

WELCOME TO THE



A Guide for Parents and Swimmers 2025 Season

(Revised April 10, 2025)

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Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Organization	Page 2
Eligibility	Page 2
Cost	Page 2
How Swimming Compares to Other Sports	Page 3
The Benefits of Swim Team	Page 3
Where Do I Start?	Page 3
JSL Teams	Page 4
Signup	Page 5
Practice	Page 5
Swim Meets	Page 5
The Championship	Page 5
The Swim Strokes	Page 6
The Swim Meet Volunteer Positions	Page 7
The Swim Meet Volunteer Positions (continued)	Page 8
Other Team Volunteer Positions	Page 8
The JSL Order of Events	Page 9
Helping Your Swimmer (and You) Through Their First Meet	Page 10
JSL and the Ben Hair – Just Swim for Life Foundation	Page 11

Learn More About JSL

This manual serves only as an introduction to JSL and summer swim team. For more information, you may find the full [JSL Team Procedure Manual](#) on the [JSL Webpage](#).



Introduction

The Jefferson Swim League (JSL) was originally formed in 1966 with five teams. Today it consists of seventeen teams with about 2700 swimmers and serves as the summer swim league for the Central Virginia area. It is recognized as one of the most organized and financially stable children's sports organizations in the area and has enjoyed tremendous growth and support over its history. The secret to its success can be attributed to the many parent volunteers who work tirelessly on the Board, at the many swim meets during the summer, and behind the scenes throughout the year, with a simple goal in mind - "Bylaw #1":

"The purpose of this Board is to ensure a summer age group swimming program in the Central Virginia area and to provide a maximum opportunity for the greatest number to participate."

Organization

The JSL is governed by a [Board](#) consisting of five officers and a representative from each member team. In addition, numerous advisors lend their talents to the Board on a regular basis. Each representative has one vote with ties being broken by the President. Other than this one exception, neither the officers nor the Advisors have a vote on the Board so that all teams have equal representation, regardless of size. The Board normally meets once a month from February to September (except August) to conduct the business of the League, set schedules, and plan for the end-of-season Championship. JSL sanctioned swim meets are governed by [JSL Bylaws and Rules and Regulations](#) and procedures as well as [USA Swimming Rules and Regulations](#).

Eligibility

All individual teams have eligibility policies for their own members. JSL requires a swimmer to be a bona fide member of one of the League teams and be no older than 18 years old on June 1st of the summer season nor have swum on a college level team. In addition, 18-year-olds must still be in or have just finished high school. There is a 5-year-old minimum age limit. In the interest of safety, a child must be able to swim the freestyle unassisted for 25 meters before entering a League meet. There are five competitive age groups in JSL as determined by the swimmer's age on June 1st - 5-8y.o., 9-10y.o., 11-12y.o., 13-14y.o., and 15-18y.o. While there is not a separate age group for 5 & 6 year olds (they are considered 5-8y.o.), there are separate events limited to those who are 5 or 6.

Cost

Each member team has its own charges to join their swim team and JSL gets \$30.00 per swimmer from each team as a League fee. In return for this fee, JSL supplies all manuals, all forms, all ribbons used at meets, all clinics, insurance, and all expenses related to the Championship (pool rental, ribbons, trophies, insurance, etc.). JSL also pays a substantial portion of all equipment purchases for member teams (start systems, computers, software, watches, etc.) & maintains the [JSL Webpage](#). Additionally, JSL donates \$1.00 per swimmer to BH-JSL (see page 11) to help fund learn-to-swim programs and waterproof our community. It would be hard to imagine a better value for \$30.00.

How Swimming Compares to Other Sports

JSL believes that swimming offers a unique experience among all youth sports. Most parents and kids are familiar with soccer, baseball, and other sports where the parents watch two small teams of kids in a game coached by a few parents and officiated by even fewer persons. Summer swim team is not like that at all. The average swim team in JSL has over 175 kids and swim meets require more than 50 volunteers to run even the smallest meet. It would not be unusual for a weekly dual meet (two teams swimming one another) to have well over 300 kids participating. This requires a tremendous amount of organization and teamwork as well as a considerable number of parent volunteers. It might be said that when a parent signs up a child for swimming, the parent also commits to volunteer for one of the many positions at the swim meets.

The Benefits of Swim Team

As noted above, JSL involves the entire family in a wholesome sport during the summer. Children who have spent just one summer competing in JSL become “water safe” and often quickly surpass their parent’s swimming skills. Both children and parents will benefit from the team spirit and camaraderie of swimming and both will quickly realize that some of their best friends are met through the swim team experience.

JSL values safety above all else. For example, the [JSL Rules and Regulations](#) specify a minimum of five safety certifications for coaches to be on deck plus all JSL coaches at JSL events have successfully passed a criminal background check. You may review all [Coaches' Certifications](#) on www.jsl.org. In addition, member teams may have further required coaching standards. To the best of our knowledge, there has never been a serious injury in JSL.

The JSL places a huge importance on sportsmanship and fair competition. One of the most coveted awards in JSL is the team [Sportsmanship Award](#) given at the Championship. This award is given to one team in each division that receives the highest sportsmanship ratings from the teams they have swum against.

To keep the competition close and exciting, scoring is limited to the top two finishers from each team in all individual events (one from each team in all relay events), but ribbons are awarded through 16th place. Because swim team has swimmers from all age groups, the points scored in a meet by an 8 year old are just as important to the team as those scored by an 18 year old. Few sports teams value their younger teammates as much as swim team. Older swimmers often serve as mentors and positive role models for younger swimmers as well as helping the coaches.

Where Do I Start?

As with other sports, swimming has its own rules, procedures, vocabulary, and idiosyncrasies. Parents and kids new to swimming can be particularly confused by all of this. That’s why this manual was developed - in part as a welcome to the Jefferson Swim League as well as an introduction to swimming. Every parent (including the author) well remembers when they had no clue as to what summer swim league was all about. Join us now for the “Times of Your Life”!

JSL Teams

The JSL is divided into three divisions containing teams of similar strengths based on their previous year's Championship finish position. Meets with other teams in the Division are scored meets and count towards the Regular Season Divisional Championships. Non-scored swim meets may also be scheduled to be swum for fun and experience.

JSL TEAM ABBREVIATIONS and LOCATIONS

ACAC - The **ATLANTIC COAST ATHLETIC CLUB'S **50 meter 8-lane** home pool is located in the Four Seasons sub-division between Hydraulic Road and Rt. 29 North. The pool is behind the clubhouse.**

BHSC - The **BOARS HEAD SPORTS CLUB** is located off of Rt. 250 on the west side of Charlottesville. The entrance is marked as the Boars Head Resort and Sports Club. The Sports Club complex and **25 yard 8-lane** pool are behind the Inn.

CBST - The **CULPEPER BARRACUDAS SWIM TEAM'S **25 meter 6-lane** home pool is located on Country Club Road off of Business Route 29 in Culpeper.**

CGST - The **CROZET GATORS SWIM TEAM'S **25 meter 8-lane** home pool is located in Claudius Crozet Park in Crozet**

CITY - The CHARLOTTESVILLE **CITY SWIM TEAM'S **25 meter 8-lane**** home pool is located in Washington Park at the corner of Preston Ave. and 10th St. in Charlottesville.

ELKS - The **ELKS LODGE** is located off Rt. 20 north on the east side of Charlottesville. The entrance is marked on the left and the **25 meter 6-lane** pool is to the left of the main building.

FAST - The **FLUVANNA AQUATIC SPORTS TEAM** is located in Fluvanna County, but does not have a home pool at the present time and swims all meets away.

FCC - The **FARMINGTON COUNTRY CLUB** is located off of Rt. 250 on the west side of Charlottesville. The entrance is marked as Farmington Country Club. The **25 meter 8-lane** pool is to the left of the main building.

FLST - The **FOREST LAKES SWIM TEAM'S **25 meter 6-lane**** home pool is located off Rt. 29 north of Charlottesville in the Forest Lakes SOUTH sub-division.

FSBC - The **FRY'S SPRING BEACH CLUB** is located off Jefferson Park Ave. in the southern part of Charlottesville. The entrance is marked as Fry's Spring Beach Club and the **50 meter 7-lane** pool is behind the main building.

FV - The **FAIRVIEW SWIM & TENNIS CLUB** is located off highway #651 on the north side of Charlottesville. The **25 meter 6-lane** pool can be seen from the road on the left.

GHG - The **GREENE HILLS GATOR'S CLUB** is located off of Rt. 230 on the north side of Stanardsville. The **25 meter 6-lane** pool is to the left of the main building.

GLEN - The **GLENMORE SWIM TEAM** is located off of Rt. 250 east of Charlottesville. The **25 meter 6-lane** pool is to the right of the main clubhouse.

HM - The **HOLLYMEAD** home pool is located in the Hollymead subdivision off of Rt. 29 north of Charlottesville. The **25 meter 6-lane** pool is next to the parking lot in front of the Silver Thatch Inn.

KWC - The **KEY WEST CLUB** **25 yard 5-lane** pool is located in the Key West subdivision off of Rt. 20 north on the east side of Charlottesville.

LG - The **LOUISA GATORS** use the Louisa County pool which is located at the Betty Queen Intergenerational Center on Industrial Drive in Louisa County. The entrance is marked with a sign and the **25 yard 6-lane** pool is at the back of the building.

LMST - The **LAKE MONTICELLO SWIM TEAM **25 meter 6-lane**** pool is located at Lake Monticello approximately 45 minutes to the east of Charlottesville.

Signup

JSL Teams may have different signup procedures including “pizza parties”, signup day, etc., but one thing is certain - all parents must completely fill out and sign a JSL Registration Form and it must be received by JSL by 9PM two days before a swimmer can participate in their first JSL swim meet. One form can be used for as many as four swimmers in a family. Some teams use online registration to facilitate this process and registration forms are not used. During signup, every parent should sign up for a volunteer position if at all possible.

Practice

Practice times and sessions will vary with each team, but practice is an extremely important part of being a successful swimmer and having a successful swim team. It would be a rare swimmer who could master all of the competitive swim strokes, turns, and takeoffs without proper instruction and hours of practice. Regular attendance at practice improves stroke technique, builds endurance, inspires swimmer confidence, and, of course, benefits the team. Every effort should be made to attend all practices.

Swim Meets

JSL swim meets are held once a week for about 6 weeks during the summer. Most meets are dual (two-team) meets, but there may also be tri-meets (3 competing teams). [Scheduled Meets](#) are normally swum on Wednesday nights, but may occasionally on other days or postponed because of weather. Normally, warm-ups start at 5PM with the meet starting at 6PM. Depending on the number of swimmers, some meets can last up to 4 hours or more. Times may vary, be sure to check the schedule and don't be late! Directions to all pools are available from your team or on the [Team Page](#) on www.jsl.org.

JSL requires that coaches have meet lineups prepared several days before a meet, so it is very important to inform the coach if a swimmer will not be at a particular swim meet. Every swimmer is an integral part of the meet and successful coaching strategy depends on knowing who will be at the meet and who will not. Be considerate of your coach and teammates by keeping your coach well informed of vacations, expected and unexpected absences, etc.

As mentioned earlier, good sportsmanship is a hallmark of JSL competition. Swimmers and parents must be on their best behavior at a swim meet. Teams must be either gracious hosts or well behaved guests during the course of a swim meet. JSL reserves some of its strictest sanctions for poor sportsmanship.

JSL Championship

The [JSL Championship](#) is the culmination of the entire season and is held on the last Friday and Saturday of July, previously at UVa's Aquatic & Fitness Center. Since 2023, the [Brooks Family YMCA](#) has been the home of the JSL Championship. It is one of the largest youth sporting events in the area with almost 2,000 swimmers. Every team competes and it is open to all JSL swimmers who have swum in at least two meets during the regular season. Otherwise, there are no qualifying standards. One of the long-standing JSL traditions is that every swimmer has the opportunity to swim in at least two Championship events.

The Swim Strokes

JSL follows all [USA Swimming Rules and Regulations](#) for take-offs, strokes, turns, and relays with some allowances made for younger swimmers who do not want to takeoff from the starting platform. All swimmers in JSL are subject to disqualification for improper technique; however, JSL allows 12 year old and under swimmers one false start without disqualification. Modifications to the rules are also allowed for swimmers with a disability. Following the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations keeps the competition fair and equitable by preventing any swimmer from gaining an unfair advantage. It also ensures the integrity of the records in that all races, past and present, are swum under the applicable rules. The following are simplified descriptions of each stroke and relay used in the JSL – more detailed descriptions may be found in the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations.

In the [Freestyle \(“free”\)](#) the swimmer may swim any stroke desired, but will normally swim the “Australian Crawl”. Because it is “freestyle”, disqualifications are rare but may occur for such things as pushing off the bottom, using the lane line as a pull, or failing to touch the wall at the turn. The forward start from the starting platform is used, but swimmers may dive in from deck level or start in the water. There are two freestyle events, “short free” and “long free”.

In the [Backstroke \(“back”\)](#) the swimmer must stay on their back except during the turns. Like freestyle, stroke disqualifications are rare, but disqualifications on the turns are more common. The backstroke start is made in the water with the swimmer facing the starting end of the pool, holding the platform hand grips, with feet submerged and placed against the wall.

In the [Breaststroke \(“breast”\)](#) the swimmer must stay on their breast (except during the turns) and execute simultaneous horizontal arm strokes alternating with simultaneous “frog” kicks of the legs. The forward start from the starting platform is used, but swimmers may dive in from deck level or start in the water.

In the [Butterfly \(“fly”\)](#), arguably the most difficult stroke, the swimmer must stay on their breast (except during the turns) and execute simultaneous overhead arm strokes combined with simultaneous “dolphin” kicks of the legs. The forward start from the starting platform is used, but swimmers may dive in from deck level or start in the water.

In the [Individual Medley \(“IM”\)](#) the swimmer must swim one-fourth of the distance using each of the above strokes in the following order: fly, back, breast, and free. The forward start from the starting platform is used, but swimmers may dive in from deck level or start in the water.

In the [Freestyle Relay \(“FR”\)](#) four different swimmers must each swim one-fourth of the distance using free style.

In the [Medley Relay \(“MR”\)](#) four different swimmers must each swim one of the following strokes in order for one-fourth of the distance: back, breast, fly, & free.

The Swim MEET Volunteer Positions

As mentioned earlier, swim meets require a considerable number of parent volunteers to ensure that the meet is officiated fairly and run efficiently. The smallest meets in JSL will frequently have over 200 swimmers participating and may require more than 50 parent volunteers. There is a volunteer position available for those of all skill and knowledge levels – pick one you like and help your team and the JSL provide a great experience for your swimmer. There is even an award given each year to the [League's outstanding volunteer](#).

All positions below link to a JSL online course for each position which must be reviewed PRIOR to serving. More detailed and printable volunteer descriptions may be found in [Section III of the JSL Team Manual](#).

The [Referee](#) ensures that all applicable rules are followed and properly enforced. Referees for dual meets are normally Certified Stroke-and-Turn judges.

The [Meet Director](#) is one of the most important officials for the team and requires previous meet experience as well as a general knowledge of JSL rules and procedures. Meet directors must attend a preseason clinic & supervise all home meets and serve as the team's official representative at away meets.

The [Clerk-of-Course](#) is responsible for lining up the swimmers in event and heat order prior to sending them to the starting blocks.

The [Starter](#) is responsible for lining the swimmers up at the starting blocks and ensuring a fair and equitable start. Starters should have previous meet experience. JSL requires that starters attend the preseason Starter's clinic or be USA Swimming or YMCA certified in this position.

The [Stroke-and-Turn Judges](#) are positioned on the sides and ends of the pool to observe all swimmers for proper stroke and turn technique. They must disqualify ("DQ") a swimmer for not swimming in accordance with the rules. Stroke-and-Turn Judges must complete an online training course and attend a preseason JSL clinic or be USA Swimming, YMCA, or High School certified.

Two [Sweep Judges](#) from each team are positioned on opposite sides of the pool at the finish line and serve as backups to the timers in determining the order of finish for every heat. This position requires a cool head and a keen eye.

The [False Start Rope](#) position is responsible for dropping a rope across the mid-width of the pool to stop (or recall) the swimmers in the event of a "false start". Although little training is required, this person must listen for the false start signal from the starter and quickly drop the rope to stop the race.

The [Timers](#) are positioned at the finish line and record the swimmers' times using stop watches. Official times determine the order of finish. Timing is another great way to be introduced to swimming with minimal training.

The [Head of Table](#) should be familiar with all procedures at the scoring and awards table ("the table"). JSL encourages persons interested in this position to attend the preseason "Table" clinic if offered.

The [Runner](#) position is responsible for gathering all timing cards, sweep judge cards, and "DQ" cards after each heat or event and taking ("running") them to the "Table" area. It is another position which requires minimal training.

The [Sorter](#) is one of the most important positions at the “Table” and requires a thorough knowledge of sorting procedures and a cool head. The Sorter receives all of the cards from the Runner, “sorts” them into heat & event order, removes “DQ’s”, and determines the official time, place, and scoring for every swimmer.

The [Computer Operator](#) and [Assistant](#) receive the cards from the Sorter and are responsible for entering final data into the Meet Manager program. Both should be familiar with the Meet Manager Program and the operation of laptop computers and printers. JSL requires all Computer Operators to attend the preseason clinic for this position or be certified by the Software Advisor.

The [Backup Checker](#) confirms that all official times have been entered correctly by the Computer Operator. It requires minimal training.

The [Awards](#) position does not actually hand-write the ribbons any longer as most are printed by computer. This position ensures that all preprinted labels go on the correct awards which are placed in the correct team’s award box. Minimal training is required.

The [Refreshments](#) position is supplied by the Home Team and is responsible for periodically distributing refreshments to all volunteers and coaches during the course of the meet. Minimal training is required.

The [Meet Marshal](#) position is supplied by the Home Team and is responsible for keeping order and ensuring safety on the deck. Minimal training is required.

Other TEAM Volunteer Positions

The **JSL Representative** is the team’s official representative and spokesperson to the Board of the Jefferson Swim League. There is no way to be trained for this position, but the best candidate should have swim meet and team experience, a willingness to attend the monthly JSL meetings, and be able to cast an informed vote at JSL Board meetings on behalf of his or her team.

The **Championship Ad Coordinator** is responsible for selling ads for their team for the Championship Heat Sheet Program. Ad sales revenue is split between the JSL and the team selling the ad with the majority going back to the team. Ad sales are a very important source of income for the JSL and may be an important source of income for an individual team. While little training is required, this person must be willing to devote the time and energy to this important fund raising function.

The **Championship Committee** is a sub-committee of the JSL Board and is responsible for organizing and hosting the end-of-season Championship. Responsibility for hosting the JSL Championship rotates every four years among all of the JSL teams with four teams at a time serving as hosts. There is an extensive manual with detailed instructions for organizing this huge event. The ideal candidate for this position would be an organized, “can-do” individual willing to devote time and effort to provide a great experience for over 2,000 swimmers.

Depending on the organization and needs of individual teams, there may be many **more volunteer positions** available such as swim team committee, pool committee, concession stand, setup staff, social events, webmaster, etc. No team in JSL would turn down a willing and capable volunteer.

THE JSL ORDER OF EVENTS

The following JSL Championship Order of Events lists all possible events that can be swum during a swim meet. However, because of time constraints, not all events are necessarily swum in every dual meet and the order of events may change. Please consult meet schedules. Each event below may be made up of multiple heats depending on the number of swimmers who are swimming the event and the number of lanes available. Swimmers are seeded in heats according to ability with the final heat made up of swimmers with the fastest seed times.

BOYS EVENTS**GIRLS EVENTS****8&U FREESTYLE RELAY Group Events**

** P1 6&U 100yd/m Boys, Girls, &/or Mixed Free Relay (short course only) **

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY Group Events

(Short Course Only)

3.....	9-10	100yd/m	.....	4
5.....	11-12	100yd/m	.....	6
7.....	13-14	100yd/m	.....	8
9.....	15-18	100yd/m	.....	10

MEDLEY RELAY Group Events

(8&U relay is NOT swum in long course pools)

11.....	8&U	100yd/m	.....	12
13.....	9-10	200yd/m	.....	14
15.....	11-12	200yd/m	.....	16
17.....	13-14	200yd/m	.....	18
19.....	15-18	200yd/m	.....	20

SHORT FREESTYLE Group Events

** P21.....	6&U	25yd/m	.....	P22 **
21.....	8&U	25yd/m	.....	22
23.....	9-10	50yd/m	.....	24
25.....	11-12	50yd/m	.....	26
27.....	13-14	50yd/m	.....	28
29.....	15-18	50yd/m	.....	30

BREASTSTROKE Group Events

31.....	8&U	25yd/m	.....	32
33.....	9-10	50yd/m	.....	34
35.....	11-12	50yd/m	.....	36
37.....	13-14	50yd/m	.....	38
39.....	15-18	50yd/m	.....	40

BACKSTROKE Group Events

** P41.....	6&U	25yd/m	.....	P42	** thru event P41 is half way in short course
41.....	8&U	25yd/m	.....	42	
43.....	9-10	50yd/m	.....	44	thru event 43 is half way in long course
45.....	11-12	50yd/m	.....	46	
47.....	13-14	50yd/m	.....	48	
49.....	15-18	50yd/m	.....	50	

BUTTERFLY Group Events

51.....	8&U	25yd/m	.....	52
53.....	9-10	50yd/m	.....	54
55.....	11-12	50yd/m	.....	56
57.....	13-14	50yd/m	.....	58
59.....	15-18	50yd/m	.....	60

LONG FREESTYLE Group Events

61.....	8&U	50yd/m	.....	62
63.....	9-10	100yd/m	.....	64
65.....	11-12	100yd/m	.....	66
67.....	13-14	100yd/m	.....	68
69.....	15-18	100yd/m	.....	70

FREESTYLE RELAY Group Events

(8&U relay is NOT swum in long course pools)

1.....	8&U	100yd/m	.....	2	(Swum at beginning in dual meets.)
73.....	9-10	200yd/m	.....	74	
75.....	11-12	200yd/m	.....	76	
77.....	13-14	200yd/m	.....	78	
79.....	15-18	200yd/m	.....	80	

** Ribbons only, no points, but records kept **

(Revised, 2017)

Helping Your Swimmer (and You) Through Their First Meet

To a first time swimmer and new swim team parent, a swim meet can appear to be one of the wettest, wildest, and most disorganized events possible - wet and wild, maybe; but hardly disorganized.

Always arrive on time (or early) for warm-ups and report to your coach or other designated person. Find your team area, consult the posted event lists to see which events, heats, and lanes your swimmer will be swimming, and make note of this. Some parents find it helpful to write this information on the back of the swimmer's left hand in waterproof ink for quick reference. There is a pattern to the event numbers - all boys events are odd numbered, girls are even. All 5 year olds – 8 year olds swim in events ending in a 1 or 2; 9-10s in events ending in 3 or 4; 11-12s ending in 5 or 6; 13-14s ending in 7 or 8, and 15-18s ending in 9 or 0. As mentioned earlier, there are special events for 5 & 6 year olds and these begin with a "P". Event P1 can be boys, girls, or mixed free relay.

Prior to warm-ups, all swimmers should be cautioned to carefully enter feet first into unknown pools and water depths. (This should become a life-long habit.) Shallow water racing dives should only be attempted by swimmers who have been properly trained and are proficient in this skill. Parents who do not feel their swimmer can safely perform this takeoff should encourage them to use an alternate takeoff method.

Throughout the meet, listen carefully for the events as they are called. Older swimmers must report promptly to the Clerk-of-Course as their event is called, but it may be necessary for parents of younger swimmers to be responsible for getting their swimmer to the Clerk in a timely manner. It is not possible for the Clerks or coaches to locate swimmers and the meet does not stop to wait on a tardy swimmer.

The Clerks will organize the swimmers into heats according to their seeding (ability), give them timing cards, and get them to the starting blocks for their race. Nothing quite matches the excitement of seeing your swimmer get up on the blocks for the first time. Cheering is, of course, encouraged, but NOT while the starter is addressing the swimmers on the blocks. Flash pictures are also not a good idea at this time because they can be confused with the strobe light of the starting signal and cause your favorite swimmer to false start. USAS rules prohibit taking pictures behind the blocks.

During the race, cheer like a madman (madwoman?) for your swimmer and, no matter where they finish, offer encouragement. Swimming is unique in that swimmers can actually swim against themselves each week by bettering their previous times in their events. Smart parents emphasize this improvement from meet to meet rather than dwelling on who was first or last.

Occasionally a swimmer is disqualified ("DQ'd") in an event for faulty technique. This is understandable, as the rules for strokes and turns are quite specific and swimmers often get very excited during the race. The coach will be able to determine why a swimmer was disqualified and work on improvement during future practices. It is not appropriate for a parent, swimmer, or coach to yell at or even approach a Stroke-and-Turn Judge to question a disqualification. This is considered unsportsmanlike conduct and may result in penalties against your team. Questions regarding judging or other issues should be directed to your Coach or Meet Director in a polite and respectful manner.

JSL HAS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR HARRASMENT OF ITS OFFICALS & VOLUNTEERS

Award ribbons are a big part of swimming, but are not usually given out at the meet. Most teams give out ribbons during practice on the day following a swim meet. JSL rewards swimmers for their efforts by providing ribbons through 16th place plus heat winners, time improvement ribbons, and super swimmer ribbons.



Joined to Save Lives



The Jefferson Swim League (JSL) and the Ben Hair Just Swim for Life Foundation (BH-JSL)

The concept of a learn-to-swim program for those disadvantaged children who do not have access to JSL was started by JSL (www.jsl.org) and was called "Just Swim for Life" (also "JSL"). The concept was originally presented to the Jefferson Swim League Board by Bob Garland in 2007.

The JSL Board made a commitment to the original "Just Swim for Life" learn-to-swim program, but the idea failed to gain traction until Gordon Hair became involved after the tragic death of his son, Ben (an ex JSL swimmer) in 2009. Gordon wanted to start a program in his son's memory and, because the concept already existed within the Jefferson Swim League, it was agreed that the name would be changed to "Ben Hair - Just Swim for Life" (BH-JSL) and Gordon would become the primary administrator. (The name was changed slightly, adding "Foundation" at a later date). Gordon and Larry Gimple provided some of the initial funding and under Gordon's leadership, the idea took off.

Although it is a separate 501(c)(3) tax exempt charity with its own Board of Directors, BH-JSL is still "connected at the hip" with JSL. By far the majority of volunteers come from JSL, various JSL teams run BH-JSL learn to swim programs, and JSL supports BH-JSL financially and administratively. Bob Garland, from JSL, serves on the Board of BH-JSL and Gordon serves as the BH-JSL Liaison to the JSL Board. Additionally, the BH-JSL website (www.bhjsl.org/), grant applications, etc. also confirm the relationship between JSL and BH-JSL.

JSL continues to support BH-JSL financially by giving \$1.00 of each swimmer registration to BH-JSL and through additional grants and support. Through the end of 2024, JSL has directly contributed more than \$45,000 to BH-JSL. JSL volunteers have contributed hundreds (if not thousands) of hours teaching thousands of children how to swim with the goal of waterproofing the Central Virginia area.

BH-JSL is a valuable charitable partner of the JSL and needs the ongoing financial, volunteer, and administrative support of JSL. Its mission is entirely consistent with JSL Bylaw #1: *"The purpose of this Board is to ensure a summer age group swimming program in the Central Virginia area and to provide a maximum opportunity for the greatest number to participate."*

In 2025, BH-JSL partnered with the Brooks Family YMCA to continue its mission for waterproofing the Community well into the future.

To [volunteer](#) or [donate](#) to BH-JSL:
For more information on BH-JSL, please go to bhjsl.org