

RAILS SWIMMING

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[A Message from Coach Weber](#)

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

CLUB: Our club team is for all ages, 5-18. The club team is the main program we offer for kids.

Everything else is in addition to the club team, like more meets. During club meets, athletes swim by age and sex specific groups. This ensures your kids are always swimming against kids their age.

YMCA Team: This is a bonus to our program. If you are a Y member, your child can participate in Y meets across the state of Iowa at no extra charge to you. We are the only program among the DSM high schools that offer this.

Middle School: All Des Moines high schools offer a middle school program for girls and boys. This is a short 4 week program. All other high schools charge an extra \$40 for this; we include it in our Club Team fee and program. This means middle school kids will get the extra benefit of swimming at middle school meets at no extra charge.

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When are the practices and where?

- Elementary kids practice M/T/TH 6-7pm at Lincoln.
- Middle School kids practice Monday 7-8pm at Lincoln, and T/TH 6-7pm at the South YMCA.

We split these age groups by time and place for 2 reasons: We have a large team needing the extra space for swimmers, and we do NOT want kids to have to swim until 8:00 p.m., three times per week.

Do we have to be at all 3 practices each week?

We understand that kids are involved in many activities, and these schedules may conflict. It's one reason we believe we have a reasonable fee for 17 weeks of practice and meets. If your child needs to miss a practice, that is fine. If you want to plan on only coming twice per week, that is fine. BUT, when we are signing up for meets, we need your child to be there to sign up, or you need to email [Coach Weber](#) which events they want to swim. We organize 145 kids in a computer program for events and times, plus the team we are swimming against. Because of this, we can't sign-up athletes for events the day of the meet.

How are club swim meets usually organized?

Club swim 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 write their event numbers on their hands 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 as well. 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 very end if they are not swimming in events at the end.

How long do swim meets last?

Club meets last around 2.5 hours, middle school meets last less than an hour. Y meets are a full day event. Kids need to be ready to report to the clerk of course at the pool when they see that their event number is being called.

Are swim meets scored?

Club and Middle school swim meets are not scored. We only score the Conference Swim Meet at the end of the season.

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Are there awards or ribbons for swim meets?

Yes, the top six finishers in each race get a ribbon. Please remember, it is the top 6 over all, not just the top six for the heat your child is in. So, if we have 20 eight year olds swimming the 25 free, only the top 6 get a ribbon.

How do we sign up to compete at swim meets?

Your child will sign up with their coach ONE WEEK in advance of the meet. If the meet is on a Monday, we will start sign ups the previous Monday. The last day to sign up will be the Wednesday before the meet. If your child misses the meet sign-up, please email [Coach Weber](#) the events they would like to swim. Please remember, we can't add events or athletes to a swim meet the day of the meet.

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. Coaches will assign relays and kids can chose their individual races. We will post an example of the entry list of events online so you can view. After the first meet, all swimmers and parents will have a better understanding of the process. Remember, club meets are set up by age and sex, so the list seems extremely long, but really it is only long because of the break out of every age group for each event.

How do you decide what lane my child swims in?

For all normal meets the lane assignments are random. We just want to have the same number of our swimmers in the pool as the other team in each heat. For bigger meets the meet will be "seeded" so a swimmer will be racing next to someone with a time that is close to their own.

How do parents sign up to help at meets?

We are always in need of some volunteers to be on deck and time at meets. Being a timer doesn't require special training, and you will have the best seat in the house! If you want to help, you can go on our [website](#) and see which meets we still need help for (check out the [Current Season](#) menu option under Club Swim tab). Email [Coach Weber](#) if you would like to help.

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Should I keep track of my child's times?

The system we use here at Lincoln allows us to keep track of 100% of all of the swimmers times throughout the entire season. It is very common for parents to start keeping track of times in a little notebook so they can always tell their kids right away how their time compares to a previous race. Many times kids will ask the coaches right after they finish, and with 150 kids, it is hard to remember every time off the top of their head. We will post all meet results the next day online, so parents can always go back and look if they want to.

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

Our conference uses 12/31 as the determining factor on which group they should swim in. The age groups are broken down like this:

- 8 and under
- 9-10
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 15 and up

We will use their age on Dec. 31st as their competitive age-group for the entire season. So if they are 8 now, but turn 9 in November; they will swim in the 9-10 bracket the entire season.

What is the Conference Swim Meet?

The Conference Meet is the meet at the end of our season. There are 10 teams in the metro area that compete in the same conference. The conference meet is held at two places, splitting the conference into two sides. Lincoln has been asked for three straight years to host both the summer and winter conference meets, and we won the Conference Meet this past summer. The meet is split by age, so all swimmers ages 11 and older swim on Friday evening, and all athletes ages 10 and younger swim on Saturday. The following Monday we always have a big party for the kids to come have fun, jump off the diving board, eat treats, and collect ribbons and medals from the Conference Meet.

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Are the team swim suits mandatory?

No. We offer a team suit that parents can choose to purchase at the beginning of each season. We will offer the same suit once per year, starting with the summer team and continuing with the winter team. This way, hopefully parents can get away with only buying one team suit each year. Other programs offer a suit as part of their entry fee, but their fee jumps 50-70 dollars. We want parents to have that choice to spend the extra money. We do require your child have a one piece swim suit for competition.

Does my child get a team t-shirt?

Yes, everyone on the team will receive a team t-shirt for the winter season as part of the entry fee. These shirts will be ordered shortly, and handed out in the first month of the season.

Where can I get the gold and maroon FAN SHIRTS other parents are wearing?

These shirts will be available at home meets located right inside the main doors to the pool area. They sell for \$13 each, sizes S/M/L/XL/XXL will be available. These shirts were designed by high school parents four years ago, using the idea that we wanted ALL of our programs to support each other. This shirt is recognizable at meets because of the gold color. Plus, you can wear it for all Club, Middle School, YMCA, and High School swim meets.

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A Message from Coach Weber

After coaching at Lincoln for almost a decade, I've tried to rebuild Lincoln swimming into a successful team for athletes of all age-groups. As part of these efforts, I've worked to create a complete swim club, Rails Swimming. I want kids to join young, continue throughout middle school, and become high school swimmers at Lincoln High School.

The high school teams have had great success recently including winning multiple conference championships and sending more kids to the high school state meet than many of the metro schools combined each year. This success is related to our club teams, as these athletes are now joining the high school ranks. In fact, I want to see Rails Swimming continue to grow and offer more comprehensive programs so more kids can succeed.

With this growth, I understand things will continue to change. This is the first season we have two pools to work out of, and it's a different experience. However, I think this is going to only help our program. I will look at more expansion in the following year to keep up with the growing team. I have always, and will always, hire more coaches than any team in the area. I truly believe that having more hands on deck allows our kids to learn more, helping them to stand out against their competition.

If you ever have questions, comments, or constructive criticism, please never hesitate to email me or ask to talk with me. I have a lot of respect for the coaches we have in place to work with your children. If you have a specific question about their coaching, please talk with them. If you leave that discussion confused or still have an issue, please let me know.

I believe that being the head coach of all of these programs gives us all the chance to aim for the same goals – continuing to see our swimmers become better, in the classroom and in the pool.

I hope everyone has a great season!

Thanks



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