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What is SDMS?

South Des Moines Swimming (SDMS) is a 501c3 non-profit swim club. The official club name is South Des Moines Swim Club. But only four letters are used for the USA Swimming team code, so we dropped the "C". The club mascot is a Seahawk.

Why was SDMS created?

The club team was created to expand the options available to Southside swimming families. In order to be a USA team, you have to be a standalone organization. The club team goal is still to provide quality swim programs to the Southside of Des Moines, Norwalk and Carlisle.

Why is the club team limited to South Des Moines, Norwalk & Carlisle?

This club team is designed to strength Southside swimming so the team is limited to swimmers who live in the Lincoln High School District (or will swim for Lincoln from an outlying community).

Most of the SDMS coaches are Lincoln coaches and/or swim alums. They are trying to build high school teams that break school records, qualify for the Iowa state swim meets, win repeatedly in the Metro Conference and more. In other words, they want to create lasting memories for the athletes who are or will be part of Lincoln Swimming.

There are swimming programs available in all areas of town should a swimmer live in another part of the city.

Why do Carlisle and Norwalk swim with this team?

Carlisle and Norwalk students swim at Lincoln High School if they'd like to participate in a school-based team (middle school or high school). To help build friendships, a sense of community and companionship, we encourage swimmers from these communities to join the club team early. That way they'll be very familiar with their teammates, coaches and the facilities when joining the school team.

How is SDMS affiliated with Lincoln Swimming?

South Des Moines Swimming (SDMS) is the endorsed club team for Lincoln Swimming. It's why the swim programs offered by SDMS are only available to families within the communities Lincoln Swimming serves.

What is the difference between Club Swimming, USA Swimming and Middle School Swimming?

Club Swimming: For athletes' age 5-18, this is the general competitive swimming option. The team participates in club swim meets each summer and winter like the *Seahawk Sprint Classic* and the *SDMS Masters of Distance* meet. During club meets, athletes compete by age and sex groups.

USA Swimming: For Advanced club swimmers, we offer the opportunity to swim at USA meets. These swimmers pay an annual membership to USA Swimming and some extra meet fees to participate at meets all over Iowa and the Midwest.

Middle School Swimming: For middle school age swimmers (6th-8th grade), there is a short four week season for girls and boys offered through Lincoln High School. All Des Moines high schools offer middle school programs. Per DMPS policy, each MS athlete pays \$10 to the district at the start of their middle school season to participate in meets, including the City Championship Meet. The MS girls season is in the fall and the MS boys season is in the winter.

How much does it cost to be on the team each season?

It depends on three factors: your child's skill level, which season (summer or winter) and how you paid (year-round or seasonally). Summer season is \$150/swimmer for the Novice and Intermediate levels and \$180 for Advanced level. Winter season is \$255/swimmer for Novice and Intermediate and \$285/swimmer for the Advanced level.

For more details about the cost, please visit www.shop.southdmswimming.com. If you compare SDMS fees to other USA Swim teams, you'll find most charge \$800-\$1500/swimmer annually.

Why is the winter season more expensive than the summer one?

The winter season (17 weeks) is 2.5 times as long as the summer season (7 weeks). But SDMS only charges approximately \$100 extra for the longer season.

How is my registration fee used?

On team expenses. Our biggest expense is payroll. Unlike many teams around Des Moines, with two or three coaches on staff, SDMS has 6-10 any given season. This allows for more tailored instruction and a better practice environment, but it also costs more money. The fees are also used to pay team expenses like pool use fees, insurance, meet expenses, ribbons, medals, the online shop, team website, team t-shirts and more.

Our Novice and Intermediate swimmers spend approximately 100 hours in the water each year. Even without the 15% year-round discount, that's only about \$4/hour. The Advanced swimmers spend around 120 hours in the pool (not including the two swim camps) and pay even less per hour to be in the water.

How are practices divided?

Practices are broken into four categories: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced and Middle School Elite. To be a novice swimmer, your child needs to be able to swim 25 yards (one length) without stopping. For all other practice slots, there are minimum time standards that need to be met to sign up for that practice level. These standards can be found within the item description for [the online store](#). Middle School Elite practices are by invitation only.

How many times a week is practice?

It depends on the season and practice level.

Novice and Intermediate swimmers practice four days/week in the summer and three days/week in the winter. Advanced swimmers practice five days/week in the summer and four days/week in the winter. Middle School Elite swimmers practice five days/week during both seasons.

Each season, you can pick your practice time slot since options are available for each level. However, these slots are capped to prevent over-crowding so early registration is recommended.

When and where is practice held?

Practices are held at Lincoln High School. The times and dates vary depending on the season (summer or winter). But generally, summer practices have a morning and an evening slot. Winter practices have two evening slots and Saturday practices. For specific practice days, please refer to [the online shop](#).

Does my child have to be at all the practices each week?

No. We understand that kids are involved in many activities and these schedules may conflict. It's just one reason, SDMS tries to keep registration fees as low as possible to cover team expenses. If your child needs to miss a practice, that is fine. You can also plan on only coming twice per week, if needed.

BUT, be sure to check and read your emails frequently so you don't miss out on online meet sign-ups or other important information. Because SDMS organizes almost 200 swimmers in a computer program (HyTek) for events and times, we can't sign-up athletes for events after the deadline has passed.

How are club swimming meets organized?

Club swim meets (and USA meets) are organized first by event, then by age and sex. All kids will receive event numbers that correspond to what they are swimming. We recommend writing their event numbers on their hand so it is easier for them to remember.

We will email this list out to all parents in advance of a swim meet, so you will have them. Kids can sit in the stands with parents and can leave the meet when their last event is done. They do not need to wait until the last event if they are not swimming in events at the end.

How long do swim meets last?

Club meets last around 2.5 hours, plus about 30 minutes for warm-ups. Middle school meets usually last less than an hour. USA meets are a full weekend event. Regardless of the meet, kids need to be ready to report to the clerk of course at the pool when they see that their event is being called.

What is the Gold Team? Or the Gray Team?

These are "sub-teams" used to make the inter-squad club meets for fun and competitive. We divide our team into two parts, a Gold team and a Gray team so they can compete for bragging rights during the club season. We try to divide the teams evenly across ability, age and sex to make the races and final outcome exciting.

Not every club meet is competition between Gray and Gold though. Other meets pit the age-groups against each other and still others boys vs. girls. It's all about having some fun while improving times.

Are swim meets scored?

Club meets are only scored for the Gray vs. Gold meets. Middle school swim meets are not scored. USA meets and Midwest Regionals are scored.

Are there awards or ribbons for swim meets?

Yes, the top six finishers in each race get a place ribbon. Please remember, it is the top 6 overall, not just the top six for your child's heat. So, if we have 20 eight year old girls swimming the 25 free, only the top 6 get a place ribbon. However, SDMS does offer participation ribbons as well.

How do we sign up to compete in swim meets?

Visit www.southdmswimming.com and click the “Swim Meet Sign-Up” button on the right-hand side of the page. You will sign up your child online about a week in advance of the meet. If the meet is on a Monday, we post the sign-up button the previous Monday. The last day to sign up will be the Thursday before the meet. We always have the sign-up timeframes for each meet of the season posted within the sign-up page so you can confirm you are signing up for the right meet.

Middle School swimmers will need to visit www.railswimming.com and click the “MS Meet Sign-up” button to sign-up for middle school meets. These meets will have different sign-up timeframes as noted on the respective sign-up pages.

Note: USA swim meet sign-ups work a little differently. Keep an eye on your email for USA meet specifics.

Please remember, we can't add events or athletes the day of the meet regardless of type.

What events does my child swim?

Your child can swim a maximum of four events in one meet. This can be three individual races and 1 relay or 2 individual races and 2 relays. You work with your child to decide their individual races. If you're new, the short distance Freestyle events are great starting point. You can also ask your child's coach if you have questions.

Coaches assign relays based on who's signed up for the meet each week. If you're new, you'll understand the process much better after the first meet. It's fairly easy to complete and doesn't waste valuable practice time. Instead, you do it online from the comfort of your home!

Remember, club meets are set up by age so be sure to pick the right sign-up form online.

How do you decide what lane my child swims in at meets?

For all club meets, we “seed” the meet by age-group so a swimmer will be racing next to someone with a time close to their own. We do intermix sexes during the meet to provide the best races for all swimmers. However, ribbons are awarded by age and sex.

USA meets are much bigger than the SDMS club meets and are seeded by age and sex.

Middle school meets have random lane assignments. In each heat, the meet host tries to have the same number of Rails/SDMS swimmers vs. our opponents.

How do parents sign up to help at meets?

We are always in need of some volunteers to be on deck timing at meets. Being a timer doesn't require special training, and you will have the best seat! If you want to help, you can email [Coach Brayton Weber](mailto:CoachBraytonWeber).

Should I keep track of my child's times?

We recommend it! While we have a system that tracks swimmers' times during the season and try to provide a season summary, it's best to also keep track of your swimmer's best times.

Many parents like to keep track of times in a little notebook so they can always tell their child right away how their time compares to a previous race. Others like to save the meet results on their computer at home so they can track from year to year. We will post all meet results online within a day or two, so parents can go back and review times. The results remain posted until the start of the next club season.

My child has a birthday during season. Which age group do they swim in for club meets?

The age they will be on the day of the meet. The age groups are broken down like this:

- 8 and under
- 9-10
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 15 & Up

So if your child is 8, for the first club meet of the year, they will swim in the 8 & Under bracket. But if they turn 9 on the day of the next meet, they will swim in the 9-10 bracket that meet and for every subsequent meet (until turning 11).

This follows the USA Swimming standard.

Midwest Regionals works differently. Their age cut-off date is 12/1. That means if your child qualifies for Midwest Regionals, you'll use their age on 12/1 to determine the proper age bracket.

What is the SDMS Championship Swim Meet?

The SDMS Championship Meet is held at the end of each club season. After winning the local swim conference several seasons in a row, SDMS broke off to be an independent club. But we still wanted to have a big end-of-season meet that the athletes could taper for to swim new best times and earn medals and ribbons.

The following day, the team has a big party for the kids to come to the pool to have fun, jump off the diving board, and collect ribbons and medals from the Championship Meet.

What is Midwest Regionals?

Midwest Regionals is a big swim meet held in Minneapolis, MN at the University of Minnesota every spring. Swimmers have to go faster than a qualifying cut-time in order to attend the meet. Every SDMS club meet and USA meet is a chance to qualify for Midwest Regionals.

The meet provides club swimmers the chance to compete against athletes from around the Midwest on a big stage!

Are the team swim suits mandatory?

No. We offer a team suit that parents can choose to purchase at the beginning of season. The design is updated before the winter season and the same suit is offered to the summer team. This should mean parents will only need to buy one team suit each year.



CLUB SWIMMING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Other programs offer a suit (and/or other apparel) as part of their entry fee, but the cost increases another \$50-\$70. Or they may try to keep their costs the same but reduce the number of coaches working with swimmers, impacting the coach-to-swimmer ratio.

We do require your child have a one piece swim suit for competition. We also don't recommend wearing the team suit to practice. Once a new design is picked, feel free to use the old one as a practice suit.

Does my child get a team t-shirt?

Yes! Everyone on the team will receive a team t-shirt each season as part of the registration fee. These shirts are ordered when season starts and normally handed out during the first month. Additional t-shirts can be purchased on our online store, www.shop.southdmswimming.com for parents and other fans.

Where can I get the SDMS Fan T-shirts others are wearing?

Visit www.shop.southdmswimming.com and click apparel from the right-hand menu. They sell for \$13 each; sizes S/M/L/XL/XXL are available in cotton. You can also pre-order dry-fit shirts with Coach Weber. These shirts are a great way to show your Southside Swimming pride!