

# Covington Critters



## Parent Handbook

2011

Please note most if not all of the information contained here is posted on the [CovingtonCritters.com](http://CovingtonCritters.com) website.

Summer 2011

Dear Covington Critter Families:

We are excited to welcome you to another season of swimming and fun! At Covington we look forward to the opportunity to provide an environment that encourages the growth and enjoyment of swimming to all of our families. The coaching staff continues to strive to improve the abilities of all of our swimmers at every practice. We would like to thank all of you for your continued support of our team. If this is your first year on Covington, welcome to our family!

This handbook might be small but it contains a lot of very important information regarding: team policies, practice times and dates, pool locations, and other swim team basics. Please take a few minutes to read over the information and share it with your swimmer(s).

If you have any questions about swim team not covered in this handbook, please feel free to contact us; talk with a coach after practice, or email us at [staff@covingtoncritters.com](mailto:staff@covingtoncritters.com) or check out our new and improved website at [www.covingtoncritters.com](http://www.covingtoncritters.com)!

We look forward to another season full of fun and learning!

Covington Swim Team Coaches

# Critters, Critters, Critters

## Covington Swim Team History & Philosophy

The Covington Swim Team is for youth and teens ages 4-18. The team has been in existence since 1968, with this summer marking Covington's 43rd anniversary of providing a summer program for youth. Our goals and philosophy have remained the same: to build a team of kids who love to swim, giving major emphasis to good stroke technique and good sportsmanship. Through our program, swimmers develop strong friendships on the team and a love of the sport. They respect the coaches, they want to improve, and they want to have fun.



For swimmers interested in continuing their swimming throughout the year, there are several local USS teams in the area, including PASA.

## Practice Group Descriptions

Covington Swim Team practices 5 days a week. We understand that children are often involved in several activities, and invite you to participate at your own level of commitment. Swimmers who attend more practices are more likely to progress faster... the more you come, the more you learn. We strongly recommend swimming at least three days per week during the summer.

Coaches place swimmers into appropriate practice groups, based on age and experience. Please respect the coaches' decisions about the best group for your child. Practices are listed by group and number. The number only indicates the time your swimmer is attending not their skill level in the group.

### **Critters (formerly Pre-comp)**

This group is for swimmers who are water safe with some lesson experience completed. While practice groups for Critters is numbered, the numbers only show which practice time your swimmer is attending, not skill level.

### **Red Group**

Red Group is for swimmers who are comfortable with the four strokes. Red Group is usually appropriate for swimmers with previous summer-league swimming experience. Although much of the time is spent on re-enforcing good stroke technique, improving starts and turns, workouts are also focused on building swimming endurance. Swimmers also learn more about reading the pace clock, workout sets, and racing starts and turns. Swimmers in Red Group are usually between 10 and 12 years old.

### **Practice Times**

Please check our website for current practice times. [www.covingtoncritters.com](http://www.covingtoncritters.com). Click on either Spring or Summer Session.

### **Attendance**

Covington Swim Team practices five days a week. We understand that children may be involved in several activities and invite you to participate at your own level of commitment. Each swimmer and their family, based on their interest in swimming and improving performance, determine attendance at practices. Swimmers who attend more practices will progress faster...the more you come, the more you learn. We strongly recommend swimming at least three days per week during the summer.

### **White Group**

White Group is for swimmers who are not yet comfortable with all four competitive strokes but CAN swim 25 yards freestyle & backstroke. Time is spent on learning good stroke technique, race starts, and swimming rules with games interspersed. White Group swimmers also begin learning swimming terminology (what's a 100 IM?) and how to read the pace clock. Swimmers in White Group are typically 7-9 years of age.

### **Black Group**

Black Group is based on training harder, yet maintaining fun as its main emphasis. Black Group swimmers swim all four strokes well, able to read the pace clock and swim on timed intervals. Swimmers know how to do legal racing starts and turns and use them in their training sets. It is strongly suggested that swimmers attend at least three workouts per week. Swimmers in Black Group usually are aged 13-18.

Black Group includes High School swimmers.

## Swim Meet Descriptions

The summer season consists of 5 dual meets, a relay meet, and a championship meet (please see schedule below). Dual meets generally last 4 hours. The relay meet lasts about 4 hours, and the championship meet can last up to 6 – 7 hours. For full details see the Types of Meets page at: [www.covingtoncritters.com/team/meet\\_info.html](http://www.covingtoncritters.com/team/meet_info.html)

## Summer Swim Meet Schedule

Covington Swim Team is part of the West Bay Swim League (WBSL), which includes: Covington, Ladera Recreation, Pacific Athletic Club, Menlo Park Mavericks, Redwood City Recreation, and Peninsula Covenant (PCA). For the summer meet schedule, please visit the Summer Session page at <http://www.covingtoncritters.com/summer/index.html>

## Swim Meet Procedures

### Items to Bring

Aside from your swimmer and lots of enthusiasm, here is a list of recommended items to bring to the meets. This may vary depending on weather, but a general motto for meets is "more is better."

- Swim suit, cap, and goggles
- Towels
- Sunscreen
- Sweatpants, sweatshirts, and hooded jackets (to keep swimmers warm!)
- Warm shoes, socks, slippers
- Sleeping bag or blankets
- Small, healthy snacks to munch on between events
- Cash for the snack bar
- Sharpie for writing events on arm

### When to Arrive

There's usually about 30 minutes of warm-up before each meet. It's a good idea to get there for warm-up so you can find out what you're swimming, meet other swimmers on your relay teams, and familiarize yourself with the pool. The coaches are usually pretty busy during warm-up, so it's best to find out ahead of time what sort of warm-up they want you to do. Please do not leave your child unattended.

## **What to do When You Arrive**

1. Check-in your swimmer.
2. Find out what events your swimmer is swimming in. Look for the boards at the pool, one for boys and one for girls. Each board has a listing by age group that lists each swimmer, the events, heats and lane number.
3. Write your swimmer's events, including heat and lane, on their hands. This helps everyone know when the swimmer is competing and prevents missing events.
4. Look for the rest of the team. We usually gather in one spot together.
5. Get psyched up and have great swims!!

## **Events, Heats, and Lanes**

The order of events in the summer league dual meets is always the same:

1. Medley Relays
2. Freestyle
3. Backstroke
4. Breaststroke
5. Butterfly
6. Freestyle Relays

There are six age groups - 6 and under, 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14 and 15 - 18, which are each separated by boys and girls. The youngest age groups swim first, boys first. So the first event is very young boys swimming Medley Relays, and the last is older girls swimming Freestyle Relays.

The easiest way to keep track of what's going on is to listen to the starter. He or she will always announce the event number for every race.

When there are more kids in a race than there are lanes in the pool, there are several heats. The first 6 kids are in the first heat; the second 6 kids are in the second heat, and so on.

## **Volunteering**

The Covington Critters Swim Team is an All-Volunteer Team. At practices and meets, the coaches are there to coach. Our swim team has survived because of amazing parent volunteers!! Please help continue this tradition by signing up to help out, opportunities are listed below. While the parents are handling the various volunteer jobs, the coaches can fulfill their role to organize the swimmers for each event and watch them swim so they can provide guidance to further enhance stroke technique. We ask parents to volunteer a minimum of 5 times throughout the summer season.

Parent volunteer jobs are easy to learn and do not require previous experience. Most parents can be trained at the swim meet just before their volunteer shift.

Most of our jobs require a short-term commitment at the swim meets themselves, but we have other behind-the-scenes jobs available for those for whom volunteering at a meet is absolutely impossible. If you can't volunteer at a meet, let us know so that we can help you fulfill the volunteer requirement. If you have a special skill you think we can use...please let us know!

Please check in with the Parent Volunteer Coordinator before your scheduled shift at each swim meet.

Whether you just can't wait to be a volunteer or are willing to help out, let us know.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

- Timers
- Runners
- Recorders
- Course Clerk
- Ribbon Writers
- Concessions Staffers
- Young Swimmer Assistance
- Hytek Meet and Data Entry
- Team Apparel
- Pre-meet shoppers
- Snack Bar Coordinator
- Pool Setup / Clean-up Assistants
- Social Event(s) Coordinator

## Communication

### E-mail

We are increasingly using e-mail instead of paper flyers to inform parents and families of swim team events. Please check the swim team roster to make sure we have a current e-mail address for your family. Typically, we send out at least 2 e-mails per week during the summer season so please check your e-mail frequently as well as our website. Our new website, [covingtoncritters.com](http://covingtoncritters.com) contains a lot of valuable information. We hope you will get in to the habit of checking it and we will do our best to update it often. We do not provide email links on our site to prevent spammers from obtaining the addresses. However, we do offer a series of forms to contact the appropriate person.

Team Staff:	<a href="mailto:staff@covingtoncritters.com">staff@covingtoncritters.com</a>
Coach Ben:	<a href="mailto:benbchung@gmail.com">benbchung@gmail.com</a>
Ali: (Registration):	<a href="mailto:alexandradesmond@gmail.com">alexandradesmond@gmail.com</a>
Maridee (General Info):	<a href="mailto:Maridee@sbcglobal.net">Maridee@sbcglobal.net</a>

### Announcement Board

We have white announcement boards at all of the swimming pools. Please check the board when you come to practices for the latest news and information.

### Family Folders

Each swim team family has a folder kept in the black boxes under the Announcement Board at Los Altos High School Pool. Please check your folder for important announcements and information. It is also a great spot for kids to find their ribbons after a swim meet!! It is a good idea to check your folder daily. Ribbons are usually available the day after a meet.

## **Equipment**

### **Suits**

Swimmers need racing suits of any color or pattern for practice. A close fitting suit is less distracting and faster to swim in. A team suit, which is black with red trim, is not required for meets, but the children enjoy having them. Please note; appropriate swimwear.

Team suits can be purchased at the beginning of the season through Palo Alto Toy and Sport Shop on Waverly in Palo Alto. (650) 328-6536. Be sure to mention that you are with Covington Swim Team.

### **Goggles**

Swimmers spend lots of time with their faces in the water, and we need them to keep their eyes open for safety and optimum learning. Most swimmers prefer to wear goggles. They'll need a pair of goggles that fit well. Palo Alto Sport Shop has a wide variety of sizes, colors, and styles and can help you find a pair that works best for you. (You may want to buy an extra pair, just in case.) Please put your swimmer's name on the goggle strap, if possible.

### **Parkas, Sweats, Towels**

Parkas are optional, but great for those really chilly days and for long meets. They're lined, warm, and dry quickly, reducing the need to bring ALL your towels to every meet. Extra towels and warm sweats are useful in addition to, or instead of, a parka. Names can be embroidered on the parkas. Sweats and towels should be clearly marked with the swimmer's name to avoid confusion.

Covington sweats are available for purchase at the pool.

## **Good Neighbor Policy**

We are borrowing Los Altos High School, Gunn High School and Terman Middle School for the spring/summer...and we would like to return in future years. As a Covington Swim Team member, your family is a guest in the neighborhood and at the schools. Please act accordingly.

The speed limit on all surrounding streets is 25 mph. Please watch for dogs, children, bicyclists, and distracted adults in parking lots. We share the school facilities with many other children's recreational programs and school groups.

Our ability to build a new pool in Los Altos in the future depends on our ability to be good neighbors. Please help so everyone learns Covington Swim Team is a responsible renter and neighbor!

## **Groups Associated with Covington Swim Team**

### **Los Altos Masters**

Los Altos Masters (LAM) was a Covington Pool-based adult swim team. LAM operated Covington Pool from 1987 until it was demolished in February 2001. Under contract with the City of Los Altos, LAM ran community, recreational aquatics programs including summer swimming lessons. LAM is a non-profit organization managed by an all-volunteer board of directors. LAM sponsors and provides business support for Covington Swim Team.

### **Los Altos Community Pool Foundation**

The Los Altos Community Pool Foundation has been asked to join forces with the Los Altos Community Center Redevelopment. As of last April the Los Altos City Council voted to include the pool(s). The approved pool complex includes 2 pools plus a water play area. The pool is just one aspect of the redevelopment.

The City currently plans to self-fund City Hall, which is part of the first phase. The 2011 bond will cover a new community center and police station. If the 2011 bond passes, the earliest we would break ground is mid-2012.

The second phase includes the pools, and new sports fields and playgrounds. The third phase includes a new library, while the final phase includes a new theater. For more information about the redevelopment go to: [www.losaltoscommunitycenter.org](http://www.losaltoscommunitycenter.org).

The funds raised for the Los Altos Community Pool will remain invested at LACF and will be used to support the project in a manner yet to be determined. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to swimming in 2015!