

Welcome to Special Olympics Swimming!

PRACTICES: We will practice at 9:00 AM on the following Saturday mornings in the Hastings Middle School Pool, 1000 11th Street W, Hastings, MN:

March 23 - No practice on March 30, Easter weekend

April 6, 13 & 27 –No practice on April 20, Regional Competition

May 4, 11 & 18 – No practice on May 25, Memorial Day weekend

June 1 & 8

Enter the Middle School at door #3. Building doors unlock at 8:45. Practice begins promptly at 9:00 AM.

Be ready to participate in warm up exercises at the practice start time! Use the restroom before practice begins.

Unified partners should plan to attend every practice with their athlete. Unified athletes must be swimming at a level at or above their athlete.

Practice dates may change, so please listen for announcements at the beginning of each practice.

Coach Behnke may decide to stagger the practice start time depending on the number of athletes registered for swimming.

SWIMMING COMPETITIONS:

REGIONAL COMPETITION: Saturday, April 20th, St Catherine's University, 2004 Randolph Ave, St. Paul, MN

STATE SUMMER GAMES: Saturday & Sunday, June 15th & 16th, Century Middle School, 18610 Ipava Ave, Lakeville, MN 55044

A parent, friend or staff must accompany the athlete to the competitions. Athletes must compete in the Regional Competition to compete in the Summer Games. Participation in both competitions is expected.

Athletes will never be turned away if they are unable to pay the participation fee. Contact Liz Alexander at (651) 437-4277 to request a scholarship. Information is confidential.

Swimming Rules

SWIMMING EQUIPMENT: Goggles, flip flops, and a big towel are a must. Bring a water bottle. A Hastings Sharks swimsuit and cap will be provided by the team.

ATTENDANCE: Please notify Head Coach Therese Behnke at (651) 331-1557 if your athlete is unable to attend practice. **Two** unexcused absences from practice may prevent your athlete from competing in the Special Olympics competitions, or from qualifying for a Hastings High School letter. Athletes, including Unified Partners, must attend practice to compete.

CODE OF CONDUCT: All Hastings Sharks athletes, unified partners and caregivers agree to follow the Shark's Code of Conduct. Please review the code with your athlete.

Alcohol, tobacco and/or vaping products are not allowed at practice or competitions. Questions? please contact Lisa Sieben at 12.Hastings.Sharks@gmail.com.

PARTICIPATION FORMS: You will be notified if your athlete needs their Application for Participation in Special Olympics form to be updated or if it is incomplete. All athlete and unified partner applications, forms and requirements must be completed one week prior to the first practice. Athletes cannot participate if their paperwork is incomplete.

UNIFIED PARTNERS: Unified Partners compete alongside Special Olympics athletes. Training together and playing together becomes a quick path to friendship and understanding. Unified Partners must be 8 years or older and should compete at approximately the same level as their athlete. Unified Partners must complete the online [Level 1 training & volunteer application](#) at **SOMN before the first practice**. **A background check is required if the partner is over 18.**

SUPPORT THE COACHES: We are all volunteers! If your athlete isn't participating, step in and help the coaches. If behavior is an issue, share a strategy with the coaches that will work for your athlete. We encourage you to become a coach.

We need coaches! SOMN has a trained coach to athlete ratio in every sport. Please consider becoming a certified coach. Coaching is very rewarding! Contact Ray Kennedy (651) 402-8786 to start your certification.

SAFETY: You are responsible for your athlete's safety! **A parent, friend or staff is required to be in the pool area during all practices.** Be prepared to take your athlete home when practice ends, especially if bad weather forces practice to end early. Athletes must be escorted by an adult/staff when using the restroom. Children in your care must always be supervised.

Please leave headphones and electronic devices at home. We want your athlete to be safe at practice and the Sharks are not responsible for lost or stolen items.