

# **RACE INFORMATION PACKET**



# Message from the Race Director



## Welcome to year **10** of the DownRiver Rip!

We are thrilled to have sold out the 2026 event in record time. We are even more thrilled to announce that we secured additional transport to the start allowing us to host the largest event we've ever had. As you know, proceeds from this event go directly to the SwimRVA Swim School where our goal is to teach every 2d grader in the Richmond Region how to swim at low-to-no cost, and we couldn't do it without you.

We've had quite a drought over the last month making conditions challenging for this year. As of May 2, the river is at 4ft, running at 1.85 KCFS with a water temp of 65. Warm temps are predicted for the remainder of the week which will likely bring that water temp up, but there is little to no rain in the forecast. This means a very clear river but not as strong a push as in year's past.

You can monitor river conditions with our friends at Riverside Outfitters here: [How's the James](#).

As always, you should follow the event Facebook page and check your spam email folders for the most up to date, last minute information: [SwimRVA Open Water Race Series Open Water Race Series](#).

Please be sure to thank a volunteer during your time at the event as they are all generously donating their time to ensure your experience is safe, enjoyable, and successful.

Swim fast, Stay Safe, Have Fun  
Jay Peluso

## EVENT TIMELINE

Saturday: May 9, 2026

6:00am	Gates Open
6:00am	Packet Pick Open (all events)
6:30am	Mandatory Kayaker Briefing
6:45am	Packet Pick Up Closes (all events)
6:45am	Mandatory Pre-Race Briefing for All Swimmers
7:00am	Shuttles Depart for Watkins Landing
7:30am	Non-Wetsuit Race Start
7:35am	Wetsuit Race Start
9:15am	Food Service Begins
11:00am	Course Cut-Off
11:05am	Awards



## PROGRAMS

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The SwimRVA Swim School is a 7 station curriculum with immediate advancement. Designed for every age level, we promote core values of Courage, Truthfulness, Dignity, Persistence, and Success. Access to water safety skills and the tools to stay active will build confidence that students will take to the classroom and workplace for the rest of their life.



With over 70 weekly water and land based group wellness classes, SwimRVA provides a variety of fitness opportunities! Enjoy classes like Aquacise, Aqua Zumba, Line Dancing, Aqua Body Blast, Pilates, Yoga, Zumba Gold, Silver Splash, H2O Fit, and many more! Designed for the active older adult, injured person to recovery, senior social butterflies, and anyone in need of gravity free whole body workouts.



The SwimRVA Swim Team is a year round non-competitive swim team. Develop technique and endurance in a fun and challenging atmosphere! Led by top aquatic professionals, learn to work as a team doing dry land and water based workouts. Perfect for summer league swimmers staying in shape, athletes improving cardiovascular endurance, and youth preparing for competition!



A USMS Certified Gold Club, SwimRVA Hammerheads is a comprehensive swim training program for adults that includes everything from stroke technique workouts for beginners to open water interval sessions and demanding pool workouts for more experienced swimmers.



The SwimRVA Safety School offers classes in CPR, First Aid, Lifeguard Certifications and re-certifications. We aim to provide RVA with higher qualified safety professionals. Backed by the American Red Cross, our aquatics leaders are fully trained and waiting to help you learn the skills necessary to save a life.



SwimRVA Water Polo is Richmond's youth water polo team! This year round competitive aquatics team plays in several tournaments a year, including scrimmages, both home and away!



SwimRVA offers a variety of camps throughout the year! Through our core values and principles, we will help your child build self confidence that they can take with them back to the classroom and at home. We give your child a well-rounded quality camp and a lifetime memory!



The SwimRVA Rapids Artistic Swimming program is a combination of endurance, breath control and body positioning. Find your symphony of skills mixing dance, sports, cheerleading and unique team building experiences.



Running University utilizes circuit training principles to achieve your cardiovascular needs while incorporating upper, lower, and core body strengthening and proprioceptive exercises. Each program is developed to help you achieve your FULLEST RUNNING POTENTIAL Whether you are serious runner, training for a marathon, a recreational runner just trying to stay fit, or a cardio junkie, SwimRVA has the program for you!

## Race Venue, Directions and Parking:

### Directions:

Robious Landing Park  
3800 James River Rd  
Midlothian, VA 23113

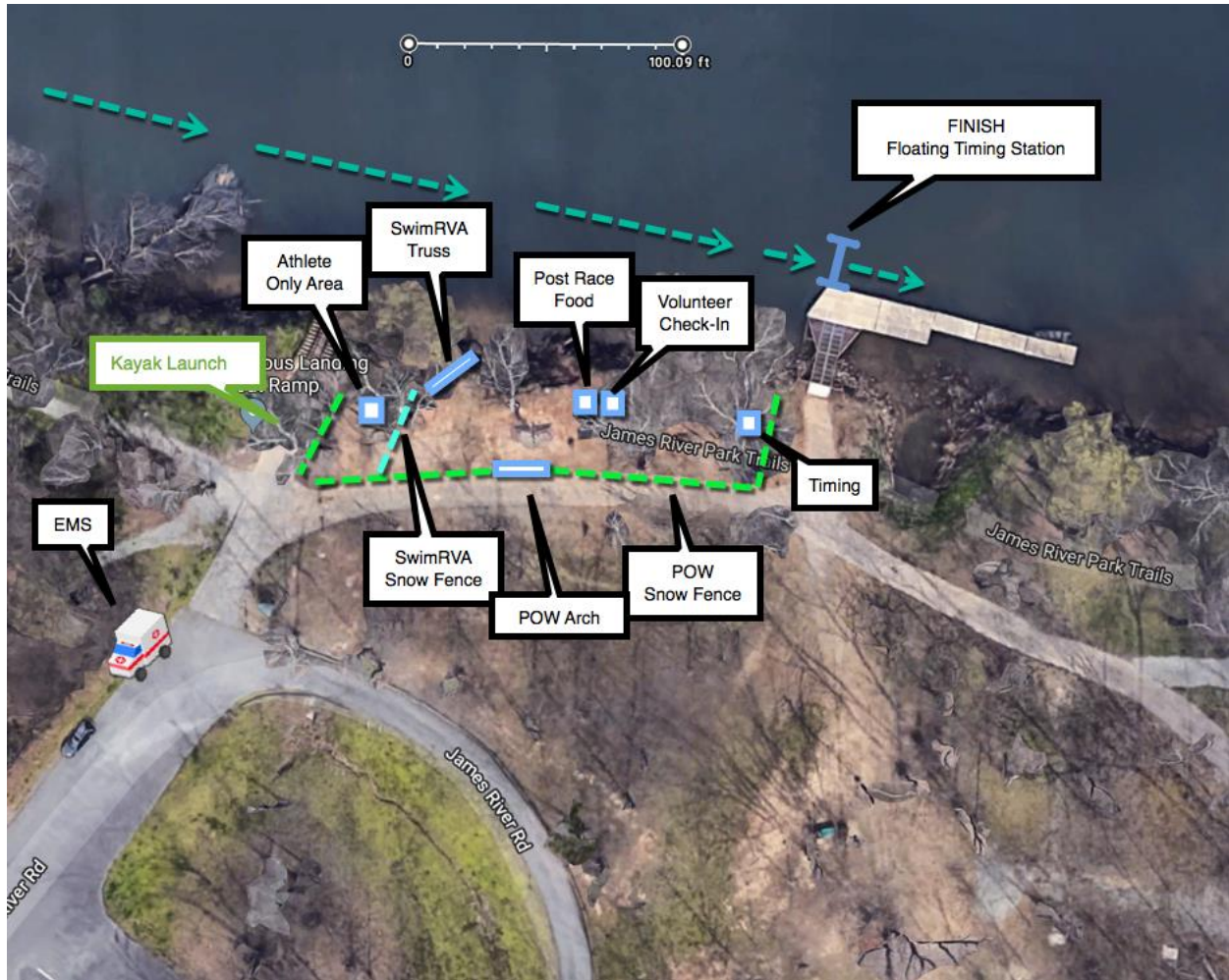
The race is held at Robious Landing Park on the Upper James River. This is a beautiful park owned by Chesterfield County. The gates to the park will be open at 6:00am on Saturday. Please keep in mind that we are guests on the property and there are private homes on the drive in. Excessive noise, speed, or trash will quickly put an end to our welcome.

There is sufficient parking for approximately 60-vehicles at the venue, so we strongly encourage car-pooling. There are another 20 spaces about a 400m walk from the main site. If those spaces fill, any remaining vehicles will need to park at James River High School just outside the park, approximately 750m walk to the race site.

There are restrooms in the park but not shower facilities.



## Venue Map:



### Athlete Check-In:

Once you arrive at the site and park. You will head to the river-front to pick up your athlete bag which will contain your race issued swim cap, timing chip, towel, and post-race food wristband. Timing chips may be placed on your **RIGHT or LEFT** wrist. Mark your race number on **THE SAME** hand with Sharpies provided on-site. If you have declared that you are wearing a wetsuit, mark a "W" under your number. This is in the event your timing chip malfunctions. We can use back-up photos to determine when you touched the finish mat. Numbers will be placed on your swim cap prior to the event. You do not need to mark your shoulders.

The ***Athlete Only Area***, to the left as you face the river, is a great place for changing and safely storing your bags and gear. **In an effort to reduce our use of plastics, please bring your own water bottle. There will be water and Gatorade coolers on site.**

## **Wetsuit v. Non-Wetsuit Division:**

During registration you will have registered in the wetsuit or the non-wetsuit category. If you registered in the non-wetsuit division but decided you would prefer to wear a wetsuit, you must declare your intent to wear a wetsuit and be placed in the wetsuit category by telling the timing staff ***when you pick-up your timing chip***. You will mark your hand with your race number and a "W" under the number during check-in. The onus is on the swimmer to be sure the timing staff is aware of your intent to wear a wetsuit. If you fail to make this declaration and you do wear a wetsuit, you will be disqualified from the event and receive a DQ in the results. PLEASE DON'T MAKE US DO THIS.

## **Kayak/SUP & Volunteer Check-In:**

All volunteers and kayakers will check-in at the river front at the Volunteer Check-In tent.

**Safety Kayakers** – you will receive a t-shirt, safety whistle if needed, and a post-race food wristband.

**NOTE:** Kayakers may be on the water for up to 3.5hrs. Please bring water with you in your kayak. You can fill your bottle onsite before departing to the start line.

**Volunteers** – you will receive a volunteer t-shirt as well as post-race food bracelet. We ask that you wear your volunteer t-shirt on the OUTSIDE of any clothing so that athletes and staff can easily identify you if they need assistance.

## **Pre-Race Briefings:**

**Mandatory Kayaker Briefings:** A kayak safety briefing will take place at the kayak launch area at 6:30am. - Kayakers will depart to the start in the SRVA electric passenger van immediately following the safety briefing.

**Mandatory Swimmer Briefing:** A swimmer safety briefing will take place in the Athlete Only area at 6:45am.

## **Transport to Swim Start:**

**4.4-Mile swimmers:** Two options for transport to the swim start at Watkins Landing.

1. [Riverside Outfitters](#) will provide bus transport immediately following the Mandatory Swimmer Briefing. **DO NOT LEAVE ANYTHING ON THE BUS.** The bus will **NOT** return to Robious Landing Park.

**BAGS:** You may bring ONE bag/backpack with you to the start. Our Kayak Transport team will take bags from the start back to the venue. Anything you want back **MUST** be in a bag. They will not collect loose shoes, flip flops, sweatshirts, etc... **DO NOT BRING VALUABLES**, i.e. wallets, keys, ID's. If your day will be ruined if it gets lost - leave it at the finish venue.

2. Swimmers with spectators on site who would like to watch the swim start are welcome to ride with their spectators to [Watkins Landing](#). After the start, spectators can drive back to Robious Landing Park to watch the rest of the race and the finish. The ride to Watkins Landing takes approximately 11-minutes.

## **Race Start Time:**

Swimmers will line up by number on the boat ramp and be manually counted off as they enter the water as our backup safety count in the event of timing chip failure.

- **7:30am** Non-wetsuit mass start from Watkins Landing
- **7:35am** Wetsuit mass start from Watkins Landing

## **Swim Course:**

### **4.4-Miler**

Athletes will start from in the water just off the boat ramp at [Watkins Landing](#) and swim along the South shoreline 4.4-miles to the finish at Robious Landing Park

There will be **no Floating Aid Station**. Our data shows that in the past, only 1 or 2 swimmers have used it and it takes a safety boat off the course for an hour. Swimmers should bring any personal nutrition they need with them.



There will be buoys located approximately every ½-mile to assist with sighting. All buoys should be taken on the **LEFT** shoulder keeping swimmers between the buoys and the South shoreline for the duration of the swim.

**Kayakers will stay between the center of the river and the swimmers at all times.**

**At NO TIME is a swimmer or kayaker to be further from the South shoreline than the powerboats which will stay just outside the buoy line.**

#### **In-Water Finish:**

All swimmers must swim underneath the swim finish arch attached to the floating dock and touch the timing pad above the water using **whichever hand has their timing chip** and race number on it to assist with time verification.



## Wetsuit Rules:

The DownRiver Rip will be wetsuit legal for those in the Wetsuit Category if the water temperature is **below** 82 degrees. The official temperature will be announced race morning. You can monitor water temperatures throughout the week here: [How's the James](#) Water Temp as of May 2, 2026 is 65-degrees.

## Post-Race Food:

All athletes and volunteers will be given a wristband at check-in to exchange for Ukrop's Homestyle Food Deluxe post-race meal.

Selections include:

- Chicken Salad on Croissant
- Turkey, Bacon and Provolone Wrap
- Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad
- Italian Style Sub
- White House Roll Pimento Cheese (vegetarian)

There will be no food available for sale on-site but you may purchase additional meals through your registration link up until 5-days prior to event day.

## Name your price SWAG:

After your swim there will be a "Name your price" SWAG table with all kinds of SWAG available for purchase. You choose what you would like to pay. There is no minimum and no maximum. 100% of the proceeds go to the SwimRVA Swim School. Your generosity will help defray the cost of teaching every second grader in the Richmond Region one of the greatest skills of all – how to swim.



## Awards:

1<sup>st</sup> Place in each of the following Divisions for both wetsuit and non-wetsuit categories

- YOUTH (13-17)
- PUPS (18-34)
- HAMMERHEADS (35-49)
- MASTERS (50-59)
- GRAND MASTERS (60+)



# PARTNERS



THE PROMO DEPARTMENT

