

ALEXANDRIA SWIM CLUB

Club Handbook



Winter Season

2010-2011

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this booklet is two-fold; to explain to new members just what the Alexandria Swim Club is and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers year after year. It should be read by all family members so that they may become familiar with important facts and concerns of the club.

WHY SWIM?

The U.S.A. age group swimming program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health by teaching healthy fitness habits.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Swimming is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth by many physicians and pediatricians. Why do doctors like it so much?

- Swimming does a great job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.
- Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.
- Swimming will bring enjoyment for a lifetime.

COACHING STAFF

HEAD COACH: David Molesworth

ASS'T. COACH: Cahil Collins

ASS'T COACH: Kim Stender

Club E-Mail :alexswimclub@charter.net

Club Website : www.alexswimclub.org

As we begin a new season, we want to thank-you for your participation and say that we look forward to a great season. We have returning as head coach, David Molesworth and are looking forward to working with Cahil Collins and Kim Stender as our assistant coaches.

Here are a few items that we hope will make this our BEST season yet!

1. Safety is number 1:

- Practice times are 'in pool' water times. Swimmers should come early and stay until the completion of their practice. If they must leave early, they should have a note of permission from their parents. We take attendance and feel responsible for your child. Good communication is the key to safety.
- The locker room is a place that is not well supervised. Therefore, all swimmers should please take short showers, turn off their showers, dress immediately and leave. As a parent, you are welcome to check in on your child, and expect them ready to leave 15 minutes after the pool time.
- Communicate any problems/questions you may have, to the coach, afterwards!

2. Teach and Have Fun:

- We will have skill-oriented practices, working specifically on stroke technique, starts, and turns.
- Don't expect an instant miracle....I just hope that we can improve skills and make swimming easier and more fun.
- Key Words- relax in the water, underwater streamline, smooth start, use the wall on turns, push-off hard.
- Starts are difficult with goggles, it take time to get used to them but they are worthwhile.

Again, I want to thank-you for your support, and I hope that your children enjoy and consider swimming as a 'lifetime experience.'

NORTHERN LIGHTS SWIM ASSOCIATION (NLSA) MEETS

The clubs in the NLSA are:

Alexandria	Bemidji	Fergus Falls	Morris
Minnewaska	Moorhead	Perham	Detroit Lakes

The NLSA was formed to give our swimmers the opportunity to participate in meets in our area. Many weekend meets are held quite a distance away, and because of our location, regular participation in most weekend meets is not always practical. Our association allows us the opportunity for sanctioned swim meets on a regular basis, a little less formal than the other weekend meets, and closer to home.

Regular season swim meets with the other swim clubs in the NLSA are usually held on weekday evenings. These meets are open to all swimmers, regardless of the individual times. Each swimmer may swim up to four individual events, or, any combination of relays and individual events up to four **at no charge**.

WEEKEND MEETS

In addition to the regular season NLSA meets, there are weekend meets in Minnesota and North Dakota that registered U.S.A. swimmers can compete in at their own expense. Weekend meets are strictly voluntary. They usually last two days, and give swimmers more opportunities to achieve qualifying times for the State Meets at the end of the season. They are also a lot of fun! Swimmers must register for weekend meets usually two to three weeks prior to the meet. A **fee** is collected at the time of registration to cover the events in which the swimmer registers. These are called pre-seeded meets. When the swimmer arrives at the meet, the events, heats, and lane assignments are printed in a program, which is sold by the host club. Information about weekend meets will be made available as we receive it.

The Club's main mode of communication is the bulletin board on the north

wall near the diving boards. Parents should check the information posted there at least twice weekly for meet sign-ups, money due dates, and schedule changes.

VERY BASIC SWIMMING RULES

Before your swimmer leaves you to go swim remind them of one good tip or rule for that particular event and send them to the Coach encouraging them to try hard!

Starts:

The swimmers are not allowed a false start. If they jump the start and the starter thinks they are trying to get an advantage (whether intentional or not- it does not matter), they will be taken out of the race. This is not like the Olympics where they are allowed two false starts.

Turns and finishes:

A. Freestyle: feet have to touch the wall

B. Backstroke turns: swimmers can:

1. be on their back when they grab and turn at the wall,
2. may turn over and grab the wall, or
3. turn over, finish the arm stroke they are currently doing, and then do a flip turn.

He/she must then push off on their back. At the finish, and at the finish of the backstroke

leg of the IM, a swimmer must finish on his/her back. A swimmer may not roll over and

grab the wall at the end of the race until they have first finished.

C. Breaststroke and Butterfly:

1. Swimmers have to touch with both hands at the same time.
2. A swimmer may not freestyle flutter kick off the wall.
3. When swimming butterfly, both arms must move at the same time.

Nutrition

Everything you do influences your performance, but your food choices have the most effect due to the long-term and short-term benefits. A proper diet, including proper selection of foods, will help your training and meet performance while also achieving a healthy lifestyle once you stop competing.

To help ensure a balanced diet, remember that there are no magical nutrition remedies. So forget the fads and eat a variety of wholesome foods from the four food groups- milk, meat, fruits & vegetables, and grains. Foods in these groups provide protein, fat, carbohydrates, fiber and all the necessary vitamins and minerals. Your ideal diet should include the following percentage of calories:

Carbohydrate: 50 - 60% Fat: 20 - 30% Protein: 14 - 18%

Training represents the period in which athletes spend most of their time. Therefore, this category represents the most critical period. During this time, a diet high in carbohydrates is important. This is important since it is not uncommon for athlete training 1 - 4 hours a day to burn 1200 - 2500 calories a day. The best way to replenish these calories is with a high carbohydrate diet. By being conscious of this and with the intake of high carbohydrate food or drink in the first 30 minutes following a workout, you can minimize depletion of energy stores and be more ready for the next day's practice or competition.

YOUR ROLE AS PARENTS

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes, including self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmers to experience success and to learn to deal with defeat while becoming healthy and physically fit. As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving, and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue swimming. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices and by coming to swimming meets.

Parents are not participants on the child's team. **Stay off the pool deck.** You can still contribute to the success experienced by your child and the team. Parents serve as role models and the children often emulate their attitudes. Be aware of this and strive to be positive models. Most importantly, show good sportsmanship, at all times, toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates.

United States Swimming is a non-profit organization made up of very dedicated volunteers. Interested parents donate their time, energy and expertise at every level from local swimming clubs to the National Board of Directors. You can be actively involved in your child's swimming program and can also be instrumental in strengthening swimming in the United States. With a positive attitude and a **willingness to lend a hand**, you will also have a great impact on your child's athletic environment, and love of swimming. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, see the club president!

Be enthusiastic and supportive!

Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful **not to impose** your own standards and goals. **Do not over burden** your child with winning or achieving best times. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, which will help your child develop a positive self-image.

Let the Coach, coach!

The best way to help your child achieve goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. If your child does make one, remember that this is a learning experience. Encourage your child's efforts and point out the positive things. The coach is the only one qualified to judge a swimmer's performance and technique. **Your role is to provide love and support.**

.....reprinted from the Parent's Handbook, United States Swimming

TIME STANDARDS- WHAT ARE THEY?

What are they? In this booklet you will see a listing of Minnesota Time Standards. There are two Time Standards, Short Course (25 yard pools) and Long Course (50 meter pools). The Alexandria pool is a 25 yard pool or short course. Most of the pools we will swim at are 25 yard pools, or short course. The St. Cloud and Island Park Pool in Fargo are 50 meter pools, or long course. The Summer A / B State and Champ Meets are held in long course pools, Winter, in short course pools. The time standards are listed by stroke and distance, being divided by sex and age group.

The time standards you will find listed note 'C', 'B', 'A', 'Champ', and 'Zone' times. The 8 and under group does not have the 'Zone' time standard. For example, if your swimmer is an 11 year old boy and swims the 100 yd. backstroke in 1:37.89, he would have a 'C' time in short course time standards. If your swimmer is a 13 year old girl who swims the 100 meter butterfly in 1:14.24, she would have a 'champ' time in long course time standards.

These are the times your swimmer needs to swim to qualify for various Swim Meets at the end of the season. The Northern Lights Swim Association holds a 'C' and below regional and a 'B' and above regional. To qualify for the 'C' regional, the swimmer must have swam the stroke at least one time during the season, and not achieved faster than a 'C' time. To qualify for the 'B' regional, the swimmer must have attained a 'B' or faster in the stroke. Many meets, and especially the end of the season meets set qualifying

standards from 'B' times to 'Zone' times. Meet information will identify the meet type and inform you of qualifying standards.

Help your child set and meet realistic goals. Try for a 'C' time- then try for a 'B' time. Do not be discouraged if they do not achieve an 'A' time. It's a high goal.

RECORD KEEPING & TIME STANDARDS

It is very important to keep track of your swimmer's times from the swim meets. Times will be needed to register your swimmer for week night NLSA meets and weekend meets. There should be time books for sale at weekend meets. These will help you to praise, encourage, and keep track of your swimmer's progress. If you need assistance with this, ask for help.

WINTER CALENDAR

The Northern Lights Swim Association season runs from early November to late-February. Our season will extend for those going to A/B/C State and for anyone qualifying for State Championship.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Please refer to the website at www.alexswimclub.org for practice dates/times/locations. Due to unforeseen conflicts, practice dates/times may change with little notice. Email updates will be sent out when schedule changes occur, please check your email or the online calendar on a regular basis for up-to-date information. Also please make sure we have updated email addresses to notify you of any changes.

COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

The head coach's job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Alexandria Swim Club coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for youngsters that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself, "to be the best they can be." Therefore, the coaches must be in total control of matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing youngsters in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be moved into a more challenging training group by the head coach.
2. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and training rest with Alexandria Swim Club coaching staff. Each groups' practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. (It is the parent's job to offer love and understanding regardless of their youngster's performance. **(Don't coach. Leave that to the staff)**)
4. Making relay teams is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff. It is the swimmer's and the parent's responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.
5. The four competitive strokes taught are: free, back, breaststroke, and butterfly. Events are offered in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age-group of the swimmer. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes swum by one swimmer called the individual medley. Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle (medley relay).

I. DISCIPLINE

- A. Coaches may discipline swimmers on the first offense for:
 - 1) disrespect towards the coaching staff, 2) locker room misconduct, 3) fighting, and 4) stealing.
- B. If the offense occurs during practice, the swimmer will be suspended from the practice. If at a meet, the swimmer will be suspended for the rest of the meet . In addition, parents will be notified by the coach or board.

II. RULES FOR MEET PARTICIPATION

- A. Swimmers must practice during the week of a meet. An exception would be if a swimmer misses practice because of a family event.

- B. Athletes who are or will be missing practices for an extended period of time, (i.e. one week-for whatever the reason, immediately prior to a meet) should, if not for safety reasons only, reconsider, resume practices, and sign up for a later meet.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW.....

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through the first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could.

BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

1. Arrive at the pool at least 30 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information handed out to all Alexandria Swim Club members.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's swim bag. The team usually sits in one place, together, so look for some familiar faces. Make sure your swimmer has his/her cap, goggles and towel. Parents find a spot to sit in the spectator section.
3. Kids find the Coach and check in. Coach will tell them where to go and what to do.
4. Once "checked in", the coach will write each event-heat-lane number on your swimmer's forearm in permanent ink. This will help him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or look for on the display board.
5. It will now be time for the warm-up. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold

day- he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go fast.

Sit and slip in entries are required at all meets. Those failing to do so may be disqualified.

6. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled down.
7. The meet will usually start about 10 minutes after the warm-ups are deemed over.
8. According to USA Swim Rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call or the conduct of the meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
9. Heat Sheets/Program- A heat sheet is usually for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets/programs usually sell for anywhere from \$1.00 - \$7.00 depending on the length of the meet. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of 'seed time.' When the team entries are sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as 'no-time' or 'NT'. A 'no-time' swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

WHEN THE MEET STARTS

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event number he/she is swimming (again, that is why they should have the numbers on their arm.) He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
2. A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and /or some meets list them on a display board. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggles. Generally girls' events are odd-numbered and boys' events are even-numbered.
3. The swimmer swims their race.
4. After each race:
 - a. He/she should ask the timers (behind the blocks at each lane) for his/her time.

- b. He/she should go immediately to their coach for any discussion.
5. Things you, as a parent, can do immediately after each swim:
 - a. Tell your swimmer what they did well! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are.
 - b. Tell your swimmer to relax and look forward, together, to the next race.
 - c. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or eat (light).
 - d. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called.
6. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents can go home. Make sure to check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is through and free to go.

A DISAPPOINTING SWIM?

If a child has a poor race and comes to you feeling bad, talk about the good things. The first thing you say is, "Hey, you tried hard." Then you can go on and talk about the good things the child did. You never should have a discussion over-emphasizing the negative aspects.

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things and the next race.

WHAT TO TAKE TO THE MEET

1. Most important: swim suit, goggles, cap and towel.
2. Towels: your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
3. Something to sit on. Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers and you will be spending a lot of time on it, (This is for weekend meets-mainly)

4. Sweat suits: bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy. (outdoor weekend meets, especially)
5. T-shirts: Two or three. Same reason as #4.
6. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, Game Boys...anything to pass time.
7. Each swimmer should bring a small cooler. They usually need snacks at the longer meets. Suggestions for items to bring: Drinks: Hi-C, fruit juice, water, and Gatorade. Snacks: granola bars, fun fruits, yogurt, dry cereal, Jell-O cubes, and sandwiches.

**Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other veteran Alexandria Swim Club parent for help or information. These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to 'race' and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

****SPECIAL PARENT'S NOTE****

Indoor pool areas is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! Dress in shorts and t-shirts. If cold outside for an indoor meet, put a pair of sweats on over your pool outfit.

For outdoor, summer meets, pack for all kinds of weather. It's not always sunny and warm. Weather can change quickly, as well, so bring outerwear appropriate for rain or shine.