



DAHLGREN SHARKS

2025 Handbook

www.dahlgrensharks.com

Dahlgren Sharks 2025 Handbook

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A Word from Your President

Hello Sharks families:

Welcome former and new swimmers and their families to the summer swim season for the Dahlgren Sharks. My name is Debbie Thomason, I am the President of the Dahlgren Sharks. This is my sixth term as a Sharks board member. I previously worked the year-round swim meets for the Stingrays. I have three grandsons that swim for the Sharks. This year marks the 59 th season for the Sharks, and we are looking forward to many more seasons to come.

Last season was the fourth season that we have been back since Covid-19. I cannot wait to see how many more swimmers join us for this upcoming season. So, if you know of anyone who is interested in swimming, please feel free to tell them to come and be a part of the Shark's family.

Last season we had Andrew Green as our head coach, he will not be returning as the Sharks head coach, he will be missed. However, we wish him all the best in his future endeavors. This season the swim team will be led by a new head coach, someone that was brand new to the team as well as our coaching staff last season, Katelyn Spuches. She comes to our team with an abundance of swimming knowledge. She swam for other RSL teams in the area. She also swam for the Stingrays, as well as King George Foxes. Her first season with us was last summer, she worked as an assistant coach. She is currently a Sophomore at Randolph College. She is excited to be leading the Sharks this upcoming season. We would also like to welcome back Jake Brown (Assistant Coach), this will be his second season coaching the team. He has been a member of this team since 2018, and now swims for KGHS as well as Swim RVA Rapids. We would like to announce two newcomer coaches to the team, Alexis Burke (Assistant Coach), and Patrick McGarrity (Assistant Coach). Last season Alexis was a JV coach for the team, this will be her second season with the Sharks. Patrick comes to the coaching staff with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Please join me and the rest of the board in welcoming Katelyn and the assistant coaches back to our Sharks family this season.

As with every season we will need parents to step up to the plate and volunteer. Also, anyone who is interested in any training position should know that there will be online training available starting at the beginning of May. For those of you that are interested in volunteering to support the team, you will be made aware of the precautions set forth by RSL. Training sessions will be available, and information will be made available on the website within the next few weeks. RSL is implementing safety precautions for every position that needs to be filled by volunteers. Show your children that you support their passion for swimming! The board and coaches are excited about the upcoming season!

If anyone has any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to any board member for answers. Our contact information can be found within the handbook packet and on the website.

Looking forward to a fun season – GO SHARKS!!

Sincerely,

Debbie Thomason

Dahlgren Sharks President



Coach's Letter

Coming soon!

Welcome

The primary goal and purpose of the Dahlgren Sharks Swim Team is to make the summer swim season a positive experience for the swimmers. The team is an educational organization. The second goal is to teach and improve swimming skills, conditioning and knowledge of the sport. We hope that every swimmer develops and improves sportsmanship, team spirit, conditioning and stroke skills.

As many children as possible swim in regular dual meets to allow them the opportunity to qualify for Finals. We look forward to having another winning season. Welcome to the Dahlgren Sharks 2025!

For New Swim Team Families

Welcome to the wonderful world of swimming. Now what?

Now, get involved. Swim meets require many parent volunteers to assist in preparing, running and cleaning up. Each family needs to have a least one adult participate in an assignment at each meet. Your help is needed to ensure the team grows and prospers. At times, it will seem as though the swim meet will go on forever; however, if you are involved as a parent volunteer, time will fly. You will also gain a better understanding of the sport in which your child is involved. There are volunteer positions available for new swim team parents having little or no previous swim team experience. Some of these positions are timers, runners, concessions, score keeping, ribbon writing and clerk of course. For position descriptions, see pages 9-10. The Rappahannock Swim League offers clinics for those positions that require training and certification. You can find dates and locations of the clinics on the RSL website at www.rslswimming.com.

A swim meet is structured so that swimmers of similar ages compete against each other. Events are made up of the following swimming strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, individual medley (IM) and relays. "Seeding" is the process of placing individual swimmers in "heats" within an event. All heats are seeded based upon the swimmers' times in that particular event. In other words, your child will be swimming against other children of similar ability.

Swim Gear

Team suits are **not** mandatory. The team recommends Black and Purple color schemes for suits.

The following rules apply for suits:

5.2. Swimmers shall not be permitted to compete in attire (suits and caps) that includes the name or logo of any team other than the RSL team for which they are competing with the exception of a brand logo smaller than 4.65 square inches.

5.2.1. Swimmers may not wear a bathing suit with any ties, zippers, or other fastening system.

5.2.2. Swimmers may be allowed to wear undergarments, a rashguard and/or shorts over or under their swimwear for modesty purposes.

Sizing for swimsuits, for those new to team swimming (or just because your athletes keeps growing!) will occur at our in person registrations.

Fees and Registration Process

Swimmer fees are as follows:

1 st swimmer -	\$155.00
2 nd swimmer -	\$130.00
3 rd swimmer -	\$105.00
4 th swimmer -	\$85.00
5 th + swimmer -	\$60.00 each

(includes swim cap, t-shirt, RSL insurance)

All NEW Sharks Participants: You can register in-person or online. But you need to bring your Swimmer(s) to the King George YMCA on either of the designated registration days as they will have to undergo a swimming assessment with the Shark's Coaches. See website for dates/times. It is recommended that you don't pay until your swimmers are evaluated by the coaches. Please feel free to show up if you are unsure of your child's abilities. While we aren't a learn to swim program for non swimmers, we don't expect your child(ren) to already know the 4 strokes.

There will be a "CAP" placed on all age levels. What this means is that only 18 swimmers per gender per age category will be allowed to register. This will be done on a First Come First Served basis. Those that miss out on registration due to the categories being filled, will be placed on a waiting list. This "CAP" has been instituted to ensure fairness to all of the swimmers within their age category to allow each swimmer the opportunity to be able to swim multiple events. The age categories are as follows:

6& under	Male (18)	Female (18)
7/8	Male (18)	Female (18)
9/10	Male (18)	Female (18)
11/12	Male (18)	Female (18)
13/14	Male (18)	Female (18)
15-18	Male (18)	Female (18)

Age Qualification:

The age group in which a competitor swims will be determined by his/her age as of June 1st of the current swim year. For example, a competitor who turns 19 after the June 1st cut off is still eligible to swim for that season.

Refund Policy:

Refunds will be provided, on a prorated basis, up to the 1st meet. If a swimmer withdraws after the 1st meet, all funds are forfeited.

Team Rules

**OUR GOAL IS TO SHOW A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, SWIM OUR BEST
AND HAVE FUN!**

1. To ensure a safe environment, all rules of the Aquatics Center must be followed.
2. Show respect to all swimmers and coaches.
3. Listen and follow all coaches' directions.
4. DO NOT leave the pool without permission from one of the coaches unless your practice session has ended.
5. Swimmers are not excused from practice (which means do not leave the pool deck) until dismissed by one of the coaches. (Swimmers not accompanied by a parent, need a note to leave practice early.)
6. DO NOT leave trash lying around (pick up after yourself) in the locker room, practice area and during all meets (both home and away).
7. Bring healthy snacks and water bottles to practice and meets.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. SHOW RESPECT and ALWAYS demonstrate good sportsmanship, especially at dual meets.
2. It is recommended that all swimmers and coaches find someone from the other team and wish them good luck.
3. Coaches will lead cheers before each meet. Swimmers are encouraged to participate and to cheer for their teammates during dual meets.

AND.....

Unkind or disrespectful behavior at practices or dual meets is UNACCEPTABLE and will be dealt with immediately.

FINALLY.....



**SMILE AND HAVE FUN!!
Family Participation**

It takes at least 60 parent volunteers to successfully conduct a swim meet at home (including first and second half). We require all parents, new and experienced alike, to sign up and help conduct the meets. To handle all the work that must be done at each meet, it is MANDATORY that at least one parent of each family participate at least six times throughout the season. Each half counts as a single participant time slot.

We will be using an electronic sign-up form that is available at the Dahlgren Sharks' website under events (www.dahlgrensharks.com).

If a person is not able to support an event that they have signed up for, they are responsible for finding a replacement and then notifying the current Dahlgren Sharks Secretary. Exceptions will be made for extenuating circumstances. Special arrangements are made so that parents can break free to watch their children compete.

To reiterate, Participation is MANDATORY.

Please remember that successful, efficient meets depend on all parents helping throughout the swim season. Please pitch in as best you can!

Descriptions of Positions for Swim Meets

***Referee:** Responsible for the meet. No disqualifications are valid until the referee signs the DQ form. All disputes are immediately referred to the referee for final resolution.

***Starter:** Issues the starting commands to the swimmers. The starter will use a strobe light with a horn.

***Stroke and Turn Judges:** Ensure each swimmer executes turns and swims each stroke in accordance with league rules.

***Head Timer:** Ensure all lanes have the correct number of timers present and that they all have stop watches, pencils and clipboards. Reviews all rules and policies with volunteer timers prior to the meet start time. Acts as a back-up to volunteer timer when/if a malfunction occurs. Has the authority to replace any volunteer timer if a continual problem occurs with lack of attention or major askew in time with fellow timers of that lane.

Timers: Use stop watches to time individual swimmers in a race. Ensure the correct swimmer is in the correct lane for the event and record the swimmers' times on cards picked up by the runner. Remember, if you are using the strobe start system, timers must look for the light and not listen for the sound of the horn.

Runners: Carry event cards from each swimmer to the timers and from the timer to the scorekeepers.

***Head Clerk of Course:** Assign swimmers to lanes and give them their event cards before each event. The only exception is relays which are provided by the Head Coach.

Clerk of Course Team Members: Assist the Head Clerk of Course with ordering swimmers in accordance with event, heat and lane.

Announcer: Announce events to the crowd during the meet. Announce the score, swimmers needing to report to the Clerk of Course and any other special announcements.

***Scorekeeper:** Responsible for the data aspects of the meet. Including working with the coaches to get entries seeded for the meets. Processing referee and judge actions. Providing award labels and everything else related to data.

Ribbon Writers: Put winners' name labels onto their ribbons.

Food Concessions: Sell pizza, candy, snow cones and other sundries. Set-up and clean-up will be required for this.

Set-up/Clean-up: Before home meets, assist with setting up equipment (chairs, Clerk of Course section, Announcer section, Scorer section, etc.). After home meets, ensure we leave the pool deck clean.

**These positions require training and information may be found at www.rslswimming.com*

There is also some work to be done keeping the team running smoothly during the season. Parent participation is needed in organizing concessions, fundraising, special events and other tasks between meets. We will need parent representation at Executive Board meetings. There is room for you to get involved in many ways. Contact any current Board member to offer services between swim meets.

We need ALL parents to volunteer to ensure successful swim meets for our children. Dahlgren Sharks swim meets are a Hands-On Activity!!!!

2025 Officials' Clinics

Details will be forthcoming. Online training exists for ALL positions this season. Refer to the Rappahannock Swim League website: <https://rsl.swimtopia.com/training> for dates, locations and times of clinics.

Meet Schedule

American Division

Date	Start Time	Home	Visitor
Wednesday, June 11 th	6pm	Leeland Express	Dahlgren
Wednesday, June 18 th	6pm	Dahlgren	Fox Point
Thursday, June 26 th	6pm	Lake of the Woods	Dahlgren
Wednesday, July 2 nd	6pm	Dahlgren	Lee's Hill
Thursday, July 9 th	6pm	Dahlgren	Aquia Harbour
Monday, July 16 th	6pm	Austin Ridge	Dahlgren
Saturday, July 22 th	7:45am	Finals	

Copies of these schedules will be posted on the Sharks website

For 6:00pm meet starts, swimmers should be at the pool at 4:30pm for home meets and 4:45pm for away meets. For 5:00pm meet starts, swimmers should be at the pool at 3:30pm for home meets and 3:45pm for away meets.

Changing into or out of swimsuits on the pool deck is NOT permitted.

Cancellation of Meets

Meets are not normally cancelled unless there are ongoing lightning and thunderstorms. RSL rules state, "once a meet is suspended due to adverse weather conditions, the meet should be rescheduled when cumulative weather delays exceed one (1) hour. Such a decision should not be made prior to 7:30pm. A suspended meet cannot be restarted after 10:00pm". Until word is given that the meet has been cancelled, please wait in your cars. If the meet is cancelled, the policy for the Sharks home meets is that the meet will recommence the following evening.

Occasionally, we get caught when a thunderstorm causes RSL officials to cancel a meet while we are in our cars on the way to the meet. We will do our best to get on the phone as early as possible if this happens.

RSL Teams

(directions to pools are available on each site)

Battlefield Division

[Curtis Park Seahawks](#)

[Fawn Lake Fliers](#)

[Hampton Oaks Hurricanes](#)

[Massad YMCA Marlins](#)

[Spotswood Sea Serpents](#)

[Woodland Wahoos](#)

Patriot Division

[Aquia Harbour Dolphins](#)

[Austin Ridge Rapids](#)

[Dahlgren Sharks](#) ← US!

[Fox Point Fintastics](#)

[Lake of the Woods Barracudas](#)

[Lee's Hill Lightning](#)

[Leeland Station Express](#)

American Division

[Caroline Orcas](#)

[Chancellor Blue Dolphins](#)

[Fredericksburg Country Club Buccaneers](#)

[Ferry Farm Flying Fish](#)

[Hopyard Hammerheads](#)

[Spotsylvania Dragons](#)

National Division

[College Heights Gators](#)

[Eden Estates Eels](#)

[Grafton Dolphins](#)

[Idlewild Tidal Waves](#)

[Lake Wilderness Torpedoes](#)

[Salem Fields Sunfish](#)

Contacts

Our team website www.dahlgrensharks.com is a great source for documents, communications and schedule updates. Feel free to ask any board member for any documents or information you need.

A communication file box with a folder for each family is located at the pool. Parents and swimmers are requested to check this box daily.

A bulletin board is located next to the main entrance and exit of the pool deck for Sharks meet information. If your child will not be available to attend a particular meet, please put their name on that meet sheet located on this bulletin board.

Below is a contact list of the Dahlgren Sharks swim team Executive Board members, RSL Representative, Head Coach and Aquatics Director. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact any board member or the Head Coach.

Important Dahlgren Sharks Contact Information

President	Debbie Thomason	540-645-0662	debbie.r.thomason@gmail.com
Vice President	Erin Wood		erin@dahlgrensharks.com
Treasurer	Nathan Morrow	540-538-2243	nathan@dahlgrensharks.com
Secretary	Jen Desantis	804-366-8445	
RSL Representative	Heather Brown	540-990-3933	hbrown3547@gmail.com
Head Coach	Katelyn Spuchesi		
YMCA Aquatics Director	Clara Lamoy	Office: 540-775-9622	clamoy@family-ymca.org

Swim Practices

From May 27th – July 25th – Monday through Friday

<u>Practice Group</u>	<u>Practice Time</u>
Level 3 (ages 13-18)	8:00-9:15 am
Level 2 (ages 9-12)	9:05-10:15 am
Level 1 (ages 5-8)	10:05-11:00 am

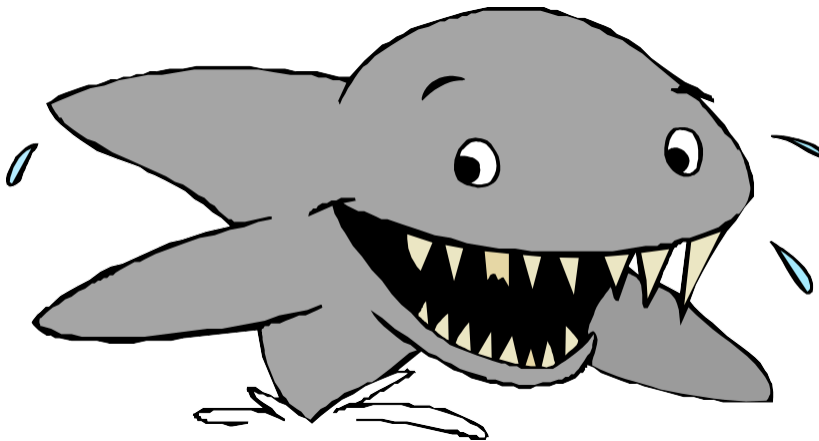
No practice the day after an away meet.

Fun practice the day after a home meet at the following times:

- ages 11 and over – 9:00am-10:00am
- ages 10 and under – 10:00am-11:00am

No practice on July 4th.

The head coach may adjust practice times throughout the season.



Fundraising

Concession Stand

As part of our fundraising efforts each year, we provide a concession stand during the home dual meets which is staffed by parent volunteers. We will ask for donations of drinks, chips, etc.

RSL Fundraiser

The RSL sells a program for finals every year. There is ad space in the program to recognize your swimmer and for businesses to advertise. We encourage team members to seek local businesses for participation in this fundraiser.

Corporate Sponsorship

We are a 501(c)3 non profit. If you know of any businesses that would like to support the team, please let us know. We have a sponsorship flier you can share with the business. Those donations help keep the costs of running our program lower and are welcome.