



# Veterans Park Swim Team

## "Home of the Marlins"

Veterans Park Parents and Coaches:

July 12, 2009

The Veterans Park Swim Team (VPST) has a long history of preparing children to swim in competitive recreational swimming environments. Opportunities for additional participation are increasing each year as teams in the Prince William Swim League add events to the summer league schedule. VPST has also encouraged continuation in swimming programs during the off-season. Swimming is growing and we must prepare our swimmers for future enjoyment and success at increasing levels of competitive and recreational swimming. Swimming is also one of the few sports you can participate in long into your golden years. It also gives you confidence in other water related activities such as fishing, boating and ocean recreation.

With the successful recruiting of this past year, our team is at its highest numbers in many years. Our numbers for the last several years have been approximately 110 – 120 registered swimmers with an average of 90 competing on a weekly basis. Our numbers this year are 25% above our historic average and we are working very hard to accommodate this growth and the wide range of skill abilities of our swimmers. The coaches have worked several different practice schedules to come up with the best compromise for conducting as much water training as possible. We have committed to 2 full time coaches at 8 & Under through 12 years old and are seeing success in the low numbers of disqualifications. We also have the largest group of 13 – 18 year olds in a long time.

We have also had significant growth in our Marlins in Training (MIT) Developmental Program to a point that we must now define our goals for this program as well as link it to our overall age group programs. We have a total of four coaches dedicated to this program, two additional parent volunteers as well as supervision by our Vice President, Heather Carroll and a volunteer parent coordinator, Deatrice Cook. I am also very encouraged that, in a very short amount of time, we have MITs competing successfully in swim meets.

The MIT program is defined in our current 2009 Marlins Handbook, posted on our website, as:

“Marlins-In-Training is a developmental program designed to prepare younger or inexperienced swimmers for the regular, competition, swim team. Each swimmer will focus on Freestyle and backstroke first under the direction of the coaches. The coaches will guide the swimmers on proper body positioning, kicking, breathing, and streamlining.

**The M.I.T. program is not intended to replace swim lessons.** This program merely builds on a swimmer’s experience in the water so that they can move up to their normal age group level. Each swimmer must be comfortable with submerging underwater and has the ability to swim/float without the use of floatation devices (i.e. water wings). Swimmers can swim at regular swim meets as soon as they have the interest and can swim freestyle, at least, across the pool with little or no stopping. The coaches and the Board will discuss with the swimmer’s parents the readiness of the swimmer before entering him/her into a swim meet. M.I.T. swimmers are part of the Veterans Park Marlins Swim Team and will have practice during the normal swim team practice dates and times; however they are exempt from attending Friday morning practices. The swimmers can and will take part in all swim team activities, including Swim-A-Lap, Spirit Week, and the end of season banquet and pool party. Each M.I.T swimmer will receive a trophy at the banquet and coaches will nominate swimmers from this group for a Coaches Award and a Most Improved trophy.”

A quick assessment of the MIT program indicates that we are **not fully implementing** some of the items in the handbook and that some are **unreasonable** for implementation. Therefore, I took the action, with the concurrence of the VPST Board, to redefine the MIT Program and link it to the rest of our swimming programs. This redefined VPST Swimming program was provided to the board members, coaches and selected parents for comment. This version represents comments received and is now provided to the members for additional comments.

The board and coaches will make a 2010 implementation decision during the off-season. If you need additional information or have comments or questions on our swimming program definitions, contact Team President Ross Schwalm at 571-330-2745 or at [rhschwalm@verizon.net](mailto:rhschwalm@verizon.net).

Very Respectfully, Ross Schwalm

## **PROPOSED REDEFINITION OF THE MIT PROGRAM**

**The program is redefined by a new Handbook Summary description and a set of tables that lays out the program parameters. This redefinition is submitted for comment to the members of the team as of 30 June 2009.**

### Marlins in Training (MIT) Development Program Summary Definition

Marlins-In-Training (MIT) is a developmental program designed to prepare young and / or inexperienced swimmers for the advancement to an appropriate age group on the swim team. MIT Swimmers will be assigned to training groups based upon age, after initial skill survey at registration and during the first week of practice. Each MIT training group will have an individual coach that will conduct the skill surveys and train the swimmers as defined for each age group. Children not ready for swim training will be asked to leave the program and will be refunded registration fees minus any external fees already paid by the team (i.e. league fee, Park Authority Fee, insurance fee). The focus is on teaching beginning swimming skills that lead to successful completion of freestyle and backstroke events. The coaches will guide the swimmers on water entry/exit, proper body positioning, kicking, breathing, and streamlining. Each swimmer will train on beginner stroke, elementary backstroke and use of a life vest. Also, swimmers will be trained to be comfortable with submerging underwater and to achieve the ability to swim/float without the use of a life vest. Coaches will coordinate skill tests with the appropriate age group coaches for assignment to the team age groups.

**The MIT program is not intended to replace swim lessons.** This program merely builds on a swimmer's experience in the water so that they can advance to their age group level. MIT swimmers can swim at regular season swim meets as soon as they have the interest and ability to swim freestyle for 25 meters across the pool with little or no stopping. The MIT coaches, along with the appropriate age group coach, will conduct skill tests on Monday and Tuesday nights to determine readiness for swim meet events. The coaches will discuss with the swimmer's parents the readiness of the swimmer before entering him/her into a swim meet. MIT swimmers are part of the Veterans Park Marlins Swim Team and will have practice during the normal swim team practice dates and times; however they are exempt from attending Friday morning practices. The swimmers can take part in all swim team activities, including team photo, Spirit Week, Divisional meet if qualified, the end of season banquet and pool party. Each MIT swimmer will receive a trophy at the banquet and coaches will nominate swimmers from this group for a Coaches Award and a Most Improved Award.

### Marlins In Training (MIT) Developmental Program

Entry Description	Age & 2010 Cost	Initial Survey at Registration	Initial Skill Test at first practice	Initial Group Assignment	Training	Goals	Meet Entry Test (MET) Age Group Assignment Test (AGAT)
Family Member of existing registered swimmer	4 \$100 per season	1. Preschool Attendance 2. Readiness to sit & listen 3. Potty Trained	Dry Land - Simon says, Follow the leader Pool - walk in entry to the pool up to chin, holding a kick board	1 hour per night X 4 nights per week with no more than 6 swimmers per coach.  Swimmer will remain in this group for entire season.	Water Safety, Feet first entry, underwater swim, beginner stroke, elementary backstroke floating, kicking, life vest use	Beginner Stroke – 25 M EBKS – 25 M Exit pool unaided	MET - Demonstrate entry and stroke during practice in competition lane No AGAT
New to Swim Team	5-6 \$100 per season	1. Preschool or Kindergarten Attendance 2. Readiness to sit & listen 3. Point out basic body parts	Dry Land - Simon Says, Head & Shoulders, Knees and Toes, Follow the Leader Pool - walk in entry to the pool up to chin, holding a kick board	1 hour per night X 4 nights per week with no more than 6 swimmers per coach.  Swimmer will remain in this group for entire season.	Water Safety, Feet first entry, underwater swim, beginner stroke, elementary backstroke floating, kicking, life vest use, diving	Beginner Stroke – 25 M EBKS – 25 M Exit pool unaided, racing dive entry	MET- Demonstrate entry and stroke during practice in competition lane No AGAT

### Marlins In Training (MIT) Developmental Program

Entry Description	Age & 2010 Cost	Initial Survey at Registration	Initial Skill Test at first practice	Initial Group Assignment	Training	Goals	Meet Entry Test (MET) Age Group Assignment Test (AGAT)
Beginning Competitive Swimmer 1	7-8 \$120 per season	1. Swim Lesson History 2. Readiness to sit & listen 3. Other sports participation	Dry Land – Basic Stretching, Sitting Toe touch Pool - walk in entry to the pool up to chin, holding a kick board, hold breath for 5 seconds	2 hours per night X 4 nights per week with no more than 10 swimmers per coach.  Swimmer may move to 8 & U group during the season.	All 5-6 skills, freestyle (front crawl), backstroke (back crawl), stroke breathing	Freestyle – 25 M Backstroke – 25 M Racing starts	MET- Demonstrate entry and stroke during practice in competition lane AGAT - 8 & U coach observes MET and agrees to promotion
Beginning Competitive Swimmer 2	9-14 \$120 per season	1. Swim Lesson History 2. Other sports participation	Dry Land – Basic Stretching, Sitting Toe Touch, Basic calisthenics Pool - walk in entry to the pool up to chin, holding a kick board, hold breath for 10 seconds	2 hours per night X 4 nights per week with no more than 10 swimmers per coach.  Swimmer may move to appropriate group during the season.	All Beginning Competitive Swimmer skills, introduction to flip turns	Freestyle – 50 M Backstroke – 50 M Racing starts	MET - Demonstrate entry and stroke during practice in competition lane AGAT - AG coach observes MET and agrees to promotion

### VPST Age Group Swimming Program

Entry Description	Age & 2010 Cost	Initial Survey at Registration	Initial Skill Test at first practice	Initial Group Assignment	Training	Goals	Meet Entry Test (MET)
8 & U	7-8  \$120 per season	1. Successful completion of MIT Program or Swim Lesson programs 2. Readiness to sit & listen 3. Other sports participation	Dry Land – Basic Stretching, Sitting Toe touch Pool - entry into the pool by jumping and recovering from being submerged to a safe location, using a kick board to travel 25 Meters, hold breath underwater for 5 seconds	2 hours per day X 5 nights/days per week with no more than 30 swimmers. 2 coaches are assigned. Swimmers may be assigned to MIT 7 – 8 group for skill development. Swimmers may swim in 9 – 10 IM or practice with the 9 – 10 group based upon skills.	Freestyle (front crawl), Backstroke (back crawl), Breaststroke, Butterfly, stroke breathing	Freestyle – 25 M Backstroke – 25 M, Breaststroke 25 M, Butterfly – 25 M, Racing starts	MET- Demonstrate entry and stroke during practice in competition lane

### VPST Age Group Swimming Program

Entry Description	Age & 2010 Cost	Initial Survey at Registration	Initial Skill Test at first practice	Initial Group Assignment	Training	Goals	Meet Entry Test (MET)
9 - 10	9-10  \$120 per season	1. Swim Lesson or Swim team History 2. Other sports participation	All 7-8 skills, hold breath underwater for 10 seconds	2 hours per day X 5 nights/days per week with no more than 30 swimmers. 2 coaches are assigned. Swimmers may practice with the 11-12 group.	All 8&U strokes, flip turns, and Individual Medley. Swimmers may be assigned to MIT 9-14 group	Freestyle – 50 M Backstroke – 50 M Breaststroke 50 M, Butterfly – 25 M, IM – 100M, Racing starts	MET - Demonstrate entry and stroke during practice in competition lane
11-12	11-12  \$120 per season	Same as 9-10	All 9-10 skills	2 hours per day X 5 nights/days per week with no more than 30 swimmers. 2 coaches are assigned. Swimmers may practice with the 13-14 group.	All 9-10 strokes, flip turns, and Individual Medley. Swimmers may be assigned to MIT 9-14 group	Freestyle – 50 M Backstroke – 50 M Breaststroke 50 M, Butterfly – 50 M, IM – 100M, Racing starts	MET - Demonstrate entry and stroke during practice in competition lane
High School Swimmers	13–18 \$80 per season	Same as 9 -10	All 5 strokes	Same as 11 –12 1 coach assigned	Same as 11 – 12 with refinement	HS Strength, Speed and Technique	Same as 11-12

VPST Coaching Structure Summary

<b>4 - 6</b>	<b>7 - 8</b>	<b>9 - 10</b>	<b>11 - 12</b>	<b>13 - 18</b>
<b>Lead Coach</b>	<b>Lead Coach</b>	<b>Lead Coach</b>	<b>Lead Coach</b>	<b>Lead Coach</b>
	Assistant Coach	Assistant Coach	Assistant Coach	<i>Stroke Technician</i>
<i>MIT coach (1 per 6 as required)</i>	<i>MIT coach (1 per 10 as required)</i>	<i>MIT coach (1 per 10 as required)</i>	<i>MIT coach (1 per 10 as required)</i>	<i>MIT coach (1 per 10 as required)</i>

All Lead coaches will report to Board President or Vice President. Head coach position can be any one of the lead coaches. Lead coaches are paid positions. Lead coaches supervise and guide Assistant and MIT coaches.

Assistant coaches are anticipated for 3 age groups but may not be hired if groups are less than 15 swimmers. Assistant coaches are paid positions. Assistant coaches report to their respective lead coach for specific duties.

*MIT coaches* are assigned based upon the initial registration survey. All MIT coaches are optional positions and may be paid or volunteer positions. MIT coaches report to their respective Lead coach for specific duties.

*Stroke Technician* is an optional position that may be hired to specifically work with small groups on stroke improvement.