will not be swimming. This keeps the clerk from searching for missing swimmers and allows the announcer to update his/her program. However, “no shows” are not scratches. If the “no show” swimmer does indeed show up, he/she can still swim. A “scratch” occurs when a swimmer is taken out of the meet and replaced with one or more other

swimmers.)

Here are the rules for substituting swimmers:

1. Each coach can substitute for only 3 swimmers. If 4 swimmers are absent, the 4th swimmer's lanes remain empty.
2. A coach cannot fill an empty lane at the scratch meeting. For example, if on the meet entry report, the team has entered only 2 swimmers in the boys 8 & under butterfly event, the coach cannot enter a 3rd swimmer at the scratch meeting.
3. Any swimmer who is substituted for cannot swim in the meet in any event, including the relays. A coach cannot scratch a swimmer from some events, but not others. However, a swimmer who is not substituted for can decide not to swim one event, yet still swim later events if he or she is entered in them.
4. When substituting for a missing swimmer, the coach can replace that swimmer with one or more swimmers. For example, if Mary is entered in the free, back, fly, and IM, the coach can scratch her and enter Sue in all Mary's events. Or he can scratch Mary and enter Sue in free, Betty in back, Zoe in fly, and Tammy in IM.
5. A swimmer who is added as a substitute may already be in the meet. If the swimmer is already in the meet, he/she cannot exceed the legal limit on events swum and cannot be removed from an event he/she is already in. For instance, in the example above, Sue can take Mary's place in free only if she is not already entered in back, breast, and fly or if she is not already swimming 2 relays, an IM, and two individual strokes. If Sue is already entered in back, breast, and fly, she cannot be taken out of one of those events to swim freestyle in Mary's place.
6. A swimmer who is added as a substitute does not have to be already entered in the meet, as long as that swimmer was on the team roster prior to Friday noon (the coaches' exchange of meet data).
7. The substitute swimmer swims in the absent swimmer's lane. The meet is not reseeded.

The clerk first makes the substitutions on the meet entry report. Then he/she changes the timer sheets and sends those to the lanes. Finally he/she updates his/her copy of the program and the announcer's copy. He/she needs to save the meet entry reports. These reports are kept by the home team rep until the end of the season in case of questions or protests.

The computer operator also makes the substitutions in the computer. He/she will need the team roster, which should be on disk, to enter a swimmer not previously entered in the meet.

Running the meet:

The **clerk** works with the announcer to control the flow of swimmers to the clerk's table. (TIP—It usually works well to call swimmers to the clerk two events ahead of the event they are to swim.) At each meet there is usually a clerk of course (home team) and an assistant clerk (visiting team). Each clerk can check in the swimmers from his/her own team, or the clerks can divide the duties in whatever method works for them.

The clerk should check the swimmers in, tell them their lanes, and have them wait in the designated area until it is time for them to go to the starting area. If a race is starting at the other end of the pool—especially the 8 & under 25 meter events—it is helpful to have runners take the swimmers to the starting end and place them in their lanes. The clerk can also determine whether the backstroke swimmers have brought their “legs” with them.

When the medley and freestyle relays arrive at the clerk, the clerk should check the relay

cards to see that the swimmers' names are filled out in the order of swim and, for the graduated free relay, if there are any swim ups. Relays with swim ups must be entered on a yellow relay card and are not eligible for the All-Star Relay meet. The clerk should then send the swimmers to the start end of the pool and the relay card to the automation table so the swimmers' names can be entered into the event. The times will be recorded on the lane/timer sheet.

The **announcer** should be aware of each event as it is swum. He/she can begin announcing the next event shortly after the last swimmer in the previous event has touched the wall. (TIP—If timers or spectators block the announcer's view of the finish, the referee's whistle chirps should alert the announcer that an event is beginning. However, it may also be helpful to have someone stationed at the finish to signal the announcer when the last swimmer has touched. This avoids the embarrassing situation of an announcer announcing the next event as one swimmer—perhaps an 8 & under flyer—struggles to reach the wall.)

The announcer also announces scores, All-Star qualifying times, and records. Arrange with the computer table and the announcer when this is to be done. At the break, when timers are switching ends of the pool, and at the end of the meet are usually good times.

Depending on the layout of your pool, you will want to use **runners**. Runners take the time sheets from the head timer to the scorer, and may help the younger children get to their lanes. These jobs are often given to non-swimming children. However, children tend to get bored and want relief often. Consider assigning these jobs to adults. This is an ideal way for new parents, especially those nervous about timing, to get involved.

Four people sit at the **computer table**: the scorer (visiting team); the computer operator (home team); and two verifiers, one from each team. The jobs at this table can be fluid, depending on what works best given the specific talents of the individuals involved. Someone, usually the **scorer**, receives the timer sheets from the runner. He/she puts them in lane order, staples any DQ cards to the appropriate sheet (making sure the DQ has been signed by the referee), and double checks the official time, circling it if it is not already circled. (If the official time is not indicated, the scorer should notify the referee so he/she can remind the head timer to circle the official time.) The official time is the time of two watches that agree, or, if no two watches agree, the middle time, recorded to the hundredths place. If there are only two times, the official time is the average of the two times, recorded to the hundredths. The digits representing thousandths are dropped—there is no rounding. It is not the scorer's job to average the times when only two are available. In this case the timer sheet must be signed by the assistant head timer and the referee. If the sheet is not properly completed and signed, the scorer should notify the referee.

The **computer operator** types the times into the computer and operates the program during the meet, for example, making the data changes to reflect the scratch meeting. (For detailed information, see the League's **Computer Operations Handbook**.) At the conclusion of the meet, the computer operator produces disks for the home team and visiting team, and printed copies of the meet results as requested by the reps.

The **verifiers** may read the times to the computer operator and check the results printed from the computer after each event against the timer sheets to be sure the times were entered accurately. The key is to have checks at each point—timer sheets, computer, and print out—so that the data is correct. When the computer table is finished with the timer sheets, they stack them for the home team rep to collect at the end of the meet. Labels are printed and handed to the awards table along with event results, if desired. The verifiers should also maintain a DQ log for each team, copying the event, heat, lane number, and reason exactly as written on the DQ

card for any disqualifications.

At the awards table are two *ribbon writers*, one from each team. The ribbon writers may check the winning time to see if it is a team or pool record. If the home team has set up its meet manager program to do so, the printout will indicate home team or pool records in addition to All-Star qualifying times. However, the visiting team's team records may not be in the home data base, so the visiting ribbon writer may need to check his/her team's times against a printed version of the visitor's team records. (A list of visiting team records can be brought to the meet.) The ribbon writers affix the ribbon labels to the ribbons and divide the ribbons by team for coaches to pick up at the end of the meet.

In general, ribbons are awarded only for places that score points. In the relay events (Events 3, 4, 49 and 50), only 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finishers score. In all other events (individual events), the first five places score points. The League provides 6th place ribbons for individual events, even though 6th place does not score points. Divisions, or individual teams, can decide to furnish their own ribbons for non-scoring relay teams and swimmers in the two-heat freestyle events who finish in 7th through 12th place, if they so desire.

In the case of a tie, the same place ribbon is awarded to each swimmer and the next lower place is not awarded. For example, when two swimmers tie for first, two 1st place ribbons are awarded, but no 2nd place. Thus, the swimmer finishing after the two swimmers who tie receives a 3rd place ribbon. A swimmer who is "DQ'd" does not receive a place ribbon. That swimmer may receive a participant or finisher ribbon if the division or team provides those ribbons.

At the conclusion of the meet:

Have the announcer remind the teams to clean up their team areas. Fill out the score on the cover sheet and have both reps sign the sheet. Give each team a copy of the cover sheet, the meet results (disk and printed copy), their DQ log, and their awards.

The home team should keep the following until the end of the season:

1. The original of the cover sheet.
2. A disk with the meet results.
3. A printed copy of the meet results.
4. Relay cards.
5. Timer sheets.
6. DQ cards.
7. Each team's dual meet entry report as changed by the clerk of course during the scratch meeting.

The home team is responsible for getting a commlink file, and a meet manager back up if requested by the Division Automation Liaison, along with the meet score to the Division Automation Liaison by 2:00 pm.

Inclement weather:

You should have a bad weather plan in case Mother Nature rains on your parade. Meets can be run in the cold and the rain, as long as there is no thunder or lightning. However, computers and printers don't take kindly to downpours. If there are no indoor facilities, you may have to swim the meet and enter the data afterwards. If the day is supposed to be exceedingly hot, you might want to start the meet early. Just be especially conscious of noise restrictions.

Meets cannot be swum in thunderstorms. While morning storms are rare, they do happen. Talk to your pool management company to see what its rule is for evacuating the pool in case of a thunderstorm. Ideally, you will have a pool management company representative—for

example, a pool manager—on site to make the determination to call the meet. It may be that the home coach is the only pool management employee on deck during the meet. This is not an ideal situation. However, in this case the home coach should then be familiar with the pool company's policies and follow those policies, alerting the team representative and referee when weather conditions determine that, according to pool company policies, the meet should be stopped and the deck cleared.

A swim meet should be an enjoyable experience. If weather becomes threatening so that either of the team reps or the referee feel that the situation is dangerous, even if it does not meet the pool company rules for closing, the meet should be stopped and swimmers and spectators evacuated. Then the appropriate officials—reps, referee, and pool management representative—should confer to decide on a plan.

Plan ahead. Each pool has its own peculiarities and the amount of time needed for a safe evacuation will vary. Some pools may have unobstructed views of impending weather. Other pools may not, or may be in a high noise area where it is difficult to determine the location of the storm by the “flash-to-bang” rule. (For each five seconds you count between seeing the lightning flash and hearing the thunder, there is one mile between you and the lightning strike. The minimum for evacuating a pool that has a safe building nearby and unobstructed view of the weather is a 30-second flash-to-bang time. Most pools do not have ideal circumstances and will need more time to safely evacuate).

If the weather forecast calls for an electrical storm, contact the other rep before the meet to come up with a plan. Be sure the visiting rep is aware of your pool management company's storm closing rules. If the weather is bad before the meet starts, will you assemble on time? Where is a safe place for spectators and swimmers to wait? (Locker rooms are generally not good places. People need to avoid any plumbing—showers and sinks. The wet floor may be an excellent conductor of electricity if the building is hit.) If the pool is in a sheltered area, is there an efficient way to monitor the weather so that there will be ample warning to clear the deck safely? You may need to plan to open extra gates so that people can leave the area as quickly as possible. How long will you wait before deciding to postpone the meet? Try to come up with a plan before you are faced with the problem. You don't want to keep large numbers of people—especially young children—in a small space for any extended amount of time. Not only do things quickly get out of hand, everyone gets annoyed with the indecision. Thirty minutes may be the maximum wait time at a pool that is cramped for space; an hour is probably the longest you'd want to wait at any pool.

Remember, even though meets are difficult to reschedule, it is most important to keep the meet *fun* and *safe*.

Postponed or interrupted meets:

If bad weather or other factors cause a meet to be postponed or interrupted:

1. The meet must be rescheduled by mutual agreement of the reps before the next regularly scheduled meet (in general, before the next Saturday). If the reps can't agree on a time, the time should be determined by the flip of a coin.
2. The rescheduled meet, or portion of the meet, is considered one continuous meet and all applicable MCSL rules apply as though the meet were swum as scheduled on Saturday morning. This means, for example, that the meet entry report exchanged on Friday controls who swims and in what events. There is not a new scratch meeting on the make-up day, so you can't substitute new swimmers to swim that day. No

swimmers can swim who were not on the roster by noon the Friday when the meet entry reports were exchanged.

MCSL records:

If you anticipate that an MCSL record will be set by one of your swimmers, you need to be prepared. Please consult the MCSL handbook's Rules for Competition, 20. Records, and "What to Do When an MCSL Record Is Broken" at the end of this section.

Protests:

Protests involving turns, strokes, and other swimming and event eligibility technicalities must be lodged with the referee within 30 minutes after the scoring has been completed. Protests involving problems that arise during the meet, other than those mentioned, which cannot be satisfactorily settled at the meet, shall be referred, within 3 days, to the Chairman of the Rules Committee. For more information on protests and procedures, see Rule 19 in the MCSL handbook.

List of meet materials—home team:

MCSL ribbons (provided by MCSL)
Finisher ribbons, if division or team uses
MCSL handbook
Stapler and staple remover
Computer
One or two printers and appropriate drivers
Printer paper
Printer labels
Extra printer cartridges
Scissors
Power strip, if needed
Heavy duty extension cord for outdoor use, if needed
Teams' meet entry disks (to put results on at end of meet)
Pens and pencils
Pencil sharpener
Clipboards—12: 6 for lane timers, 6 for stroke and turn judges, referee, and starter
Watches—10. Check batteries at the beginning of the season. Batteries usually last for 3 summer seasons if the watches are not used at other times, for example at PVS meets. Visiting team will bring its own watches.
Rubber bands
Whistle
DQ cards and relay take off cards (MCSL forms that teams print from MCSL website)
MCSL cover sheet (provided by MCSL)
Meet paperwork—programs, meet roster, lane sheets.
Relay cards (provided by MCSL and downloadable from web)
National Anthem
Nametags
Starting equipment
Roster

Copy of team records and pool records, if not in meet manager program
Shoebox for awards

Meet materials—visiting team:

Watches (10)

MCSL handbook

Finisher ribbons, if division doesn't provide

Pencils

Relay cards (provided by MCSL and downloadable from web)

Roster

Copy of team records

Shoebox for ribbons

Back-up starting equipment

What to Do When an MCSL Record is Broken

When a swimmer or a relay team sets a new MCSL record at a dual meet, Relay Carnival, or Divisionals, the host team is responsible for notifying the Records Chairperson. The following information should be included on the lane/time sheet documenting the record breaker's times.


Lane/Timer Sheet for Submitting a Record in an Individual Event

Event 31 Men 9-10 25 SC Meter Breaststroke Finals							Official Time		
Lane 1	Heat 1	Little, Chicken	10	Omega	22.30	22.26	22.23	22.24	22.24
Timer	Team	Print Name			Signature				
Timer 1	D	Minnie Mouse			<i>Minnie Mouse</i>				
Timer 2	O	Donald Duck			<i>Donald Duck</i>				
Timer 3	D	Red Rover			<i>Red Rover</i>				
Head Timer	D	Pesto Sauce			<i>Pesto Sauce</i>				
Referee	D	Milk Shake			<i>Milk Shake</i>				
Host Team Rep Name; Phone or e-mail				Brunhilda Zzoomwick 123-456-7890					

Lane/Timer Sheet for Submitting a Record in a Relay Event

Event 49 Boys 14 7 Under 175 SC Meter Freestyle Relay Finals							Official Time		
Lane 1	Heat 1	Omega	1:45.25	1:45.01	1:45.07	1:45.02	1:45.02		
Swimmer 1	Chicken Little			Swimmer 3	John Horner				
Swimmer 2	Donald Duck			Swimmer 4	Road Runner				
Timer	Team	Print Name			Signature				
Timer 1	D	Minnie Mouse			<i>Minnie Mouse</i>				
Timer 2	O	Donald Duck			<i>Donald Duck</i>				
Timer 3	D	Red Rover			<i>Red Rover</i>				
Head Timer	D	Pesto Sauce			<i>Pesto Sauce</i>				
Referee	D	Milk Shake			<i>Milk Shake</i>				

3 Ways to Submit a Record

	Snail mail (via post office) <i>Make a copy for your records</i>	Linda Raab, MCSL Records Chair 6606 Old Stage Road, Rockville, MD 20852-4328 ☎ 301-984-8812
	Fax	240-465-0741

	Scan and e-mail as a pdf	records@mcs1.org
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DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP MEET (DIVISIONALS)

DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP MEET (DIVISIONALS)

Divisionals are held the Saturday after the last dual meet. The meet is rather long—there are two heats of each individual event and one heat of each relay event for a total of 96 heats—and can become somewhat less than fun if it is not well planned and run according to plan.

Host pool:

At the April MCSL meeting, the division reps choose one pool to host divisionals. The League gives each host pool the divisional Meet Manager template, two cover sheets, and the meet awards. (For individual events, medals for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd; ribbons for 4th, 5th, and 6th. For relay events, medals for 1st and ribbons for 2nd and 3rd.) The host pool must print off the MCSL website DQ cards and relay take-off cards.

Before the pre-meet organizational meeting:

The time between the last “A” meet and the divisional meeting can be short and hectic. However, everyone will be happier if coaches and reps take the time to carefully review their divisional meet entries BEFORE they show up at the host pool for the organizational meeting. Calls after the seeding meeting to make changes because of a wrong time or wrong swimmer can cause dissention in the division.

Be sure you are seeding swimmers on current season “A” times only. You may choose your swimmers based on their “B” times, but you must use the “A” times on your entry disk. You should seed your relay teams on their best “A” times of the current season. Relay carnival times count for those relays swum at divisionals.

It is helpful if the Division Automation Liaison provides each team with a team manager data base that contains only current “A” meet times. The teams can then use that data base to prepare their team entries. Using the “Proof of Time” meet entry report will let you confirm that all times are from current “A” meets.

Pre-meet organizational and seeding meeting:

The host pool needs to schedule a meeting of all reps to be held the Sunday before divisionals. **COACHES MUST ATTEND THIS MEETING.** If Sunday is not convenient, you may schedule the meeting for another time that is agreeable to all the division reps. The seeding portion of the meeting can be held at a different time than the organizational meeting. Each rep should bring:

1. The team’s coach.
2. A disk, including team roster, and meet entry report with the team’s entries. It is a good idea to use the “Proof of Time” meet entry report. This format will list the meet in which a time was achieved, giving you a check that all your times are from “A” meets only. You may want to bring a back up disk.
3. Names of parents who can fill official positions.

You may also want to bring a paper copy of your team roster and your time ladder (you may also want to print a ladder with “A” times only).

Each team can enter two swimmers in the individual events and one relay in the relay events. (The relay entries do not need to include swimmers’ names. If they do, those names can

be changed at the clerk's table when the relay reports to swim. Relay swimmers are not finalized until the swimmers hand the relay card to the clerk of course shortly before their event.

However, all swimmers in divisionals, including relay swimmers, must be on the team roster and have swum in at least one dual "A" meet during the season.)

At the pre-meet meeting, the host computer operator will produce a meet program. A copy of the meet program should then be given to all the teams so that they know the lane and heat of each of their swimmers. This is the seeding portion of the meeting.

If there are discrepancies between the disk information and the data printed on the meet entry reports, the printed meet entry reports govern. This is the time to iron out any problems or oversights—for example, a team that has forgotten to enter any relays.

During the organizational part of the meeting, the reps need to decide a number of things:

1. Officials. Each team needs to provide 1 stroke and turn judge, 1 awards person, 1 clerk of course, and 4 timers. (Some teams prefer to provide 6 timers so that parents only have to time half the meet.) Be aware that you will need side take off judges for the relay events (event #3, 4, 49, and 50.) A number of other official spots also need to be filled. (See the "Divisionals Meet Officials" list.) Since this is such a large meet, you will want to have all six stroke and turn judges on deck, responsible for two lanes each. You may want to have a chief judge assist the referee. A chief judge must be certified as a referee, experienced, and willing to supervise the activities of others. Since it is also a long meet, some divisions choose to use two starters. It is best, if possible, not to have more than 2 of the key officials (referee, chief judge, and starter) from one pool. However, the primary consideration is to have the best officials run the meet. There should be general agreement in selecting the best officials available, and care must be taken that no derogatory comments are made about officials from any pool. Key official positions can be determined by secret ballot, if necessary. (TIP—Try to get the names of all officials, including timers, before the meet. Use the "Divisionals Timer Lane Assignments" grid to collect the timers' names. Then you can run a set of nametags so each person knows his/her job when he/she arrives at the pool. [For example, a nametag might read: Joe Smith, Timer/Recorder, Lane 1. It's also nice to include the person's pool initials on the nametag.]
2. Schedule, including warm-up times and time of the scratch meeting. It is suggested that the meet start at 8 a.m., so you will want to plan for all swimmers to be out of the water and officials in their positions by 7:55 a.m. The scratch meeting should be scheduled to start no later than 7:45 a.m. or 15 minutes prior to the first event. Warm-ups should be scheduled to end by 7:45. There should be three 20-minute warm-up sessions with two teams warming up per session, one in lanes 1-3 and the other in lanes 4-6. Decide now which teams will warm up in each session and assign the teams their warm-up lanes.
3. Team areas. These are usually selected by drawing lots.
4. Awards. You can print award labels for all finishers so that teams can provide their own ribbons or certificates to all their swimmers, if they wish.
5. Equipment. It is a good idea to have at least one back-up starting machine available in case the main system fails. You might also want to have back-up printers (with appropriate drivers), printer cartridges, a heavy duty extension cord, and a back up computer. (See the list of meet materials for dual meets for more equipment needs.)

- Also be sure all teams know whether your backstroke flags are 5 meters or 5 yards from the pool end.
6. Deck logistics. Be sure everyone knows the location of clerk of course, announcer, award writers. Discuss the availability of shade tents and time display boards.
 7. Parking.
 8. Recognition of graduating seniors. Seniors who are graduating off their teams are often recognized at divisionals. Their names might be listed in the program, or they might be awarded a small gift (balloons are one idea) at half time. Now is a good time to discuss what, if anything, you would like to do. Team reps should come prepared with their list of graduating seniors. This can include swimmers who are not swimming in divisionals.
 9. Other details—food sales, programs, spectator seating, t-shirt pick up, etc.
 10. Verification of season results. You can begin to fill out the meet “cover sheet & scoring summary.” Be sure the reps agree with the number of dual meets won and the relay carnival results. Remind the reps and coaches that the 2 copies of the cover sheet need to be signed at the conclusion of divisionals. In the dual meets results section, a team earns 6 points for a win, 3 points for a tie, and 0 points for a loss. For relay carnival, the 1st place team receives 10 points, and the teams from 2nd to 6th receive, respectively, 8, 6, 4, 2, and 0 points. (For a 5-team division, the scale is 8-6-4-2-0; for a 4-team division; 6-4-2-0.)
 11. Remind the reps that good sportsmanship is always important. Make the meet a *fun* ending to the season.
 12. Remind the teams to bring the following items to the meet: a box for awards; at least three stopwatches—one for each of their timers on duty; clipboards and pencils, if necessary, for their officials; relay cards; and their team roster.

Preparing for the meet:

The host pool should fill out the cover sheets as much as possible in advance. Remember that you will need to complete them at the end of the meet by entering the divisional results. Teams earn 20 points for finishing 1st at divisionals. The teams 2nd through 6th receive, respectively, 16, 12, 8, 4, and 0 points. (For a 5-team division, the scale is 16-12-8-4-0; for a 4-team division, 12-8-4-0.) You can then compute the teams’ total points for the season and their final rank.

Running the meet:

Running divisionals is very similar to running a dual meet. On the day of the meet, it is important to stick to your schedule. Be sure officials check in and warm ups go off according to schedule. Remember to allow time for a watch check with the starter and timers, and for the referee’s instructions to officials.

Coordinate with the announcer and the clerk of course when swimmers should be called to the clerk. Let the announcer know when scores, All-Star qualifying times, and records should be announced. Show the runners what their jobs are. Usually one will pick up the timer sheets and deliver them to the computer table. Another can escort the 8 & under swimmers to the starting end of the pool.

Have the scratch meeting as early as possible, once all the teams have arrived and had time to take attendance. This is the time to introduce to the referee the person who will be

acknowledging DQs for your team during the meet, if that person is someone other than the team coach. The referee will want to know whom to seek out if a DQ occurs and where on the pool deck that person will be located during the meet. Once the scratch meeting is finished, correct the computer program, all the timer sheets and at least some of the officials' programs—announcer, referee, and starter. Make sure corrected timer sheets, pencils, and clipboards are distributed to timers, and pencils, clipboards, and DQ cards to the stroke and turn judges.

Because of the extra length of the meet, each team's extra timer or timers can rotate on and off duty as needed. Some teams replace their timers at the halftime break. Each team's clerk can assist his/her team's swimmers, and each team's awards person is responsible for his/her team's awards. Some divisions have found that they can rotate computer operators so that the computer folks don't tire out and can watch their own kids swim, yet still get the job done.

At the conclusion of the meet:

Have the announcer remind all teams to clean up their team areas and call all reps and coaches to the scoring table or other central location. Fill out the "Divisional Meet," "total points," and "final rank" columns on the cover sheets, and be sure all reps and coaches sign both sheets. Make the DQ logs available for coaches to review while the final paperwork is completed. Give each team a copy of the cover sheet, the meet results (disk and printed copy), and their awards.

The Division Automation Liaison must turn the meet results into the League by 3 p.m. the day of divisionals.

Inclement weather/postponed or interrupted meets:

The same concerns about weather hold true for divisionals as for dual meets. If bad weather or other factors cause divisionals to be postponed or interrupted, the meet must be rescheduled as soon as possible by mutual agreement of the reps. The meet must be completed and results submitted to the Division Automation Liaison no later than mid day of the next day. If the reps can't agree on a time, the time should be determined by the flip of a coin. The rescheduled meet, or portion of the meet, is considered one continuous meet and all applicable MCSL rules apply as though the meet were swum as scheduled. This means, for example, there is not a new scratch meeting, so teams can't substitute new swimmers. No new swimmers can be added to the roster.

For a large meet such as divisionals, you should have a pool management company representative—for example, a pool manager—on site to make the determination to clear the deck due to weather. (Meets can be swum in the rain; they cannot be swum in lightning.) If this is impossible, it may be that the home coach is the only pool management employee on deck. This is not an ideal situation. However, in this case the home coach should then be familiar with the pool company's policies and follow those policies, alerting the team representative and referee when weather conditions determine that, according to pool company policies, the meet should be stopped and the deck cleared.

A swim meet should be an enjoyable experience. If weather becomes threatening so that either of the team reps or the referee feel that the situation is dangerous, even if it does not meet the pool company rules for closing, the meet should be stopped, swimmers and spectators evacuated, and the appropriate officials—reps, referee, and pool management representative—confer to decide on a plan.

Plan ahead. Each pool has its own peculiarities and the amount of time needed for a safe evacuation will vary. Some pools may have unobstructed views of impending weather. Other pools may not, or may be in a high noise area where it is difficult to determine the location of the storm by the “flash-to-bang” rule (For each five seconds you count between seeing the lightning flash and hearing the thunder, there is one mile between you and that lightning strike. The minimum for evacuating a pool that has a safe building nearby and unobstructed view of the weather is a 30-second flash-to-bang time. Most pools do not have these ideal circumstances and will need more time to safely evacuate).

If the weather forecast calls for an electrical storm, contact the other reps before the meet. Be sure they are aware of your pool management company’s storm closing rules. If the weather is bad before the meet starts, will you assemble on time? Where is a safe place for spectators and swimmers to wait? (Locker rooms are generally not good places. People need to avoid any plumbing—showers and sinks. The wet floor may be an excellent conductor of electricity if the building is hit.) If the pool is in a sheltered area, is there an efficient way to monitor the weather so that there will be ample warning to clear the deck safely? You may need to plan to open extra gates so that people can leave the area as quickly as possible. How long will you wait before deciding to postpone the meet? Try to come up with a plan before you are faced with the problem. You don’t want to keep large numbers of people—especially young children—in a small space for any extended amount of time. Not only do things quickly get out of hand, everyone gets annoyed with the indecision. Thirty minutes may be the maximum wait time at a pool that is cramped for space; an hour is probably the longest you’d want to wait at any pool.

Remember, even though meets are difficult to reschedule, it is most important to keep the meet *fun* and *safe*.

MCSL records:

The same procedure that is used at dual meets is followed if an MCSL record is set at divisionals. The referee, head timer and the three lane timers must sign the timer sheet and the sheet must be pulled and submitted to the MCSL records chairperson. Please see the information on records at the end of the Dual Meet section of this book.

Protests:

The same procedure is followed at divisionals that is followed at dual meets, however timeliness is more crucial as the meet is swum at the end of the swim season. Protests involving turns, strokes, and other swimming and event eligibility technicalities must be lodged with the referee within 30 minutes after the scoring has been completed. Protests involving problems that arise during the meet, other than those mentioned, which cannot be satisfactorily settled at the meet, should be submitted to the Chairman of the Rules Committee within 3 days. For more information on protests and procedures, see Rule 19 in the MCSL handbook.

Divisionals meet officials:

Referee:

Chief Judge:

Starter:

- 1.
2. (optional)

Head Timer:

Assistant Head Timer:

Scorer:

- 1.
- 2.

Computer Operator:

- 1.
- 2.

Verifiers:

- 1.
- 2.

Stroke & Turn Judges (6—one from each team):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Clerk of Course:

Assistant Clerk of Course (6—one from each team):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Awards (6—one from each team):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Announcer:

Side Take Off Judges (start end, events #3, 4, 49, and 50):

- 1.
- 2.

Runners:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

DIVISIONALS TIMER LANE ASSIGNMENTS

	LANE 1	LANE 2	LANE 3	LANE 4	LANE 5	LANE 6
Timer 1 (recorder)	Team 3	Team 5	Team 1	Team 4	Team 2	Team 6
Timer 2 (T/O Judge)	Team 1	Team 6	Team 2	Team 5	Team 3	Team 4
Timer 3 (Display)	Team 2	Team 4	Team 3	Team 6	Team 1	Team 5

**DIVISION RELAY MEET
(RELAY CARNIVAL)**

DIVISION RELAY MEET (RELAY CARNIVAL)

The division relay meet (relay carnival) is scheduled any time within a “window” established at the prior July’s MCSL meeting. The exact date and the host pool are determined by the reps at the April MCSL meeting. The meet is exclusively relays—the Order of Events is published in the MCSL handbook. Except for the graduated freestyle and open medley events (Relay events #1, 2, 8, and 9), teams that place first at relay carnival will swim at the MCSL All-Star Relay Meet (Relay All Stars). Other teams may also be invited to Relay All Stars based on their times. The graduated free and open medley relays are swum at all dual meets and at divisionals—these relays will be selected for Relay All Stars based on best times over the season.

Meet materials:

The League gives each host pool the relay Meet Manager template, two cover sheets, a few extra tan and yellow relay cards, and the meet awards. (Medals for 1st place; ribbons for 2nd and 3rd.) **The host pool must print off the MCSL website DQ cards and two kinds of relay take-off sheets.**

Pre-meet organizational meeting:

The host pool needs to schedule a meeting of all reps to be held about a week before the meet at the host pool. Coaches do not need to attend. Each rep should bring:

1. A disk with a file of the team’s roster. No swimmers can participate in relay carnival unless their names are on the team roster by 12 noon on the day preceding the meet. If a swimmer joins the team after the organizational meeting, but before the noon deadline, the swimmer can be added by sending the information by email to the computer operator in charge of the meet. (See **Computer Operations Handbook**.) The noon deadline refers to the meet’s original date. If the meet is delayed or interrupted due to bad weather, no new swimmers can be added. (Teams are strongly encouraged to submit a disk file with their proposed relays including swimmers’ names. This line up would be tentative--the final make up of each relay is not determined until the relay card is submitted to the clerk--but it helps the computer table the day of the meet by allowing the computer operators to check and correct names instead of entering all the swimmers’ names when they receive the relay card at the end of an event.)
2. Names of parents who can fill official positions.

Before this meeting, have your computer person run the program of the meet. To do this, you need to use the relay carnival template. (See **Computer Operations Handbook**)

During the organizational meeting, the reps need to decide a number of things:

1. Officials. Each team needs to provide the name of 1 stroke and turn judge, 3 timers, 1 opposite end take off judge, 1 clerk of course, and 1 awards person. You will also need 4 side take off judges and a number of other officials (See the “Relay Officials List.”) Since this is such a large meet, you may want to have a chief judge assist the referee. A chief judge must be certified as a referee, experienced, and willing to supervise the activities of others. It is best, if possible, not to have more than 2 of the key officials (referee, chief judge, and starter) from one pool. However, the primary consideration is to have the best officials run the meet. There should be general agreement in selecting the best officials available, and care must be taken that no

- derogatory comments are made about officials from any pool. Key official positions can be determined by secret ballot, if necessary. (TIP—Try to get the names of all officials, including timers, before the meet. Use the “Relay Carnival Timer and Take Off Judges” grid to collect the timers’ and take off judges’ names. Then you can run a set of nametags so each person knows his/her job when he/she arrives at the pool. [For example, a nametag might read: Joe Smith, Timer/Recorder, Lane 1. It’s also nice to include the person’s pool initials on the nametag.]
2. Schedule, including warm-up times. (Sample schedules are included in this guidance.)
 3. Team areas. These are usually selected by drawing lots.
 4. Awards. You can print award labels for all finishers so that teams can provide their own ribbons or certificates to all their swimmers, if they wish.
 5. Equipment. It is a good idea to have at least one back-up starting machine available in case the main system fails. You might also want to have back-up printers (with appropriate drivers), printer cartridges, and even a back up computer. Tell the other teams whether your backstroke flags are 5 meters or 5 yards from the end of the pool.
 6. Deck logistics—location of clerk of course, announcer, awards writers, etc.
 7. Parking.
 8. Inclement weather plan. (More on this later.)
 9. Other details such as food sales, programs, spectator seating, etc.
 10. Remind the reps that this is a big, crowded, noisy meet. Good sportsmanship, important at all meets, is especially important in this setting where team areas may be very close together.
 11. Remind the reps to bring the following items to the meet: tan relay cards, properly filled out for each relay (remember that swimmers can be changed up until the time the card is handed to the clerk); yellow relay cards for any relays with swim ups; a box for awards; 3 stopwatches—one for each of their timers; clipboards and pencils, if necessary, for their officials.

Timers and take off judges:

Use the “Timer and Lane Take Off Judges” grid in this packet to assign timers and lane take off judges to the appropriate lane. Have the reps fill in the names of their team officials in the space provided. The numbers refer to the team’s original rank in the division found in the MCSL handbook. “Timer 1 (recorder)” writes down the times on the timer sheets. “Timer 2 (T/O Judge)” also judges take offs from his/her lane. (Assign your most experienced, dependable timer parent to this job and one who will be staying for the full meet.) “Timer 3 (Display)” dials up the official time on the display boards, if any are available.

You will need six opposite end *lane* take off judges (in this case, “opposite end” means the end opposite to the timers) for all the 100, 175, and 250 meter events. You will need two sets of two *side* take off judges--shallow end and deep end--for all 100 meter relays. Each side take off judge judges 3 lanes at a time. The referee will assign the side take off judges to their positions.

This meet uses more take off judges than any other meet of the season. Be sure the referee takes time before the meet to instruct all the take off judges, including the timers who are also lane take off judges.

Preparing for the meet:

As for divisionals, the host pool should fill out the cover sheets as much as possible in advance. Remember that you will need to complete them at the end of the meet by entering the final relay carnival results. Pools earn 10 points for finishing 1st. The 2nd through 6th place pools receive, respectively, 8, 6, 4, 2, and 0 points. (For a 5-team division, the scale is 8-6-4-2-0; for a 4-team division, 6-4-2-0.) Be sure the awards are organized to make award writing efficient. Be sure to print enough DQ cards and special relay take off sheets (2 kinds) from the MCSL website.

Sample meet schedules:

The following time schedules are suggested for AM or PM relay meets.

<u>AM</u>	<u>PM</u>	
8:00	5:30	After checking in with the meet manager, all officials except timers and take off judges report to their positions; two teams warm up (possibly home team and closest pool).
8:15	5:45	Two teams warm up.
8:20	5:50	Timers and take off judges report to referee.
8:30	6:00	Two teams warm up.
8:45	6:15	Late warm ups for any swimmers who missed team warm up.
8:55	6:25	All swimmers out of pool; timers and take off judges in position; event #1 swimmers report to clerk.
9:00	6:30	“Star Spangled Banner” followed by start of Event #1.

Running the meet:

If there are some blanks in the cover sheet, fill these in as people arrive and pick up their nametags. Be sure each team introduces to the referee the person who will be acknowledging DQs for that team during the meet, if that person is someone other than the team coach. The referee will want to know whom to seek out if a DQ occurs and where on the pool deck that person will be located during the meet. Unlike most other MCSL meets, there is no meet entry report for relay carnival. Teams enter their swimmers by entering their names on the tan or yellow relay cards. Teams can fill out the relay cards before the meet, but, since the entry is not final until the card is handed to the clerk of course, coaches can change swimmers during the meet.

Here are some points to remember with regard to entries:

1. A swimmer may swim in as many events as he/she qualifies for by sex and age. For example, 14-year-old Speedy Sammy could swim in 6 relays: Boys Graduated Free, 13-14 Mixed Free, Boys Open Medley, Boys 14 & Under Graduated Medley, 13-14 Boys Medley, and the Boys Crescendo.
2. The swimmers on a relay can be changed up until the time the card is handed to the clerk of course. After that, the swimmers listed must swim in the order listed on the card. (For example crescendo swimmers are *not* listed in age order.)
3. Use the *yellow* relay cards for relays that include swim ups. These relays can score points, but are not eligible to go to Relay All Stars.

For each event, the relay swimmers bring their card to the clerk. Because of the large number of swimmers, each team has its own clerk. The clerk checks to be sure the card is filled out accurately and sends the swimmers to their lane. (It is a very good idea to run this meet off

lane/timer sheets. Thus the clerk should send the card to the automation table, not with the swimmers. This will solve the problem of swimmers having the card at the end opposite to the timers and will cut down on the number of wet and chewed cards.) Getting the swimmers to the proper location is sometimes a trick. Give the chart at the end of this section to your clerks to help them get swimmers to their proper positions. (If you have a pool that is over five feet at each end, you may want to use an alternate chart that is available on our website.)

Relay carnival is the only meet all season in which take offs are judged in every event. Please be sure your referee is experienced, well versed in all MCSL rules, and can keep his/her cool in a sometimes circus-like atmosphere. He/she should give complete instructions to all officials before the meet begins, particularly to the stroke and turn and the take off judges (including timers acting as take off judges).

At the conclusion of the meet:

Have the announcer remind all teams to clean up their team areas and call all reps and coaches to the scoring table or other central location. Complete the two cover sheets and have each rep and each head coach sign them. Print out a copy of the meet results for each team. Make the DQ log available for coaches to review while the final paperwork is completed.

When the Division Automation Liaison reports the relay results to the League, he/she should send a separate email to automation@mcs.org indicating any winning relays that included swim ups.

Inclement weather plans:

Relay carnival is often held in the evening, when thunderstorms can be a common threat. It can be a very noisy meet, so it is often difficult to hear early warning thunder. You will need a careful plan to get a large number of people off the deck quickly.

In April, when the division chooses a date for relay carnival, it usually chooses a rain date. When you meet with the reps in the pre-meet organizational meeting, it is a good idea to discuss exactly how this all will work. If the weather is bad before the meet starts, will all teams assemble on time? Where is a safe place for spectators and swimmers to wait? (Locker rooms are generally not good places. People need to avoid any plumbing—showers and sinks. The wet floor may be an excellent conductor of electricity if the building is hit.) If the pool is in a sheltered area, is there an efficient way to monitor the weather so that there will be ample warning to clear the deck safely? What is your pool management company's rule for evacuating the pool in case of a thunderstorm? You may need to plan to open extra gates so that people can leave the area as quickly as possible. How long will you wait before deciding to postpone the meet to its rain date? Decide this now, at the organizational meeting, and plan to stick to it no matter what arguments reps might make the night of the meet. When reps know that a star swimmer is leaving for the beach the next day, they may be more insistent that you wait "just a few more minutes." You don't want to keep large numbers of people—especially young children—in a small space for any extended amount of time. Not only do things quickly get out of hand, everyone gets annoyed with the indecision. Thirty minutes may be the maximum wait time at a pool that is cramped for space; an hour is probably the maximum wait time at any pool.

If threatening weather conditions develop during the meet, follow your pool management company's rules for clearing the pool and deck areas. For a large meet such as relay carnival, you should have a pool management company representative—for example, a pool manager—on site to make this determination. If this is impossible, it may be that the home coach is the only

pool management employee on deck. This is not an ideal situation. However, in this case the home coach should then be familiar with the pool company's policies and follow those policies, alerting the team representative and referee when weather conditions determine that, according to pool company policies, the meet should be stopped and the deck cleared.

A swim meet should be an enjoyable experience. If weather becomes threatening so that the team reps or the referee feel that the situation is dangerous, even if it does not meet the pool company rules for closing, the meet should be stopped, swimmers and spectators evacuated, and the appropriate officials—reps, referee, and pool management representative—confer to decide on a plan.

Plan ahead. Each pool has its own peculiarities and the amount of time needed for a safe evacuation will vary. Some pools may have unobstructed views of impending weather. Other pools may not, or may be in a high noise area where it is difficult to determine the location of the storm by the “flash-to-bang” rule (For each five seconds you count between seeing the lightning flash and hearing the thunder, there is one mile between you and that lightning strike. The minimum for evacuating a pool that has a safe building nearby and unobstructed view of the weather is a 30-second flash-to-bang time. Most pools do not have these ideal circumstances and will need more time to safely evacuate).

If the weather forecast calls for an electrical storm, contact the other reps the day before the meet to remind them of your bad weather plan. Restate your pool management company's storm closing rules.

No one wants a thunderstorm to arrive during a swim meet. Postponing or stopping a meet is a headache, but it is an inevitable risk for outdoor sports in our area. Plan now to keep your meet *fun* and *safe*.

MCSL records:

The same procedure that is used at dual meets is followed if an MCSL record is set at relay carnival. The referee, head timer and the three lane timers must sign the relay card and the card must be pulled and submitted to the MCSL records chairperson. See the information on records at the end of the dual meet section.

Protests:

The same procedure is followed at relay carnival that is followed at dual meets, however timeliness is more crucial if the carnival is swum near the end of the scheduling window. Protests involving turns, strokes, and other swimming and event eligibility technicalities must be lodged with the referee within 30 minutes after the scoring has been completed. Protests involving problems that arise during the meet, other than those mentioned, which cannot be satisfactorily settled at the meet shall be referred within 3 days to the Chairman of the Rules Committee. For more information on protests and procedures, see Rule 19 in the MCSL handbook.

Relay officials list:

Referee:

Chief Judge:

Starter:

Head Timer:

Assistant Head Timer:

Scorer:

1.

2.

Computer Operator:

1.

2.

Verifiers:

1.

2.

Stroke & Turn Judges (6—one from each team):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Side Take Off Judges (deep end):

1.

2.

Side Take Off Judges (shallow end):

1.

2.

Clerk of Course:

Assistant Clerk of Course (6—one from each team):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Awards (6—one from each team):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Announcer:

Runners:

1.

2.

3.

4.

RELAY CARNIVAL TIMER AND TAKE OFF JUDGES*

	LANE 1	LANE 2	LANE 3	LANE 4	LANE 5	LANE 6
Timer 1 (recorder)	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5	Team 6
Timer 2 (T/O Judge)	Team 6	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5
Timer 3 (Display)	Team 5	Team 6	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4
Opposite end T/O judge **	Team 4	Team 5	Team 6	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3

*Since side take off judges are not assigned to a particular lane, these positions appear on the "Relay officials list."

**Opposite end take off judges are needed for 100, 175, and 250 meter events.

CLERK AND REFEREE CHART--Swimmer/timer locations

Event #	Description	Swimmers start	Race Ends-timers stand
1	Boys 175M Graduated Free	Deep End-all	Shallow End
2	Girls 175M graduated Free	Deep End-all	Shallow End
3	Mixed 15-18 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
4	Mixed 13-14 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
5	Mixed 8&U 100m Free	Deep end–dive #1,3 Shallow end–in water #2, 4	Deep End
6	Mixed 9-10 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
7	Mixed 11-12 200M Free	Deep End-all	Deep End
8	Boys Open 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
9	Girls Open 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
10	Boys 100M Graduated Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (Breast and Free)	Shallow end
11	Girls 100M Graduated Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow end
TEN MINUTE BREAK			
12	Boys 8&U 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
13	Girls 8&U 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
14	Boys 9-10 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
15	Girls 9-10 100M Medley	Shallow end–in water #1,3 (back and fly) Deep end–dive #2,4 (breast and free)	Shallow End
16	Mixed 15-18 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
17	Boys 11-12 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
18	Girls 11-12 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
19	Boys 13-14 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
20	Girls 13-14 200M Medley	Deep End-all	Deep End
TEN MINUTE BREAK			
21	Boys 250M Crescendo Free	Shallow End-in water #1 Deep End-#2,3,4,5	Shallow End
22	Girls 250M Crescendo Free	Shallow End-in water #1 Deep End-#2,3,4,5	Shallow End

(Pools that are deep at both ends may wish to use an alternate chart available on mcsl.org.)

MCSL TEAM REPRESENTATIVE

Every member team in the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL) should have a team representative and an alternate team representative. The team rep must attend all MCSL meetings and act as liaison between the MCSL and the team. The team rep should be familiar with all MCSL rules and should try to be familiar with USA Swimming rules.

The job of team rep involves working in three areas: the League as a whole; the team's division; and the team itself—coach, swimmers, and pool management.

REP'S LEAGUE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Attend all MCSL meetings (Feb.—July (September optional)).
2. Vote on all MCSL issues presented to the reps (e.g., rules in March and schedule in July).
3. Ensure all payments (team dues, All Star fees) are made to the League on time.
4. Transmit team information to League for handbook.
5. Pick up and distribute MCSL team items (handbooks, ribbons).
6. Relay League information to team.

REP'S DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. In concert with the 5 other division team reps, select host pools for each of the two divisional meets—the relay meet (relay carnival) and the championship meet (divisionals). When making these decisions, consider such issues as size of pool (6 lanes vs. 8 lanes), depth of pool, parking availability, spectator seating availability, and pool location in relation to the other pools in division. This decision is made at the April MCSL meeting.
2. Also with the 5 other reps, decide other division jobs—Division Automation Liaison and All Star meet officials liaison. Decide any other common issues, e.g., which pool, if any, will produce divisional t-shirts, or whether the division as a whole wants to distribute finisher ribbons.
3. When hosting a meet, contact the visiting team rep the week before to verify officials, set warm-up times, discuss starting equipment, and give directions to the pool. If your backstroke flags are 5 meters instead of 5 yards from the end of the pool, be sure visiting team is aware of this.
4. When hosting a meet, be sure that all materials—disk, entry sheets, timer sheets, heat sheets, etc.—are properly prepared and that ribbons and other supplies are available to run the meet. Start the meet on time and conduct it in a sportsmanlike manner.
5. When hosting a meet, see that the meet results and score are delivered promptly to the Division Automation Liaison. Keep the other meet materials until the end of the season so that they can be consulted in case of a question.
6. Notify the Division Automation Liaison as soon as possible of any scratches from the Coaches Invitational Long Course, Individual All-Star, or All-Star Relay meets so that additional swimmers may be invited if necessary.

REP'S TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Maintain an accurate team roster, signed by the rep and the coach. Ensure the eligibility of all team members.
2. Distribute MCSL handbooks to all officials and team members. Ensure team members are familiar with MCSL rules and schedules.

3. Bring team coach or assistant coach to the June MCSL meeting.
4. Ensure that as many team parents as possible attend MCSL officials clinics. Keep a list of certified referees, starters, and stroke and turn judges for your team.
5. Familiarize your coaches with MCSL safety guidelines, eligibility rules, and meet entry procedures, particularly the meet entry report traded at the Friday pre-meet meeting. Assist coaches at home and away meets.
6. Work with pool management to ensure availability of the pool for practices and meets.
7. Ensure that your team automation person is trained in the use of team and meet manager. This may require that the person attend one of the training sessions held by the League.
8. Ensure that meet equipment (starting machine, stopwatches, lane lines, backstroke flags) is maintained and that all materials are on hand for home meets. Ensure that stopwatches and, if necessary, starting machine are taken to away meets.
9. Ensure that the Meet Manager follows the MCSL Meet Managers dual meet checklist.
10. Be sure that all coaches, parents, and team members are aware of the importance of good sportsmanship and the spirit of friendly competition. Set a good example yourself. Make meets *fun*.
11. Notify swimmers who qualify to swim in the Coaches Invitational Long Course, Individual All-Star, and All-Star Relay meets. Remind them of the MCSL rule banning competition in a suit or cap that bears the name, insignia, or logo of any team or pool other than the MCSL pool they are representing.
12. Maintain orderly files and turn over all information promptly to the next team rep.

MCSL CHECKLIST FOR COACHES

PRIOR TO WEEK OF FIRST MEET

- Learn stroke and turn rules, including any special to MCSL, and teach swimmers.
- Attend June MCSL coaches' meeting.
- Do not plan participation in other leagues.
- Plan cheers and psyche-ups that are consistent with good sportsmanship.
- Observe competitor eligibility.
- Keep any MCSL forms (e.g. relay cards) separate from "B" meet supplies.
- Sign team roster.

DUAL MEET ENTRIES

- Know MCSL meet events and eligibility criteria.
- Know rules for scratch meeting.

DUAL MEET ENTRY EXCHANGE/FRIDAY NOON

- Schedule exchange of meet entry reports and team rosters for Friday morning by noon. Home team coach or rep should call visiting coach or rep.
- Visiting team coach selects odd or even lanes. (Numbered from swimmer's right as swimmer faces the pool for a 50 or 100-meter event.) Home team coach writes choice on meet entry report.
- Coaches may change entries up to the exchange of meet entry reports. Written changes made prior to exchange supersede entries on disk. No change is permitted after the exchange until the scratch meeting. If you make any hand changes, the home team computer operator will need your team roster to set up the meet.
- Home team coach takes two copies of all meet entry reports. Visiting coach takes one copy of home team meet entry report.
- Coaches may need to discuss warm-up times, team areas, and any other necessary or helpful information.

BEFORE START OF MEET

- Take roll call of swimmers (if visitor, complete this at home pool).
- If visitor, arrive at pool by 8:30 a.m. (At least 30 minutes before meet starts.) You may want to arrive earlier, depending on what you have decided about warm ups.
- Report to and stay in assigned area.
- Supervise warm up.
- Attend scratch meeting.

DURING DUAL MEET

- See that swimmers report to clerk of course.
- Add swimmers' names to relay cards.
- Note limitation on entries per individuals.
- Order of finish is by official time.
- Be available for referee to report DQs, unless your team designates someone else for this.
- Keep records of DQs. Scorer should produce log that you can pick up at end of meet.

SCORING

- Individual events—6, 4, 3, 2, 1.
- Relays—8, 4, 2, 0.
- Division ranking—win, 6 points; tie, 3 points.

AFTER MEET

- Clean up team area.
- Pick up DQ log.
- Pick up and distribute awards.

DIVISION RELAY MEET (RELAY CARNIVAL)

- Prepare relay cards completely (team, full name, date,). Use yellow cards for relays that include swim ups. (This also applies to dual meets.)
- First place teams, except the graduated free relays and open medley relays, are automatically invited to the All-Star Relay meet, unless the team included swim ups. Other teams may be invited based on time. Since the graduated free relays and the open medley relays are swum at all dual meets, the “first place” team in these events is the team that turns in the fastest time for the season.

DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP MEET (DIVISIONALS)

- Prepare the meet entry report and relay cards. Only two swimmers per team in individual events; one relay per team in relay events.
- Attend seeding meeting. Be sure you use current “A” times to seed swimmers.

LEAGUE ALL-STAR MEETS AND COACHES INVITATIONAL LONG COURSE MEET

- No swim ups.
- Swimmers limited to 3 individual events in individual All-Stars; 2 events in Long Course.
- There are no relays swum at individual All-Stars or Long Course. All events at Long Course are double the usual distance, and the meet is swum in long course format in a 50-meter pool.
- Qualifying times for Long Course are taken from the first 3 dual meets; for individual All-Stars, qualifying times are taken from the 5 dual meets and divisionals.
- All-Star Relay meet is divided into 2 sections.
- Notify Division Automation Liaison of scratches as early as possible.
- Be aware of special rule for suits and caps.

THIS CHECKLIST IS FOR GUIDANCE ONLY AND DOES NOT MODIFY OR REPLACE ANY RULE. REFER TO MCSL AND USA SWIMMING HANDBOOKS FOR ACTUAL WORDING OF RULES.

COMPETITION AND GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

An important purpose of the MCSL is to “...provide organized, friendly team competition within a fair and wholesome environment...” and to “foster good sportsmanship...” This is what we should all be striving for.

We are swimming against the tide. “Friendly,” “wholesome” and “sportsmanship” are not often featured on TV, in the movies, newspapers, or on radio stations. We don’t always see these virtues on our roads, in parking lots, stores, and offices. Our children are inundated with bad examples of social behavior, and too often the people giving the worst examples are parents. We’ve all seen embarrassing parents at soccer fields, basketball courts, and even pool decks. Here are some ideas to help our programs foster *friendly*, *wholesome* competition and *good sportsmanship*.

Between teams:

The first step a team rep and other team officials can do to foster good feelings between teams is to know the MCSL rules, especially the rules concerning meet entries. Be sure your coach is familiar with these rules before the first meet, and that the home team has a phone number to call if the person setting up the meet on Friday notices a problem that can be corrected. Don’t show up on Saturday morning wanting to change the line up because of a mistake. It puts everyone in an uncomfortable position and starts the meet, and perhaps the season, off on a bad note.

If you are the home team, be welcoming. Greet the visitors as they arrive and direct them to their team area. Run the meet efficiently. Offer officials refreshments at the break. If you plan on having a special event, such as a recognition for your graduating seniors, alert the visiting team in advance and invite them to participate.

If you are the visitors, behave as you would if you were visiting someone’s home. If you would like more chairs in your team area, ask—don’t grab. Don’t expect the home team to provide you with multiple copies of the program—the suggested number is listed in this meet management handbook. Bring copies of your meet entry sheets if you need to have many different people corral your swimmers for the clerk of course. Follow the host team’s directions on reporting to the clerk, keeping the deck clear for officials, and other aspects of meet management, even if you think they’re nutsy. When the meet is over, clean up your team area and replace any chairs you may have borrowed.

Keep your cheers and psyche-ups *friendly* and *wholesome*. Do not indulge in cheers that have suggestive or insulting themes. Two specific examples come to mind. One cheer has as a line “your team swims like s---hifft to the left...” Another has a chant leader pointing to various pool objects, saying, “Is this not a lifeguard chair?” and his team responds, “Yes that is a lifeguard chair.” The conclusion is for the leader to point to the opposing team and shout, “Is that not the losing team?” Cheers of this nature may seem pretty mild given the low level of much of modern culture, but they are still rude and insulting and should not be allowed, especially when one considers that our youngest swimmers can be 6 or 7 years old.

It is possible to have cheers that celebrate how great *your* team is without putting down the other team. Psyche-ups can be elaborate, engaging for the teenagers and exciting for the young kids without attacking the other team. One team in different years staged a battle between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, featured a swing dance exhibition by the coaches, had secret agents sneaking into the pool area, and presented a Marines-style military formation. None of

these had anything to do with the other team, but all were enthusiastically supported by team parents and swimmers. They gave older kids leadership opportunities, younger kids excitement, and were just plain fun.

Coaches, especially young coaches who are high school or college students, may not be sensitive to the potential problems of some of their cheers or psyche-up plans. Cheers that may be acceptable at the high school or college level are often not acceptable in a summer league setting with young children and their parents. Coaches may also need help developing and carrying out some of their plans. It may be a good idea for the rep, coach, and an interested group of parents to meet at the beginning of the season to discuss “spirit” plans. Some teams choose a theme for the summer and base their spirit activities around that theme.

Most teams choose a team swimsuit for the season. You may also want to design team caps and t-shirts. Encourage your swimmers to wear your team gear at swim meets. Being outfitted in the same way can help build team identity and spirit.

Within a team:

You may find that you have a problem with parents or children on your own team being too competitive with each other. You may want to look at your team organization to try to find ways to tone down this competitiveness.

The first step in getting control of intra-team competition problems is to educate your parents on meet entry rules. A team handbook that explains the different kinds of meets and the MCSL meet entry rules may help. Make clear that the coach has the final say on meet entries.

One area that has given some teams problems in the past, and which is not addressed in the MCSL rules, is Relay All-Star entries. For most of the Relay All-Star events, relay teams make it into the meet if they place first at their division’s relay carnival. However, the League has no requirement stating which *swimmers* are to swim on that relay team. Some teams send the original swimmers—those who swam in the event at the division relay carnival. Other teams put together the fastest team for All-Stars. For example, perhaps Sam, Steve, Stan, and Sylvester swam the 11-12 boys medley at the Division “Z” relay carnival and came in first. But speedy Sonny, the super-fast freestyler, was away at camp, and sleepy Sandy suddenly learned how to swim butterfly at divisionals and dropped 10 seconds. Do you send the original foursome of Sam, Steve, Stan, and Sylvester, or do you bump Sam and Steve for Sonny and Sandy, thereby dropping 20 seconds and setting a league record? It helps to address this issue before the season starts, rather than when Sam’s and Steve’s parental units, who have ordered All-Star T-shirts, changed their vacation plans, and notified all living grandparents, are in your face on deck. The choice is yours, but wise teams will want to make the choice early and put it in writing in their team handbook.

Teams may also run into problems with divisional entries. Some teams enter the swimmer who has the fastest (or second fastest) time in an event no matter when or in what meet that time was swum. Other teams count only “A” meets, and other teams look at trends. For example, Suzie swam the second fastest 11-12 girl freestyle time in the first “A” meet. Shelly has beaten Suzie in every other “A” meet, but has never beaten Suzie’s best time. Do you put Suzie or Shelly in the second slot for 11-12 girls free at divisionals? Does it make a difference if the times involved were attained at time trials or a “B” meet? (While swimmers cannot be seeded on “B” times in divisionals, they can swim in the meet, as long as they have swum some event in at least one “A” meet. They can be seeded on their best “A” meet time, or as a “no time” if they have not swum that event in an “A” meet.) The choice is up to the team. Again, it

is a good idea to put your guidelines in writing. This situation may come down to the coach's discretion, but the fact that final entry selection is subject to coach's discretion should be clear in the handbook.

The next step may be to have the focus of your program be on personal improvement, not points scored. If kids are enthusiastic and excited about improving, the wins will come eventually. Consider getting the Hy-Tek label option that lets you print improvement labels, showing time dropped, and investing in "best time" ribbons. Give participation or finisher ribbons at "A" and "B" meets so that every swimmer gets recognized at the post-meet fast food eatery, and so swimmers and parents know what time a swimmer actually achieved. Sometimes kids have difficulty keeping the numbers straight. Johnny may tell mom that he swam a 38 in the 50 free when it was really a 48. If coaches are organized, they can recognize kids for best times when they hand out ribbons.

Consider not posting your time ladder. If each child knows his/her own time, he/she (and parents) doesn't need to know everyone else's. Posting the "A" meet entry sheets will tell swimmers what times to shoot for to move into the "A" meet.

If you are committed to making self-improvement the goal of your program, take a look at what you reward at the end-of-season banquet. Some teams get very involved in trophies. They may have trophies for "B" meet points scored, "A" meet points scored, high-point by age group and sex, and overall high-point by sex. Not only are all these trophy distinctions a lot of work for coaches and parents, they may be hurting your program by increasing negative competitiveness within age groups. The same children may be winning these trophies year after year, with the bulk of the age group having very little hope of breaking into the top three. The fast children already get rewarded at every meet by their high place finishes. One team decided to do away with point-based trophies and found that the move caused few, if any, complaints. However, if you decide to change your trophy system, make this change before the season starts and publicize and explain the change. Changing award standards in mid-season, when families may have already have formed some expectations, can lead to hard feelings.

Foster the growth and fun of all your swimmers. Besides stressing personal improvement—a goal every swimmer, even the weakest, can shoot for—make sure your "B" meet program is strong. Consider having psyche-ups at your "B" meets. Try to include all your swimmers and all your meets, "A" and "B," in your end of year slide show or other review of the season. Get your teenage swimmers involved. Let them pick the team suit and have leadership roles in psyche-ups.

All teams will have losing seasons occasionally. Some teams may have a string of losing seasons. Everyone prefers to win rather than lose, but an MCSL program that puts winning before all else is going to lose in the long run. If you put fun and improvement first, you can feel like winners even when you lose. One coach in the midst of a multiple year losing streak observed that if she couldn't win, she wanted the other team to feel like her team was having the most fun. A team that is fun keeps its families coming back year after year.

You may find that even after you've tried to downplay intra-team competition, you still have parents who cause problems. Sometimes it is a normally sane parent who has just lost it and will calm down and be terribly embarrassed by his or her behavior if given a chance to step back from the situation. Sometimes the problem stems from a lack of communication, or misunderstanding due to different cultural expectations or language difficulties. As our teams become more multi-ethnic, it may be a challenge to explain somewhat confusing swimming concepts to parents who do not speak English as a first language. Even parents who do speak

English fluently have trouble understanding some MCSL concepts. Sometimes you just have parents who can't seem to step back from any situation that involves their children. Further complicating the mix, many coaches are young and need help in developing their interpersonal skills.

Consider having regular staff meetings with your coaches, or at least with your head coach. You can use this time to discuss a variety of team operations, giving the coach an opportunity to vent, if needed. Make suggestions on how to deal both with swimmers and their parents. If you've had complaints from parents, you can also use this regularly scheduled time to discuss those. Hopefully, you'll diffuse any explosive situations before they detonate on deck.

If you, as rep, have trouble dealing with difficult parents or other community members, you may want to identify a parent on your team who has that skill and make him or her the team ombudsman. Many reps are barreling toward a nervous breakdown about mid season, and having someone to handle this task can be a lifesaver.

The goal is to head off any situation before it becomes a major problem, especially before it becomes a major scene on deck in front of the kids. Occasionally, confrontation happens. One coach found it most helpful not to engage the parent in an exchange of accusations, but to agree with the complainer as much as she could. If you can give parents the feeling that they are being heard, you may cause them to calm down and get a grip.

If the confrontation happens during practice, the coach should firmly, but politely, remind the parent that he/she has to coach the children and cannot discuss the issue at that time. Have the coach tell the parent what time they can talk. If the adult responds to this, the delay might give the individual time to calm down. If the parent won't back off, and there are other coaches present, the head coach could take the parent aside, away from the kids, and hear him/her out. If you as rep have had warning that such a situation is brewing, you may have had time to develop a plan of action, perhaps involving your team ombudsman or another parent or two who have intervention skills. Perhaps a friend of the offending parent can be enlisted to intervene. The goal is to remain calm and refuse to allow a shouting match to occur in front of the children. If the confrontation occurs at a meet, the referee has the authority to tell the offenders to leave the pool area.

Clear, written meet eligibility rules, a team emphasis on fun and personal improvement, regular staff meetings with coaches to help develop interpersonal skills, and a planned response, such as a team ombudsman, may all help avert a problem or deal satisfactorily with a parent problem once it arises.

SOME FRIENDLY ADVICE ON “B” MEETS

MCSL does not set rules for “B” meets. However, the Executive Committee has received a number of comments about “B” meets over the years and so is offering this guidance to teams to help them in designing their “B” programs. Everything noted here is just a suggestion. Pick and choose what works for you.

Different “B” programs:

Some teams may be in a highly organized “B” league. Such leagues may have their own rules, purchase their own awards, and schedule a full complement of meets, including a “B” relay carnival. Other teams are not in leagues, and call teams year by year to set up meets. Still other teams may be in loosely organized leagues, that is, they swim the same teams year after year, but do not have a common set of rules. These guidelines may be most helpful to teams who are not part of organized “B” leagues, but even teams in well-organized leagues may find some ideas here that would be useful.

The problem of “B” meets:

“B” meets differ from “A” meets in that there may be no common rules concerning which events a child may swim. In addition, there are unlimited heats so more children can participate. Some teams have extra events they like to add, such as 6 and under events or kickboard events. Some teams also feel that children should not be disqualified for stroke infractions. Since the meets are generally held in the evenings, some teams find that their meets are lasting well into the night.

Eligibility for “B” meets:

If you are in an organized “B” league, you may have clearly explained rules on who can swim “B” meets. For example, some teams let children swim in the “B” meet if they did not get a ribbon in the previous “A” meet in that event, or did not place first, second or third. If you are finding that a rule like this is a problem, either because you need to think of ways to shorten your “B” meets or because you are finding that “A” swimmers are dominating the “B” events, you might want to consider a more restrictive eligibility rule such as not having a child swim any events that he or she swam in the previous “A” meet, or not allowing swimmers to swim more than three individual events and one IM in a week. Children who swim only in the “B” meet would also be limited by this rule, i.e., they could not swim more than three individual events plus an IM in one “B” meet. If they swim fast enough to qualify for the next “A” meet in an event, they would swim that event in the next “A” meet, but would not swim it in the following “B” meet.

There are a number of advantages to this approach. It limits the number of kids in the “B” meets, yet gives each child a fair chance to swim in a meet at least once every week. It encourages the “A” swimmer to concentrate on times, not amassing a hoard of blue ribbons. It is hard for a child to expect to get a best time in an event every Saturday and even harder to get a best time every Saturday and Wednesday. It gives the “B” swimmers a chance to shine in a less competitive pond. They may move into an event in the next “A” meet—and then the displaced “A” swimmer can swim that event in the next “B” meet and try to move back into an “A” spot. The disadvantage in this approach, particularly for younger kids who may swim their maximum number of events in “A” meets, is that some kids may not get a chance to swim their off event in

meet conditions after time trials. To address this problem, you may want to let the swimmers who fall into this category swim their off events “exhibition” at one of your home “B” meets.

Disqualifications:

All teams should treat their “B” meets as seriously as their “A” meets. This means holding their “B” swimmers to the same stroke standards as their “A” swimmers. Teams should only enter in “B” meets those children who have demonstrated to a coach during practice that they can swim the stroke legally.

Few things bring a “B” meet to a screeching halt like the 8 and under breaststroke and butterfly events. DQ cards fly like snow in a blizzard. All young children seem to want to swim the breaststroke, but if they are coached well, they can understand—and explain to their parents—that they have to wait until they get their left foot to stay turned out, or their arms strong enough that they don’t pull down to their waist. They’ll forget sometimes when they race, and that’s to be expected. A “B” meet without DQs wouldn’t be a “B” meet. But to enter a child who is not even close to legal does everyone a disservice. It slows the meet and confuses the child and the child’s parents.

If the child does not get DQ’d, either because the team does not DQ “B” swimmers or because a beginning stroke and turn judge missed the stroke violation out of inexperience or inability to see in the growing darkness, the child may bring home a first place ribbon with the fastest time in his/her age group. When the child is not put in the “A” meet because the coach knows that the child cannot swim the stroke to the standards required for an “A” meet, the parents and child may be very disappointed and the coach and rep may have a difficult job of explaining ahead of them. If a child is put in the “A” meet, he/she will displace a child who swims more slowly, but legally. The faster child will probably be DQ’d in the “A” meet, so that no one has benefited. The “fast” child gets DQ’d in what may be a more intense and therefore more upsetting situation; another child does not get to swim; and the team may lose points and a valid time for the end of the season swimoff that determines next season’s ranking.

Be sure that the DQ cards get separated by team and sent home with the coach at the end of the meet.

Events in “B” meets:

Discuss beforehand which events will be included in the meet besides the standard MCSL “A” meet events. The extra events which seem to crop up most often are 6 & under free and back (and perhaps breast and fly) and kickboard events. Some teams are very attached to their “special” events and you may not be able to reach an agreement. In a stalemate, it is best to let the home team have the last word.

The kickboard event for children who cannot swim an entire length of the pool by themselves has raised some strong feelings in the past few years. If a team wishes to include this event, it should take great care that the children are supervised to eliminate the risk of drowning. Teams might want to consider developing a separate pre-team program for these young swimmers that could be better tailored to their skill level and attention span. An inter-squad meet or two during the pre-team season with a variety of races across the “L” or the width of the pool might be a more positive experience for these young kids, and make them and their parents more enthusiastic about moving onto the team when they are capable of swimming an entire length of the pool.

If your team has a time limit on “B” meets, you may find that you never get to the

butterfly events. To address this issue, some teams occasionally reverse the order of events so that butterfly is swum first. If you want to do this at a “B” meet, be sure to discuss your plan in advance with the visiting team.

The graduated free relays, swum at the end of “A” meets, are often swum in the middle of “B” meets, right after the backstroke or the break, so that the younger freestylers (and, perhaps, their parents) can go home to bed.

Computers:

Some teams find computers helpful in running their “B” meets. Even if you don’t want to use the computer on deck, you can use it to help set up your entries. If you have the deck label function with your team manager program, you can generate labels for the “B” meet cards. This will give you a card for each eligible child as well as each swimmer’s seedtime. Save the cards of the swimmers who don’t swim and stick new labels over the old labels for the next meet. Be sure to have a few blank cards handy at the clerk’s table in case you’ve forgotten to include a swimmer when you ran the deck labels. You can also print out entry sheets for your team that will help the coaches round up swimmers.

If you would like to score the “B” meet, or leave the deck with the results on a disk, you can use the computer to do these tasks also. You will need to get a roster on disk from the other team. Since the swimmers who are actually swimming in the race are not determined prior to the meet, you can’t generate lane assignments or timer sheets. (Very organized “B” leagues may have teams exchange disks a day prior to the meet so that the meet can be set up like an “A” meet. In that case, you may be able to generate a program and timer sheets.)

See the MCSL automation handbook for more help with computers at “B” meets.

Meet operations:

When a meet is run solely off time cards, 25-meter events present a special problem. Usually the “B” swimmer comes to the lane carrying his or her card and presents it to the timer. However, in the 25-meter events, the timer is at the other end of the pool. Address this issue before the meet begins. Have enough helpers at the clerk of course. You may want to have one person take heat 1 and put each kid in his or her lane chair, and then carry the cards down and hand them out to the lane timers. Meanwhile, person number 2 is taking heat 2 to their chairs, collecting their cards, and taking them down to pass out to the timers as soon as the head timer has collected heat 1 cards. (Asking the head timer to both collect and distribute cards seems to slow the process down dramatically. Always remind the timers to check the name of the swimmer who gets out of their lane.)

Hooking DQ cards up to the proper time card can also be a problem. You may be able to put the swimmer’s name and team on the DQ slip. However, if this is not possible, consider having someone stand by the referee or chief judge to collect both the time cards and the DQ cards and staple the DQ to the correct time card before the next heat even goes off. This person could also collect all the event cards, taking them to the scorers/ribbon writers only after the last heat of that event has swum. This keeps ribbon writers from assigning places and then getting the winner’s card in the last heat. If you are running the meet off the computer, you may want to take the cards over after each heat. Be sure the computer operator knows when the last heat of an event has swum.

You may find that using a chief judge to process DQs at the turn end of the pool will help keep the meet moving.

Fun:

“B” meets should be fun, not a forced march to get finished before midnight. Plan them efficiently so you can do a psyche-up at the beginning and cheers and other fun things during the meet. The future of your team may be at your “B” meets. Next season’s Mike Barrowman (or his parents) may get turned off by all night “B” meet marathons and decide to ditch the pool for the baseball diamond. Even if a child has little hope of ever seeing a Saturday meet, he or she deserves a fun, happy summer. That’s what summer swimming is all about—not qualifying times or college scholarships, but having a good time with your neighbors in a healthy, child-centered activity.

MCSL GUIDELINES

“Swim Meets Must Be Good Neighbors”

Many MCSL clubs currently operate swim meets under special restrictions set forth by the County Board of Appeals as part of their “Special Exception” status in the neighborhood. All clubs are vulnerable to similar restrictions if they disturb their neighbors. Operating restrictions imposed on pools are often the result of conflict between adjoining neighbors and the clubs. The Board of Appeals has felt that any adverse impact to adjoining properties carried greater weight than the public benefit that swim meets and other pool events might serve.

The following guidelines are supported by the MCSL Board of Directors to encourage member clubs to be more sensitive to any adverse impact our swim meets might have upon neighbors of the host pool. These guidelines may help avoid a review of a club’s special exemption status, costly attorneys’ fees, operating restrictions, or fines.

NOISE:

- I. The Montgomery County Noise Ordinance (Chapter 31B of the County Code) is strictly enforced by the Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection. With only two complaints needed, Police (or inspectors who can measure decibel levels at adjoining properties) can issue citations and fines. It behooves each club, pool manager, social chairman and Team Rep., to ensure adherence to the Noise Ordinance. Excerpts from this Ordinance can be found on the MCSL Bulletin Board.

Specifically regarding swim teams, we suggest:

- a. Coaches and swimmers should keep all noise at a low (conversation) level during practices or meets that begin before 7:00 a.m. on weekdays, or before 9:00 a.m. on weekends. This means no PA or starter announcements; whistle, gun or horn starts; loud, boisterous behavior (even team cheers); boom boxes, etc. This would also apply to team parties, pep rallies, etc. after 9:00 p.m.
- b. Care should be taken before morning meets to:
 1. Avoid use of the large PA system before 9:00 a.m. to welcome teams, call the first event, and play the National Anthem. Use common sense when testing the volume by doing it just at 9:00 a.m., starting from low volume/master setting and increasing to a moderate level.
 2. Use voice commands or send a message to teams and spectator areas to announce warm-ups, call for officials, etc. A careful use at a low setting on the starter horn may be acceptable. **THIS IS EVEN MORE CRITICAL IF YOU HOST DIVISIONALS AND BEGIN AT 8 a.m., Warm-up at 7 a.m.**
 3. For the finish of a ‘B’ meet beyond 9 p.m., items 1 & 2 apply as well.
 4. Reduce or curtail use of the PA and use just the starter horn whenever possible. As the crowds diminish, so should the volume of PA equipment or starter horn.
 5. Do not make unnecessary announcements, just those necessary to the conduct of the meet.

6. The Team Rep or a member of the Club's Board of Directors or their designee shall monitor the volume, and overrule the announcer, if necessary, on volume settings of the PA, appropriate uses of the amplification equipment, and unnecessary announcements.
- c. Pools should examine speaker locations and modify them to direct announcements inward from pool perimeter toward participants and spectators, not toward neighbors. Also several well-located speakers can reduce the need to "push" the volume of only one or two central speakers toward the property lines (and toward the neighbors).
- d. All MCSL visiting teams shall refrain from honking horns or squealing through the parking lot, etc., when arriving or departing. Remember, horns or other noisemakers are not permitted at swim meets.

PARKING

- II. Most meets cause overflow parking along adjacent side streets. Parking on both sides makes for dangerous driving and walking, and it severely irritates neighbors. The following is recommended:
 1. Ask your team members who live close to the pool to walk.
 2. Allow for a drop-off loop so parents can get their swimmers and belongings to the door, and then leave to park.
 3. Develop a map that gives directions and also shows where to (and not to) park around your pool. Give 20 copies to the Rep when exchanging lineups. Visiting Reps must distribute this to the "caravan" and to others with instructions to heed.
 4. Assign parents to direct and park cars efficiently in your lot, on adjacent open land if possible, and along side streets. These people must be in place before warm-up and past the first few events.
 5. Park only along one side of a residential street, preferably the pool side or park side, not in front of neighbor's homes.
 6. Where possible, direct cars to park along curb and gutter streets to avoid pulling off road and damaging a front lawn.

INFORM

- III. In a community newsletter or flyer, give your immediate neighbors and others your home meet and social schedule. Let them know your efforts to be some good neighbors. They may wish to schedule themselves "away" at those times.

William R. Bullough