

# MJCC Stingrays

Mittleman Jewish Community Center  
at the Schnitzer Family Campus  
6651 SW Capitol Highway, Portland, OR 97219  
P: 503.244.0111 | F: 503.245.4233 | oregonjcc.org



## Junior Rays Pre-Swim Team Parent Handbook 2023-24

The Junior Rays' goal is to create athletes, friends, and community members through the sport of competitive swimming. We strive to challenge our swimmers physically while also nurturing them developmentally, and encouraging them to build skills to last a lifetime. Our coaches will help develop the character and self-discipline necessary to succeed not only in swimming but also in life away from the pool.

### MEET OUR COACHES

Our coaching staff is shared with the Stingrays Swim Team, with one or two assistant coaches working specifically with the Junior Rays. Our coaches are a group of talented and dedicated professionals who work on supporting and encouraging each swimmer to develop technique and endurance in an appropriate progression for age and ability.

#### **Head Coach, Jennie Condon, [jcondon@oregonjcc.org](mailto:jcondon@oregonjcc.org)**

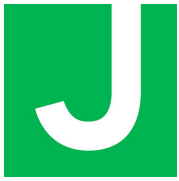
Jennie Condon joined the MJCC in early 2011 and started as the Stingrays' assistant coach in the fall of 2012, moving up to the head coach position in 2014. She is an American Swimming Coaches' Association Level 2 certified coach, a graduate of Hollins University in Virginia and a lifelong athlete and swimmer, including swimming competitively in high school and college. Her combined love of water and working with youth has led her to a 20-plus-year career in aquatics. She spends her time outside the pool horseback riding, reading, and checking out new perspectives on the world through her camera.

#### **Assistant Coach, John Halvorson**

John Halvorson joined the Stingrays in 2017 and loves being a part of the team at MJCC. He has been an avid swimmer since high school which has included swimming at Central Washington University as well as competitive sprint and Olympic length triathlons. John has always worked to be around the water including racing, swim instructing, lifeguarding, water skiing, and inner tubing! He spends his time outside of the pool skiing, riding his bike, camping, traveling, and spending time with his wife and mini Aussie.

#### **Assistant Coaches for Junior Rays, Tiana & Grace Julian**

Long-time swimmers and swim mom and daughter, Tiana and Grace love working with young swimmers to develop their strokes and swimming knowledge. Tiana joined the Junior Rays in 2021 and Grace joined her in 2023. They bring a wealth of experience, joy, and empathy to the team.



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## 2023-2024 PRACTICE SCHEDULE

**Oct 2 (returning swimmers) or Oct 3 (new swimmers) - May 30**

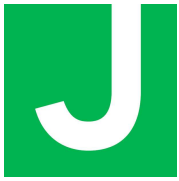
Mon - Thurs 4:45 - 5:30pm

**Note:** With rare exception, we practice every day that the MJCC is open through practice time, including during school breaks. Any changes to this schedule, including due to inclement weather, will be communicated via email with as much advance notice as is practical and possible.

## SWIMMER EXPECTATIONS

We expect each swimmer to treat all participants, members, MJCC staff, and coaches with respect and arrive at every practice and meet with a desire and willingness to work hard and have fun.

- Swimmers should be on deck ready to enter the water at the beginning of their practice time.
- Swimmers should never interfere with the progress of another swimmer, whether through actions or words.
- Swimmers should behave in a way that demonstrates good sportsmanship, sets a good example to other swimmers, and reflects positively on the team. Violent, sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
- Swimmers should treat the facility and equipment with respect. Belongings not needed on the deck must be locked in lockers or kept neatly in a bag on the bleachers during practice. Swimmers must not be loud or disruptive in the locker rooms, and are not permitted in saunas, steam rooms, or hot tubs.
- MJCC rules state that children age 12 and under must be accompanied by a responsible caregiver age 16 or older while on campus, unless they are actively participating in a program. If young swimmers want to come early or stay late, they must have an adult supervising them. (It is permissible for swimmers to be dropped off alone as long as they come directly to the pool deck for practice, spending only a reasonable amount of time in the locker rooms to change before and after.)
- Profanity and other inappropriate language or discussion topics are not allowed at practice or any other team functions.
- Bullying is prohibited. While the Junior Rays are a pre-competitive group, we adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct in this area. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more [Junior Rays] members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:
  - i. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
  - ii. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
  - iii. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any [Junior Rays] activity;
  - iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any [Junior Rays] activity; or
  - v. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any [Junior Rays] activity. [Quoted from USA Swimming Code of Conduct]
- *Swimmers who cannot adhere to these expectations may be asked to leave the team. We do not give refunds to swimmers dismissed for behavioral reasons.*



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## PRACTICE EQUIPMENT

Each swimmer should bring goggles, a swim cap (not required for those with short hair, but highly encouraged for all), and a water bottle to practice each day.

For those new to the sport, we suggest going to a local shop where you can try on suits and goggles to make sure they fit properly for each swimmer. The number one complaint we hear at every single practice is about goggles that do not fit and thus leak or come off. To ensure your swimmer's enjoyment and success, please make sure that they have properly fitting goggles that are replaced at least yearly!

We recommend that boys wear jammers-style suits and girls wear one-piece suits.\* Please remember that swimming is a sport and suits should be chosen for their appropriateness as athletic gear, not for fashion! Swimsuits should fit snugly when purchased; they have a tendency to stretch and lose shape over time, so a suit bought large "to grow into" will usually end up too large for comfort and public appropriateness. Please keep an eye on your swimmer's suits so that they can be replaced before they become see-through or otherwise unacceptable. It is usual for a swimmer who comes to practice regularly to go through 2-3 good quality competition-style suits over the course of a season.

We recommend against shirts or rash guards in the pool. These are great tools outdoors where they protect from sun and abrasions, but are not needed for those reasons indoors. They create a lot of drag and the weight inhibits good form with swimmer's arms. If your swimmer is not comfortable without a shirt, please try to find one that fits very snugly (it should be hard to get off when it's wet) and, if possible, has short sleeves.

Latex Stingrays swim caps are provided to all swimmers who wish to wear one.

*\*Note that there are further requirements for swimwear once your swimmer moves up to Stingrays and begins attending competitions.*

## ATTENDANCE

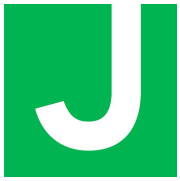
Junior Rays practice is a transition from swim lessons to competitive swimming, with components of technique, fitness, and racing skills. The development of endurance, especially, requires that swimmers attend practice with some regularity. We do not have an attendance requirement, but suggest swimmers attend at least twice a week in order to benefit from the program, and more often if they can. If a swimmer will not be able to attend at least twice a week on average, we suggest they stay in swim lessons instead, as once a week is not enough to build the same level of fitness as the other swimmers, and practices will quickly become discouraging. We do not offer pro-rating or refunds for missed practices.

Tardiness - In order for each practice to run smoothly without interruption, it is important for swimmers to be on time to practice. If a swimmer consistently shows up to practice late, we will speak to the swimmer's parents to come up with a solution.

## COMMUNICATION

### E-MAIL

Our primary means of communication is e-mail. If you find you are not receiving emails from us or your email address changes please notify one of the coaches so that you don't miss out on any important information.



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## PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Our success depends on the support and involvement of our parents! In everything from getting swimmers to practice each day to volunteering at team functions, parental involvement is key. We may occasionally ask for volunteers for team events, and if that happens, please help out in whatever way you can – and don't hesitate to ask questions or share feedback with the coaches.

A few things for parents to keep in mind:

- Our coaches are professionals with a broad and deep understanding of competitive swimming and athlete training. Your questions are welcome, but please leave the coaching up to them!
- We expect everyone involved with the Junior Rays to demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times and show respect and common courtesy to the team members, coaches, parents, and facilities.
- Encourage your swimmer and remind them kindly, when appropriate, of advice or instruction that the coaches have given them.
- As we work on details of technique, swimmers will sometimes temporarily slow down, lose focus on other parts of their stroke, or start to feel awkward. These things are completely normal and will result in even better swimming over time; please remind your swimmer of that and encourage them to speak to the coach with any questions or concerns.
- Swimming is a sport made up of hundreds of tiny details – celebrate all accomplishments with your swimmer, even those that seem small!
- The 10 & under age group are the most inconsistent of all swimmers: one day they are finishing with top times and the next day they look like they forgot how to swim! This inconsistency can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and swimmers alike, but it is totally ordinary. Patience and positivity are the keys to getting through this developmental phase.
- Be supportive of “bad” or frustrating practices and remind your swimmer of how far they have come.
- Criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward coaches, parents, swimmers, or anyone else will not be tolerated, nor will sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, or other offensive language or behavior.
- *If parents cannot adhere to these expectations, their swimmers may be asked to leave the team. We do not give refunds to swimmers dismissed for parent behavior.*

## FROM THE COACHES

We are confident that we are going to have an amazing 2023-2024 season! Our door is always open to both swimmers and parents and we encourage your feedback. Our hope is that together we can provide your swimmer with a positive experience that will not be forgotten and help them nurture friendships that will last in the years to come. Thank you for the opportunity to work with your child and for our new swimmers, **WELCOME TO JUNIOR RAYS!**