

PVSL Championships Information Winter 2025-2026

DATES: Saturday, January 24th and Sunday, January 25th
LOCATION: Springfield College's Art Linkletter Natatorium
Address: 263 Alden St, Springfield, MA 01109

Champs Sessions are divided into the following age groups:

- **CHAMPS SESSION 1: AGES 8 & UNDER**

- Location: Springfield College
- Date: Saturday, January 24th
- **Swimmer Arrival Time: 7:00 AM**
- Meet Start Time: 8:40 AM
- Admission: \$5
- Programs: TBD

- **CHAMPS SESSION 2: AGES 11-12**

- Location: Springfield College
- Date: Saturday, January 24th
- **Swimmer Arrival Time: 1:00 PM**
- Meet Start Time: 2:40 PM
- Admission: \$5
- Programs: TBD

- **CHAMPS SESSION 3: AGES 9-10**

- Location: Springfield College
- Date: Sunday, January 25th
- **Swimmer Arrival Time: 7:00 AM**
- Meet Start Time: 8:40 AM
- Admission: \$5
- Programs: TBD

- **CHAMPS SESSION 4: AGES 13-14 & 15-18**

- Location: Springfield College
- Date: Sunday, January 25th
- **Swimmer Arrival Time: 1:00 PM**
- Meet Start Time: 2:40 PM
- Admission: \$5
- Programs: TBD

Please see the following pages for more Champs info and FAQs.

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IMPORTANT NOTES:

- While Champs are scheduled for Saturday, January 24th and Sunday, January 25th, we do have make-up dates that are TBD if there are issues with weather. The make-up dates are likely to be Saturday, January 31st and Sunday, February 1st. Please make sure that you keep these dates open in case of poor weather AND remember that if Champs is postponed, practice will continue of one more week (1/26 – 1/30).
- If your birthday is AFTER 1/10 and BEFORE 1/24/26 and you will be “aging up” (e.g. you are 8 and will be turning 9, 10 and turning 11, 12 and turning 13, or 14 and turning 15), you will need to compete in that new age group at Championships (by my accounting, this does not impact any Sharks swimmers this season). HOWEVER, if you age up AFTER Championships, you will remain in your original age group. You can check this at the pool. If you have any questions about this, PLEASE CONTACT ME DIRECTLY!!!!

Preparation:

- As we head into Championships, please try to do what you can to help prepare your swimmers mentally and physically, ESPECIALLY if they are a first season swimmer, but this advice will benefit EVERYONE. My goal for the Sharks is to have **NO DAY-OF SCRATCHES** for Champs!
- Physical Preparation:
 - Getting Enough Sleep/Rest: please try your best to make sure that your child is able to rest leading up to Champs. Proper sleep leading up to Champs will make it more likely that a swimmer can perform to their best abilities (and less likely that they will become ill). This is especially important the night before Champs, which can be very exciting and nerve-racking for both swimmer and parent and it can be difficult to sleep. Deep breathing exercises and listening to quiet music in a completely dark room can be helpful to help a nervous swimmer relax the night before the competition.
 - Proper Fueling/Nutrition: please try to make sure your child is eating a balanced diet leading up into Champs. Limiting sugar and junk foods can help swimmers put the final touches on all the physical preparation that they have been doing this season (and help prevent illness). Swimmers should also be **HYDRATING PROPERLY** with **WATER** (please try to avoid sugary drinks).
- Mental Preparation:
 - **Calming Nerves/Anxiety:** This is a big meet. It will make most swimmers at least a little nervous, and it can be anxiety inducing for anyone in a situation this big. This is understandable, but it is also a great learning opportunity for ALL Sharks – from the very experienced all the way to the first season swimmers. **Some swimmers may experience anxiety before Champs that is so intense that they experience physical symptoms – it is important that they push through these to learn that they can do difficult things and**

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come out better for them. If your child is nervous about Champs, I have some tips:

- Remind your swimmer that they are doing something they have done before – no one is swimming a new event – **they know what they're doing, even if they've never done Champs before!**
- Have them try some deep breathing exercises – breathe in through your nose, hold your breath for a few seconds, and breathe out through your mouth
- Have your swimmer remind THEMSELVES that they've got this! They are going to do AWESOME and nerves and anxiety are a natural part of competition!
- Visualize the Competitions: your swimmer knows what events they will be doing (this will also be posted at the pool this week and will be sent out via Remind). Have them think about the things that they want to do as part of their event (good start, good turn, good finish, proper technique, etc.). Visualization is also a way to help swimmers calm their nerves, because it helps them take ownership of their races. When swimmers feel like they're in control of what they're doing, they don't get as worried.
- Team Responsibility: please remember that even though many of your child's competitions are individual, the Sharks are still a **TEAM**. Please try your best to follow through with Championships – while last minute severe illness can occur and has happened in the past, please remember that almost every swimmer is in at least one relay, and for most relays, **ONE** person being scratched means that the **WHOLE** relay will need to be scratched, eliminating an entire relay for other swimmers – we don't always have enough substitutes.

Timeliness Issues:

- In the past, we have had issues with people showing up late to meets and we have, unfortunately, had an issue with no-call no-shows to meets this season. We understand that life gets in the way of things sometimes. Please **CALL ME DIRECTLY if you think there is any possibility of your child being late** to the **warm-ups** of their session (this prevents us from scratching swimmers prematurely). My number is (413)455-4293.
- We are required to make scratches 45 minutes before the start of the meet. This is a **HARD DEADLINE - we do not have control over this**. We are required to scratch any swimmers who are not present before the scratch deadline. Most swimmers are in relays, so a scratch means that 3 other swimmers will lose a relay. Please keep this in consideration.
- In regards to warm-ups, we only have 20 minutes for each session and typically get only 1-2 lanes, so timeliness of all swimmers ensures an effective warm-up for everyone.

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Events:

- **Relays:** Most swimmers will be in at least 1 relay. Some swimmers are in 2 relays. However, there is a chance that not everyone will have relays. This is due to issues with numbers of people signed up for Champs. We will try our best to get everyone in a relay, but not everyone will be in one. We triple-check the entries, so everything that your child is in will be proofed multiple times before we submit.
- **Individual Events:** Event sign-ups for Champs for individual events are considered by the coaches, but they are not guaranteed. Most swimmers will be entered in events for which they sign up, **BUT** we will make changes based on...
 - system times (e.g. a swimmer signs up for 100 back but does not yet have a time for 100 back in our records - we're not allowed to make a No Time entry),
 - the ability of the swimmer (e.g. I will NOT put a swimmer in an event for which they are a major disqualification risk), or
 - on placement opportunities (e.g. a swimmer has a better chance of placing in a different event from one they selected)
- **Entries:** If you want to know what your child is swimming at champs ahead of time, we will have a list posted at the pool that has all individual events and relays for each swimmer on 1/20. I will also hand back the individual sign-up sheets for each swimmer with final events circled. These sheets list any changes that I make along with my reasoning. Please speak to me directly if you have questions about your child's events.

Volunteering:

- As always, we need parent volunteers to help with Champs. All teams are required to supply volunteers - the meet can't function without help from parents from every team. We will need:
 - We need help with keeping swimmers seated, calm, and occupied in the swimmer holding area so that we can find swimmers easily and to avoid accidents and altercations. This will be limited to 1-2 adults per session.
 - Our assigned duty at Champs this season is warm-up/meet marshal. We had this assignment over the summer and did a great job, so I hope we can continue the trend. It will also be much simpler at Springfield College since the spectator area is completely separate from the pool deck and there is much more space. Please speak to a board member if this is a volunteer duty that you are willing to take on (note: due to the nature of the job, meet marshals have authorized access to the pool deck).
- Please talk to the board about volunteering if you would like to help out or if you have any questions. Some of these positions have already been filled but I would like extra people just in case.

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Spectator Information:

- Parking information:
 - **Saturday, 1/24 for Session 1 and 2: Parking on Saturday is restricted to lots 5 and 9, on the corner of Alden x Sheffield. Please note that this is a 10-minute walk away from the pool for an adult. The lot by the pool will be OFF LIMITS to swimming – this will be enforced by a security guard. You should plan to DROP OFF your swimmer at the natatorium – coaches will meet them at door)** (please see the map linked here: [Springfield-College-Campus-Map.pdf](#))
 - Sunday, 1/25 for Session 3 and 4: parking is not restricted on Sundays and spectators are allowed to park in available spaces.
- The spectator seating at Springfield College is completely separate from the pool deck. There is extensive seating, but early arrival will help you get a better view.
- **Spectators are NOT allowed to access the pool deck. The league policy is that anyone who is found to be on the pool deck without authorized access will be personally fined \$100 and their team will be fined \$200.**
- If you have a spectator with mobility issues, please let us know ASAP so that we can discuss accommodations with the league.
- Please remember to bring cash! Admission, programs, and concessions will be cash only.
- We have confirmed that the apparel vendor will be on site selling Champs branded clothing items. The apparel vendor typically accepts credit cards as well as cash payment.
- Admission is \$5.00 per person and Programs are TBD each.
- To help with noise and allow swimmers to hear the starter, there will be 5 short whistles prior to the start, then event and heat (or just heat if not the first heat) will be announced. The starter will then take control of the heat and invite the swimmers to step up or step in and will maintain control through completion of the start. **All swimmers and spectators should remain quiet for the start from whistles to start signal.**

Final Tips for Champs Participants and Spectators

- Bring extra equipment – malfunctions with suits, caps, and goggles happen frequently, so having extras of everything will ensure that there are no big issues during Champs (we had a swimmer miss an event many years ago at winter Champs because his suit ripped and he did not have a backup). **Please double check your child's bag to make sure they have packed what they need!**
- **All swimmers should wear a Sharks cap while competing – the coaches will have extra just in case, but please bring your own as well.**

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- It's a good idea to bring something to do - there will be extended periods of time between your child's events. Champs is a long meet, so bringing a tablet, a puzzle book, or reading material can help pass the time (for both swimmers and parents!). **Please be careful about sending electronic devices with your child** - we have had swimmers lose expensive items in the past, and I cannot account for other teams (with whom we must share the bullpen), only our own. If your child is absent-minded, please do not let them use an electronic device without supervision from a responsible person. **SSSC is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged property! The bullpen volunteers are not responsible for taking care of swimmers' belongings – that is the responsibility of each swimmer. If it is valuable, please do not risk bringing it!!**
- Talk to your child about where they will be spending the meet - the Sharks area will be on the pool deck and swimmers will be separate from their spectators. **I expect swimmers to be remain on the pool deck for the duration of the meet** (the Sharks will have our own designated area to sit). Please **DO NOT** allow your child to stay with you in spectator seating during their meet. If you must meet with your child, please call coach Teresa to set up an escort. It is tremendously difficult for coaches to find children in the stands, so please make sure that your child knows that they are to stay with the rest of the team in their designated area so that no one misses their events. **Please also remember to check out with a coach before you leave the meet so that there are no issues with the final relays – please assume that your child will be swimming in a final relay unless/until told otherwise DIRECTLY by a coach.**
- I strongly suggest sending your child with snacks or food packed ahead of time. Definitely make sure your child has water and Gatorade so that they stay hydrated (remind them that they must eat food and drink Gatorade in the **designated areas only!**) **I expect my swimmers to pick up after themselves!!**

Post-Season

- Our **LAST** week of Sharks activities/practices for the winter season is the week of 1/20 – 1/23 **unless** there is a weather postponement for one or both of the Champs dates. After that, we will not be doing any swimming or practice until the start of the spring/summer season. The start of pre-season activities will be Monday, March 30th, 2026 – please stay tuned to the website, Facebook, and TeamSnap email for updates on swim lessons and clinics. Regular season spring practices will begin, as usual, on the week following April vacation (Monday, April 27th, 2026 will be the first official day of regular practices, but there will be pre-season lessons and activities prior to that date).
- We will be having our **end of season party** on the evening of **Monday, February 2nd** at Interskate 91 South (address: 2043 Boston Road, Wilbraham, MA 01095.). Please make every effort to attend – we not only

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distribute Champs awards but also team awards as well! It is our way of celebrating all of the hard work the swimmers and families have put in all season! Details include:

- Sharks swimmers will be provided with a slice of pizza, a drink, and popcorn.
- Sharks swimmers will be able to skate free of charge.
- All other attendees will be able to enter free of charge but will need to pay for skating, food, drink, etc.
- The party schedule is as follows:
 - 6:00-7:00pm: Free skate time for Sharks swimmers.
 - 7:00-8:00pm: Team awards, medals and ribbons from Champs, meet attendance medals, and best-times ribbons.
 - PLEASE RSVP for this celebration on TeamSnap.