

# Alameda Island Aquatics



## Member Handbook

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## 1. WELCOME TO ALAMEDA ISLAND AQUATICS!

Our goal is to provide an opportunity for children to excel at the sport of competitive swimming and to learn good sportsmanship. The Islanders strive to provide a superior quality program that accommodates all levels of proficiency from novice to national competitor. This handbook contains information concerning procedures, prices, and participation expected of swimmers and parents. You'll find after reading the handbook that being a member of a swim team is a family commitment. We hope that you'll make every effort to stay informed, assist with team operations and fundraising, and enjoy the benefits of this successful team to the fullest.

## 2. PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The Islander program is based on two objectives. The first objective is the development of the child in an environment that emphasizes the fun in being a competitive swimmer. The second objective is the development of the athlete to reach his or her fullest potential as a swimmer, to be the "best he or she can be." To this end, the Islander program is designed for the long-term goals of successful swimming. Members of the Islanders range in ability from five-year-old beginners to nationally ranked seniors. We strive to be one of the strongest teams in California with each member being a valuable contributor in his or her own unique way. Swimming is a fantastic sport that teaches children many life lessons.

## 3. TEAM ORGANIZATION

The Islanders are part of the national swimming governing body known as USA Swimming (<http://www.usaswimming.org>.) USA Swimming governs swimming throughout the United States, from beginners all the way to the US Olympic Team. USA Swimming is divided into geographical regions called the Local Swimming Committees (LSC). The Islanders belong to the Pacific LSC (<http://www.pacswim.org>), which covers most of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Pacific LSC is further divided into six zones. The Islanders belong to Zone 2, which roughly covers the East Bay.

Alameda Island Aquatics is a non-profit 501.3.C corporation governed by the team by-laws. An annually elected Board of Directors and parent-staffed committees run the team.

If a problem arises, first speak to your child's coach. The team President, and the Board Members also serve as good listeners and will look into the matter. Please remember that all of these people have the swimmers' and the team's best interests in mind, and they will do their best to help. Team members are expected to always uphold team policies in word and deed.

## 4. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The governing body of the Islanders is the Board of Directors. The team by-laws define the structure of the Board and there are currently 8 positions on the Board:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

- Membership
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Novice/Fundraising
- Head Coach/Zone 2 Representative (Filled by the Head Coach)

Team parents fill the board positions. The term of a board position is one swim year, from September 1 to August 31 of the next year. Each September the team votes on a new Board of Directors at the General Team Meeting held during the Awards Banquet. Board meetings are held monthly or more frequently if required.

In addition, there are many other roles that must be filled to effectively run a swim team. Some of those roles are shown below. See the Islander web site at:

<http://www.alamedaislanders.org> for a list of the people currently serving in these positions.

The Islanders are always in need of new volunteers. Parent volunteers fill all Board positions and committees. There is a place for each parent's skills, and by working together the swimmer's development can be maximized. If you are able and willing to help with any of these positions, or find a need that requires a resource, please contact any Board member or your swimmer's coach. Help is always needed and appreciated.

## 5. SWIM PROGRAM

There is a place for swimmers of all ages and abilities on the Islanders. Presently, we have four practice groups: a Novice Group and Groups 1, 2, and 3. These groups are based loosely on age, but ability, level of participation and dedication to swimming also contribute to group placement decisions. Swimmers are placed in groups based on the evaluation of the coaches. If a swimmer feels s/he has been placed in the wrong group, it is important for her/him to talk to their coach. Coaches are the only ones authorized to make group changes, not the swimmer, the swimmer's parents, or Board Members. We recognize that greater success comes from the correct placement of the swimmers, and we will do our best to evaluate and place all swimmers accordingly.

The team recognizes that there may be situations where a swimmer must attend one or more practices in a group other than the one to which s/he is assigned. These situations may be the result of scheduling conflicts on particular days or may be necessary to help the swimmer transition into more challenging workouts. Each situation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the coaches from both involved groups, and if all are in agreement (swimmer, coaches, and parent), the swimmer may split workouts among more than one group. For billing and administrative purposes, however, the swimmer is still considered to be a member of the group to which s/he has been "officially" assigned.

### 5.1. NOVICE GROUP

This group is run on a seasonal basis in the Spring and Fall to train incoming members in the four competitive strokes. There are minimum skill requirements to join; the Novice Program is not intended to teach non-swimmers how to swim. Practices are 45 minutes each day, usually four days per week. Novice programs generally run for 3-6 weeks. At the end of the Novice Program swimmers are either advanced to Group 1 or asked to take additional lessons and return to a subsequent Novice Program.

## 5.2. GROUP 1

This training group is comprised of novice to beginning/intermediate swimmers. These swimmers are generally beginning their assimilation into year-round swimming. The major focus in this group is introducing and developing the biomechanics of all four competitive strokes. Starts, turns, and dives are also introduced. In addition, swimmers in this group may be introduced to training devices such as the pace clock, the use of fins and pull buoys, and games that provide fun in the midst of a learning environment.

**Emphasis:** The focus of Group 1 is to learn the competitive strokes while developing an enjoyment for the sport.

**Competition:** Swimmers in this group are expected to begin going to low-level meets about once a month. The focus here is on participation, enjoyment, and an introduction to competition.

## 5.3. GROUP 2

This training group is comprised of swimmers who have gained the ability and knowledge to begin implementation of their skills into a workout scenario. An equal amount of time is spent on both stroke mechanics and training concepts.

**Emphasis:** The focus of Group 2 is to firm up the concepts of stroke mechanics and to begin to forge an understanding of the relationship between swim training and competitive swimming success. Although the emphasis is not on cumulative yardage, the introduction of training different energy systems is introduced.

**Competition:** Swimmers are expected to compete in 1 meet per month.

## 5.4. GROUP 3

This group is the highest level of age group swimming on the Islanders. Swimmers commit to an increased training regimen. Planning for the swim season is emphasized. Building the foundation for a well-rounded swimmer continues, however some specialization is introduced as individual aptitudes are discovered. Athletes continue to learn about how to train and why they train. Goal setting is emphasized more at this level. Swimmers are expected to attend workouts on a regular basis. A high level of workout attendance is required. The assumption is that swimmers in this group are serious about improving and developing to their fullest potential. Swimmers are expected to compete in scheduled team meets and must be willing to swim different and longer events. Out of the water training such as running, dry land and weight training are a regular part of conditioning. Swimmers strive to compete at high-level meets including: junior/senior meets, Junior Olympics, Far Westerns, Sectionals, and National level meets. Swimmers swim in 1-2 team meets per month.

**Emphasis:** The focus Group 3 is on developing the swimmer to the peak of their potential. Swimmers who complete group 3 have gone on to swim at the college level and a few have even competed in US Olympic Trials.

**Competition:** Swimmers should be competing in 1–2 team meets per month.

## 5.5. HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMERS

This program is offered to students who participate in high school water polo in the Fall, and high school swimming in the Spring. They are given a special price break to swim between these seasons (Dec.–Feb.) to keep in shape. Dues for this program must be paid in full at the start of the applicable period.

The underlying theme of the Islanders swim program is a steady and continuous progress. Technique instruction is uniform throughout the entire program, and each step up the ladder is a well-planned progression to aid the child’s total growth and development, both physically and mentally.

## 6. COACHES

The Islander coaching staff consists of seasoned coaching veterans with many years of swim coaching experience. See the Islander web site at <http://www.alamedaislanders.org> for more information on the Islander coaches.

## 7. TEAM UNIFORMS / CLOTHING

Upon joining the team, each swimmer receives an Islander swim cap. Additional caps may be purchased from the coaches at a nominal charge. Swimmers are required to wear a team cap at all swim meets. Team suits are optional attire and are offered at cost to all swimmers. Orders are taken periodically throughout the year. Goggles, fins, and pull buoys are available from vendors at meets, on line and at various sporting goods stores. Talk to your coach and other parents to see where the best deals are. In addition, we now have several items of clothing that can be ordered from the “Team Store.” These items include Islander parkas (great for winter meets), warm-up suits, sweatshirts, sweatpants, T-shirts, and swim caps. Please contact the Team Store Manager for more information.

## 8. MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Membership in Alameda Island Aquatics is open to any swimmer wishing to take part in the program and who meets the minimum team criteria (being able to swim 25 yards freestyle). After an initial tryout, the swimmer is given a one-week trial period, and at the conclusion of the week, the swimmer and coach will confer and determine group placement. The initial tryout is generally given at the end of practice for each of the respective groups.

## 9. ANNUAL AND MONTHLY COACHING FEES

The annual fee pays for the **USA Swimming registration card** (required for every swimmer participating in Alameda Island Aquatics) and miscellaneous administrative team fees such as most relay entries, postage, team supplies and awards. The annual fee applies per swimmer. **There are no sibling discounts for this fee and the fee is not refundable if the swimmer quits any time during the swim year.**

When joining the Islanders, you will be given a USA Swimming Registration Application to complete. The cost of this registration (\$60.00 as of 9/1/2009, subject to change by USA Swimming) is included in your annual fee. The application should be completed and returned to the Membership Chair. You must be registered to swim workouts or to compete in meets. If you're transferring from another team, you must submit a new registration application and swim "unattached" for 120 days.

The remainder of the annual fee defrays the costs of administration of the team. This \$100.00 fee is prorated on a quarterly basis based on when you join the team. Our swim year is from September 1, to August 31. Swimmers joining in September - November will pay the full 100.00 fee; swimmers joining in December – February will pay a \$75.00 fee; March – May \$50.00 and June – August \$25.00.

Islander annual and monthly coaching fees go directly toward paying the coaches' salaries, pool rentals, and other team expenses. The coaches' salaries are based on an annual figure. Likewise, the monthly fees are based on an annual figure and are due monthly. There are no discounts during months with fewer workout days due to holidays or the team's traditional two-week break in late August. Monthly coach fees are not prorated.

**All fees are due the first of each month.** Fees are considered delinquent after a two-week grace period. If fees are not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for which they are due, a **\$10 late fee per swimmer** will be charged. If the account balance is not paid in full by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month, the swimmer's coach will be notified and the child will not be allowed to swim until the matter is resolved. All monthly fees must be kept current for a family to be considered a "member in good standing."

Monthly coaching fees should be made payable to Alameda Island Aquatics and mailed to the address on your invoice; please do not give payments to your coach. Please indicate the swimmer's name and to which month the payment applies on your check. No cash payments will be accepted.

For information on current Islander membership rates see our web site at <http://www.alamedaislanders.org>.

### 9.1. SIBLING DISCOUNTS

Families with more than one swimmer receive the following discounts on the Monthly Coaching Fee (the Annual Fee is not discounted):

- 1<sup>st</sup> swimmer (highest group) pays 100%
- 2<sup>nd</sup> swimmer pays 75% of their rate
- 3<sup>rd</sup> swimmer pays 50% of their rate

- 4<sup>th</sup> swimmer pays 25% of their rate

## 9.2. FUNDRAISING REQUIREMENTS

There are Fundraising Participation Requirements for each family. Please see below under “Parent Participation - Fundraising” for more information.

## 10. LEAVE OF ABSENCE / LEAVING TEAM / REINSTATEMENT

If you plan to take a break from swimming, you must give **30 days written notice**. You are responsible for all fees until the end of the 30 days. You must send the **written notice** to the Membership Chairman ([membership@alamedaislanders.org](mailto:membership@alamedaislanders.org)) and the Billing Manager. Simply not showing up or letting the coach know you will be absent is not sufficient notification to the team that you intend to go on break.

Team members who provide the required 30-day notice to membership for a break of one or more months (other than high school or medical) will be retained on the team roster. No monthly charge will be assessed for this type of break; however, a reinstatement charge of \$30.00 will be billed upon return along with the current monthly coaching fee.

If your child is quitting the team, you still must give 30 days’ written notice. You are responsible for all fees until the end of the 30 days. You must send the written notice to the Membership Director ([membership@alamedaislanders.org](mailto:membership@alamedaislanders.org).)

If you leave and rejoin the team within the same swim season of September 1, to August 31, you will be assessed a \$30.00 reinstatement fee. Please notify the membership chairman if you intend to rejoin the team during the swim season so that we may maintain you on our roster. There is no fee during the swimmer’s absence.

High school swimmers who take a leave of absence to swim with their high school teams will be assessed a \$10/month maintenance fee, as they are technically still part of the team. These swimmers may continue to compete with the team as long as they register for meets as Unattached-AIA. These swimmers continue to receive the monthly newsletter and other team notifications.

Medical leave is not subject to the reinstatement fee if accompanied by written notice with Board approval.

**\*\* In order to remain eligible for team awards at the end of the year, families MUST pay all team fees, stay “current”, and be in good standing. High school only swimmers are not eligible.**

## 11. FINANCIAL AID

Alameda Island Aquatics offers financial aid for up to six swimmers. This program is offered in six-month terms. At the end of each term, the program is once again opened up to the entire membership. We are committed to offering this opportunity to as many swimmers in need as we are able.

All financial aid packages shall be equal to 50% of normal dues for a single child swimmer. The term of financial aid shall be 6 continuous months, consisting of the periods of **Sept. 1 through Feb. 28** and **Mar. 1 through Aug. 31**. Swimmers receiving financial aid for one particular period may be eligible for further aid, but **must complete new applications for each 6-month period**. Sibling discounts still apply to additional children in the family, even if only one child receives financial aid.

Each financial aid application shall be completed by a parent, in which they briefly describe circumstances of the family's financial need and the family's level of volunteer contribution to Alameda Island Aquatics to date. The swimmer's coach will provide information regarding the level of dedication of the swimmer. Note that this does not exclude new swimmers from receiving financial aid. A new swimmer who shows high interest and a family with financial need and a willingness to volunteer will be considered.

A three-person Nominating Committee composed of at least one Board Member (none of whom shall be a family relation of any applicant) shall convene to review applications in February and August of each year. It will screen, evaluate, and rank individual applications solely on the basis of the three criteria listed above and recommend no more than the maximum number of applications allowed for ratification by the Board for any term. Only members in good standing per the Treasurer may be considered. The recommendation shall be collectively ratified by a majority vote of the voting Board or returned to the Nominating Committee for reconsideration.

All financial information will be kept strictly confidential.

## 12. PARENT PARTICIPATION

Alameda Island Aquatics is dedicated to swimming excellence. This goal requires extreme effort by each swimmer and swimming family. While the coaches have well defined, paying positions, parent and family volunteers handle the actual operation of the team.

Since every swimmer benefits from the activities available on the Islanders, the Board of Directors feels there should be additional duties and responsibilities set forth as a policy for ALL parents. These responsibilities can be considered minimum standards expected of parents. They include:

**Serving on a committee or managing a task:** All families are expected to serve.

**Serving one full day at Islander-hosted swim meets:** Swim meets are a major source of our fundraising budget. In order to host well run meets, we need as many parents as possible to help with the numerous tasks associated with running each meet. Each family is expected to serve at least one day.

**Fundraising:** Each family will be expected to participate in all fundraising events: the annual Swim-a-thon, Islander-hosted swim meets, Islander meet ads, and other annual fundraising drives. These events are critical to the operation of the team.

While the monthly fees mostly cover the coaches' salaries and the cost of pool rental, a portion of these costs and other team expenses, such as annual awards, meet equipment rental, etc., are

not covered by the dues structure. As a result, the Islanders have an aggressive and successful fundraising program to ensure that we can provide the best and most complete program possible for our swimmers.

The team will award Community Service hours to middle and high school students who help at a meet. However, those hours will not also be credited for participation points. Please bring a community service form to be signed at the meet.

## 12.1. MINIMUM FUNDRAISING PARTICIPATION

Each family will be responsible for minimum participation levels (backed by parent donations, if necessary) in the team's designated fundraising efforts. These include: Islander meet program ads (\$30 per meet per family, two meets per year), and the annual Islander Swim-a-thon (\$50 per swimmer). These "per swimmer" levels apply to families with up to three children. A family with four or more swimmers only has to meet the three-swimmer goal.

## 12.2. SWIM MEETS

There are meets that we sponsor, and there are meets that we attend that are sponsored by other teams. Parents and volunteer officials run all swim meets. We need to represent our team in a positive manner and distribute jobs fairly among team parents. At all swim meets, parents are expected to help with "timing" (recording the times of the swimmers). Timing is simple to learn. The Islanders are often assigned to a specific lane to time at a meet. Occasionally, the host team doesn't assign us a lane, but simply asks for timers to cover all lanes. It is our responsibility to take a chair and help out with timing. Shifts are usually 1–2 hours, and refreshments are served to the timers. If you have other small children, please make arrangements with another parent to trade watching them while you time, and you can watch theirs when they time. Make sure you fill out the sign-up sheet provided by the Timing Assignment Manager or tell the Point System Manager that you have timed so that you receive credit for your time served. Points are recorded through the team website at <http://www.alamedaislanders.org>.

At meets that the Islanders host, our team runs the entire meet. All members are required to work one full day of every Islander-hosted swim meet. Jobs include a wide variety of tasks from Meet Director to snack bar to cleanup committee. All parents/guardians are expected to do a job in whatever capacity they can to help run the meet efficiently. Please see the "Swim Meets" section for more information on what is required in the area of family participation.

Parent participation at meets also includes making sure your children, and any swimmer in your care, get to their events on time. Proper nutrition and plenty of sleep are important in preparing a swimmer to do his or her best. Be sure your child is provided with appropriate clothing, towels, and food for the day. It is best to dress in layers and have an extra suit, especially on cold days, to change into. *BE SURE ALL CLOTHING AND SWIM EQUIPMENT IS MARKED WITH CHILD'S NAME AND TEAM NAME.* Lost items cannot be returned unless marked. Bring games, cards, or coloring books to meets for use between swimming events. No balls or Frisbees please! It is important that the swimmer doesn't get tired between events. Try to keep them out of the sun.

It is a good idea to speak with your child's coach ahead of time to find out when your child needs to arrive at the meet for warm-up!

### 12.3. PARTICIPATION POINT SYSTEM

All families are required to earn **20 participation points** per swim year (Sept. 1–Aug. 31) unless your swimmer is a high school swimmer or new to the Islanders (see below for more information.) Points may be earned in various ways. Generally, points are awarded on the basis of one point for each hour of service on any task. However, a number of key team jobs are assigned points on an annual basis by the Board. For more information about these jobs, please contact the Board. Point goals will be pro-rated for families joining mid-year.

Each family will be responsible for keeping track of points they earn and informing the Point System Manager in order to receive credit. When available and posted, it's imperative that members use the Job Signup form on the team website. This electronic form makes it easier to track volunteer hours and determine areas where we may need more help. It's a first come, first serve system so sign up early. It is a good idea to look around for a sign-in sheet at any function, so your participation can be verified. Points will be credited upon completion of a function. Current point status may be seen by logging into your account on the team web site at <http://www.alamedaislanders.org>.

If you fail or choose not to participate in the above-mentioned Point System, you may pay a non-participation fee of \$20.00 per hour you fall short, or a maximum of \$400. Families will be assessed this fee at year-end if they have not reached their respective point goals.

Our goal is not to earn money from penalties! We need your help along the way! Any volunteer organization can only be successful with the efforts and hard work of its members. Besides being a gratifying way to spend your time, it's also a great way to get to know other people on the team.

### 12.4. POINTS FOR FAMILIES WITH HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMERS

High School Swimmers who swim during the Winter only (between water polo and swim season), **no points** are required. For those who swim during the Winter and also during the Summer months, **5 points** are required.

### 12.5. POINTS FOR FAMILIES NEW TO THE TEAM

New families joining at the beginning of the swim season will be required to accrue only **10 points** their first year. Families joining the team after the Spring Membership Open House/Novice Program will not be required to earn points for the remainder of that swim year and will be considered new families the following swim year, which is considered their first full year on the team.

## 13. CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Competitive swimmers should work out at least three days a week to stay in shape and improve. Four to five days per week is more beneficial. The older the swimmer, the more workouts he/she should attend.

Swimmers are encouraged and expected to participate in team meets. **Please communicate with your child's coach for details.** Our New Member Mentor, your coach, Board Members and other parents can help you in filling out meet sheets and providing other information necessary to make going to swim meets the FUN part of the program.

## 14. PARENT ATTITUDE

Your attitude is vitally important to your child's overall success as a competitive swimmer and how he/she feels about himself/herself in the future. **Please be positive and supportive at all times.**

It is necessary to promote and demonstrate "good sportsmanship" among all our swimmers. Swimmers and parents should encourage and support fellow teammates and coaches at workouts and swim meets. Negative attitudes are discouraged at all times.

And while it may seem like a point too obvious to require saying, your child's commitment to the sport will mirror your commitment to the team. Each of us is, in effect, a part owner of this team, and this team exists for the sole purpose of providing the kids with pool access and the finest coaching available. Show them how much you value their commitment by demonstrating your own commitment to the Islanders.

## 15. TEAM COMMUNICATION

Staying informed of the team affairs is a vital aspect of being a "swim parent." There are various means available to keep abreast of important events, announcements, schedule changes, upcoming meets, and social happenings. Feel free to contact your coach or a Board Member for any reason, and consult the following:

**Newsletter:** Our newsletter is published monthly. A link to the newsletter can be found on our monthly invoice and there is a link to all newsletters on our web page (<http://www.alamedaislanders.org>.)

**Islander Website:** The team website contains plenty of useful information, including the current monthly newsletter, practice schedules, meet and events calendar, team records, volunteer point records and fun photos. Check it out at <http://www.alamedaislanders.org>.

**Email:** The team maintains your email address and uses email as the primary method to communicate key information to the team. It is very important that we have a valid e-mail address that you check regularly in our files. Please keep your email address current with the Membership Director. We can maintain two e-mail addresses if two people would like to receive Islander updates.

**Board Meetings:** Board meetings are held regularly, roughly monthly. The general membership is encouraged to submit concerns either through a written request to the Board for an agenda item to be discussed by the Board. These items need to be submitted at least one week prior to the meeting to make sure it gets on the agenda. Minutes of Board Meetings are kept on file and available from the Secretary upon request.

**General Membership Meetings:** These meetings are held quarterly, and all families are required to have someone in attendance. Board elections, by-law changes, and other important team matters are decided at these meetings. We also take care of critical team business with regard to our own Islander Meets, Zone 2 business, and the Alameda City Swim Championships. It's also a chance to interact directly with the Board, including the Head Coach. Minutes of General Meetings are kept on file and available from the Secretary upon request.

## 16. SWIMMERS' RULES

1. Be on time for practice. If your coach has a dry land workout, he/she may request that you be at practice early. Please communicate with your coach. Swimmers are to arrive no earlier than 10 minutes prior to practice time. Following practice, swimmers are to be picked up within 10 minutes of the finish. Swimmers being dropped off early or picked up late because of carpool arrangements are to be supervised by that carpool driver.
2. Every single practice begins with a warm-up and ends with a warm-down. It is extremely important that each swimmer is in the water at the beginning of practice and completes the entire warm-up set. This not only mentally gears the swimmer up for the practice, but also more importantly, raises the athlete's core temperature, which in turn loosens tendons, ligaments, and musculature for the demands that lay ahead. Warm-down reduces heart rate and breaks up lactic acid and other waste accumulated from the workload. This not only helps at the end of the workout, but also has an effect on recovery period for the following workout the next day. Most importantly, it is crucial in terms of injury reduction.
3. Attend practice regularly.
4. Bring your equipment and be ready, on deck, for workout: suits, caps, goggles, fins, buoys, paddles, etc.
5. NO PARENTS are allowed on the pool deck during practice. You may sit in the stands to observe practice.
6. The coach is in charge of discipline. He/she has the final word.
7. No talking when the coach is talking. Listen, learn, and collect as much knowledge as you can.
8. Treat all facilities and equipment with care and pride.
9. There is NO running anywhere on the pool center premises. There is no horseplay, climbing, or playing around the fences.
10. All food, candy, soda, and chewing gum are not to go beyond the pool lobby. None of these items are to be taken into the dressing rooms. All trash is to be put in trashcans.

11. Be neat and orderly with clothes in the locker rooms. Do not tamper with others' belongings. Leave valuables at home.
12. Swimmers will obey all directions from the pool staff, coaching staff, and membership parents and do as they are told in a respectful manner.
13. Swimmers are NOT to engage in any language or action against another team member under any circumstances. This includes fighting, hazing, or other forms of inappropriate behavior.
14. Head lice should be treated as it is at school—a “nit-free policy.” The swimmer should stay away from workout until appropriate treatments are finished and all lice are gone. The coach should be informed of any instance of head lice.

## 17. DISCIPLINE

Discipline from the coaches is at the coaches' discretion. Each child is different and will probably be handled differently, just as they are coached differently. Coaches will be in contact with parents if a discipline problem develops, and a cooperative effort will be made to work out such problems. Parents' support of the coaches' discipline will be appreciated.

All infractions will be reported to the coach on duty. The coach will discuss first offenses with the swimmer.

Recurring offenses will be dealt with as necessary. This could include meetings between the coach, Head Coach, parents, swimmers and/or an Islander Board Member. Suspension or dismissal is an alternative if offenses keep recurring.

## 18. AWARDS

Alameda Island Aquatics offers many opportunities for swimmers to earn awards. At most swim meets, swimmers have the chance to earn ribbons, medals, pins, and sometimes trophies. In addition to these awards, we also honor our swimmers at our annual **Awards Banquet** held each Fall. At this event the coaches acknowledge improvement, attendance, fundraiser participation, outstanding performance, team records, and time achievements with certificates, trophies, and plaques. Other incentives are also awarded at the banquet.

To qualify for the annual Islander awards and trophies, the swimmer must be an active current member in good standing of Alameda Island Aquatics. The following are the guidelines for these criteria:

**Complete Year:** The swim year is from Sept. 1–Aug. 31.

**Active Members:** Members must have all coaching fees, yearly fees, and any miscellaneous monies owed the team paid in full for each month. Eligible swimmers must participate in at least 100 workouts during the swim year.

**New Members:** Swimmers must swim at least 100 workouts prior to the end of the season in August to meet the one-year requirement.

**Participation Certificate:** Swimmers who don't complete the 100 workouts will receive certificates of accomplishment to acknowledge their participation.

**Five and Ten Year Awards:** This special award represents consecutive active membership with Alameda Island Aquatics.

\*\*\* Swimmers who leave the team and pay no Maintenance Fee lose seniority for awards. They must accrue their 100 workouts from the time they rejoin the team.

In addition to the Awards Banquet, the Islanders periodically award other recognition items such as "branded" swim caps to those swimmers who achieve Junior Olympic (JO), Far Western (FW), Sectional and other time standards. These caps are to be worn at the JO, FW and Sectional meets in recognition of the swimmer's achievement.

## 19. SWIM MEETS

There are several kinds of swim meets:

**Islander-Hosted Meets:** Meets we sponsor, organize, and run.

**Team Effort Meets:** Meets at which 100% team attendance is our goal.

**Team Meets:** Meets selected by our coaches as part of a carefully constructed schedule.

**Optional Meets:** Meets offered, but not required.

### 19.1. ISLANDER-HOSTED MEETS

Families of team members help with all aspects of Islander meets. Some of the duties include set up and clean up, check-in, helping with the Colorado Timing system, the office computer system, Clerk of Course, "runner," Head Timer, Meet Marshall, Snack Bar, Hospitality, and Awards.

In addition to our Islander meets, every other year we host the Alameda City Swim Championships in cooperation with the Alameda Recreation and Park Department.

**All Families are required to work at the team-hosted meets.** If the team meet is a "split meet" (i.e., a meet at which swimmers are divided into two groups and the two groups swim separately), families are still required to work THE ENTIRE DAY. All families must serve one full day of each Islander-hosted swim meet.

If you are unable to attend the meet, you are still required to help in the planning of the meet in advance. You must contact the Meet Director to make arrangements.

Each family is obligated to secure a **\$30 ad for the Islander Meet Program**. The family can place (and pay for) the ad themselves, or they can secure an ad and \$30 contribution from a business or organization. If a family does not secure an ad for the program, \$30 will be added to their next monthly invoice.

### 19.2. TEAM EFFORT MEETS

Full Islander attendance is the goal for these meets. There are usually five per year: the Zone 2 Championship Meet in February, two Islander-sponsored meets (usually in Spring and Fall), the 14-Under Relay Meet in May, and the Alameda City Swim Championship in August. Coaches will attend. Impressive attendance numbers and performances by Islander swimmers are a source of pride for the whole team.

### 19.3. TEAM MEETS

These meets, selected by the coaches each season, usually include at least one per month for a given class of swimmer, and at least one coach will attend each day. All Islander swimmers are encouraged to attend Team Meets.

## 19.4. OPTIONAL MEETS

These meets are offered, but not required. Your child may desire to enter because of a special event, or because they are aging up and strive to get a better time or to qualify for a championship meet such as Far Westerns. **Ask your coach for approval to attend these meets.** Your coach may or may not attend, and there are strict rules about swimmers attending without their coach present (including a requirement that any “coach-less” swimmer link up with another team’s coach for the day). All swimmers must adhere to these rules.

## 20. SWIMCONNECTION

The Islanders sponsor free membership to SwimConnection for all swimmers. If you are participating in meets this is a great way to obtain a record of times from prior meets, determine the swimmer’s next goal and to enter upcoming meets. We strongly encourage all team members to join. Go to the Swimconnection web site at <http://www.swimconnection.com/pc/exec/member/AccountView>, click on the orange “signup” button and follow the instructions. Although it might seem that you will have to pay, selecting AIA under Team Affiliation eliminates that requirement.

If you plan to enter meets on line, also sign up for SwimConnection Online Meet Entry (OME). You must register at <http://ome.swimconnection.com> in addition to your main SwimConnection registration.

## 21. SWIM MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE

Alameda Island Aquatics encourages all swimmers to attend swim meets. Swim meets can be a bit imposing for new swimmers, younger swimmers, and also new swim parents/guardians. Hopefully, this guide will prepare both the swimmers and parents/guardians for what to expect at a swim meet. Prepared, the new swimmer will be much more likely to enjoy his/her swimming experience. Also, with good meet attendance, your team can better organize relay teams that are fun for the kids. Swim meets are an integral part of a competitive swim team, and we hope you encourage your swimmer(s) to participate.

### 21.1. TYPES OF MEETS

Most meets you will attend will be multi-team meets. Teams from all over Northern California come to compete—some with only a few swimmers, others with many. The meets are routinely held on Saturdays and Sundays with some meets adding a Friday. Boys and girls swim in the same session but all events are single gender, so girls and boys don’t compete against each other. Dual Meets will have only two teams participating. They are great opportunities for new swimmers to experience their first meet.

Most meets will be grouped according to gender and age: 8 & Under, 9–10, 11–12, 13–14, 15–16, 17–18, and Open. Some meets may also add a “6 & Under” category. Meets will additionally categorize swim times into C, B, A, AA, JO, FW and PRT. Sometimes there is a ‘+’ sign, this can be read “... and faster.” If a meet is designated as a B/A meet, your child will need to meet a qualifying time before s/he can participate. New swimmers can compete in any meet with a C designation: C, C/B, or C/B/A+, etc. As a swimmer progresses, s/he will

be eligible to participate in the more challenging qualifying time meets such as Junior Olympics and Far Westerns.

Most meets use one of two lane lengths: SCY–Short Course Yards, which means the length of the pool is 25 yards long; or LCM–Long Course Meters, which means the pool is 50 meters long. Long Course season is typically in the Spring and Summer, and Short Course season is the rest of the year. There are usually Short Course meets somewhere year-round. There is a third lane length: SCM-Short Course Meters but we rarely encounter meets of this type.

Each event a swimmer participates in is timed by using electronic timing systems as well as stopwatches. This allows swimmers to track their progress as they become stronger and more experienced. SwimConnection maintains a record of all time for swimmers who are registered. The best way to keep track of your child’s times is to use SwimConnection. It is important to maintain a record of your child’s times as his/her fastest times will always need to be noted on entries in future meets.

## 21.2. THE MEET SHEET

The most important document for any meet is the Meet Sheet. Every meet has one and the Meet Sheet is a must-read document. The Meet Sheet defines the rules for the meet and includes information about where the meet will be held, including directions, which swimmers are qualified to swim in the meet, which events will be held at the meet and other information about warm-up, parking, etc. Meet sheets can be found on line at the Pacific Swimming web site (<http://www.pacswim.org>) and on the Online Meet Entry (OME) web site for a given meet. Once at the Pacific Swimming web site, hover the mouse over “Meets” at the top of the page and select the schedule for the year of the meet to be held. A new page will come up and you should be able to find the meet information based on the date the meet will be held. **Please read all information on meet sheets.**

## 21.3. SIGNING UP FOR A MEET

A swimmer must have a current and valid USA Swimming membership before signing up for any sanctioned meet. Failing to have a current USA Swimming membership may subject the team to penalties, so do not delay paying the annual or seasonal USA Swimming membership.

Each parent/guardian is responsible for entering their child(ren) in a meet. The Meet Sheet outlines how to enter the meet. Most meets may be entered on line, usually at <http://ome.swimconnection.com>, although there are sometimes other web sites used. Consult the meet sheet for details. Meets may also be entered via postal mail or hand delivery of entries, to avoid the on line fee. Most meets limit the number of entries so it is important to read the meet sheet immediately and enter early.

All meets have deadlines for entry; note that the deadlines may be different for on line and mail or hand-delivered entries. Most meets are “capped” with a maximum number of entries allowed. Entries for capped meets should be submitted as soon as possible to avoid being excluded from the meet. **Most meets close well in advance of the posted closing date so submit entries early.**

All meets require payment at the time of entry. Payment includes a fee for each event entered in addition to a fixed Pool Charge or Splash Fee, as indicated on the meet sheet. You can enter the entire meet or just individual days. For the beginner swimmer one day may be enough. However, if you are going to the meet, sign up for the maximum allowed events, also specified in the meet sheet (this does not include relay events, which are handled by the coaches), even if your swimmer is not confident about his/her ability.

Entry times must be provided on the entry form. Use the swimmer's fastest time (not most recent time) in each event from previous meets. If your swimmer has not yet competed in an event, ask his/her coach what his/her time should be. Most meets do not accept "No Time (NT)" entries. Dual Meets do not require entry forms as the coaches submit entries for Dual Meets. If you join SwimConnection and use SwimConnection OME to enter meets on line, your swimmer's fastest times will be automatically populated in the entry.

Occasionally, a meet will require teams to enter their swimmers as one group. The coaches will advise you if this is the case.

If you have any questions about meet entry, please ask your coach. Experienced parents and Board members can also be very helpful.

#### **21.4. BEFORE THE MEET**

Before the day of the meet, you should make sure you have a map or directions to the pool (see the Meet Sheet.) If it is a dual venue meet, verify with your coach which venue the team has been assigned. There can be last minute changes, so check team email or inquire with your coach. Some higher-level meets require overnight stays, so hotel arrangements may need to be made well ahead of time.

Swimmers should prepare their meet bag the night before to include: an extra suit, extra goggles, extra swim cap, three or more towels, two or three T-shirts, snacks (easy to digest high energy food), a water bottle (the most important), books to read, cards to play or other activities to keep themselves busy between events. A large towel, pad, or sleeping bag is also recommended to sit on.

The Islanders usually provide at least one shade canopy at each meet; frequently two are available. When possible, team members should sit together to show team spirit and support and to assist new parents with the process as well as helping other parents with their swimmers if they are timing. Do bring comfortable chairs to the meet. It is also useful to bring a pen and a highlighter for use with the Program.

#### **21.5. THE DAY OF THE MEET**

Coaches will advise all swimmers as to the time swimmers should arrive for warm-up. Please arrive with enough time for your swimmer to register at the check-in desk, get settled, and find the Islander coach to check with him/her before your swimmer has to jump in the water for warm-up (on time).

Events are posted on a wall or board in a central location. These postings show the heat and lane assignments for each swimmer in the event. Events are posted approximately 20 minutes before the event starts. It is important to check this information regularly, so your swimmer does not miss any events. Again, ask another team member or parent for help if

anything is unclear. After getting the heat and lane assignment, the swimmer must report their assignment to their Islander coach and receive any last-minute instructions and support. Swimmers then proceed to their lane with enough time, so that they don't have to rush or cause a delay. Usually, parents of new swimmers need to help their child with this process for a few meets.

Swimmers should learn to get their times after their swim from the lane recorder, and then report to their coach. Parents need to keep a record of their swimmer's official times. Again, the best way to do this is via SwimConnection. The official times are posted at all meets with all other results. You will need this information to fill out subsequent meet entries, which always get filled out with the swimmer's fastest times.

## **21.6. AT THE MEET**

Plan to arrive at the pool for the meet at least 15 minutes before the coach wants your swimmer there for warm-ups. Warm-ups usually begin 1–1.5 hours before the actual meet begins. You will have an opportunity to buy a Program. Programs are important because they detail each event with the participant's name and swim times entered. Take a moment to highlight each event your child is in.

Take some time to go with your swimmer to tour the key locations for the meet: the Sign-In Desk, where your swimmer needs to sign in (immediately) each day of the meet, circle and initial each event s/he will be swimming; locker rooms and bathrooms; Clerk of the Course, where heat and lane assignments and results will be posted. Locate where the rest of your team is situated; you should get settled there. Some find it helpful to write the event numbers on the swimmer's hand with a permanent marker or ballpoint pen. Participants who do not sign in at least 30 minutes before their individual event will be scratched from the remainder of the meet unless they re-check in with the Meet Referee (they will not be allowed to swim). Now your child is ready for warm-up!

## **21.7. MEET BEHAVIOR**

Meets are very crowded and busy events. 800+ swimmers are common during short-course season. When you add in the family, friends, coaches, officials and other people on deck, there can be up to 2000 people attending a meet. Good behavior is an important responsibility for all swimmers and spectators. There are some rules that everyone must follow at the pool:

1. Be courteous. There are many people crowded into a small space.
2. No running, ever.
3. Officials usually wear white shirts and blue pants or shorts. They are the authority at the meet. Listen to them. Officials have the authority to eject anyone who is misbehaving at a meet.
4. Meet Marshals usually wear orange vests at a meet. They are responsible for the safety of the swimmers at the pool. Listen to them.
5. Lifeguards are responsible for safety in the water. Listen to them.

6. Look around you before doing stretches. Make sure you are in a place where you will not hit anyone.
7. From the time the Referee blows the long whistle until after the heat has started, please stop talking if you are near the blocks. It is very distracting to the swimmers to hear "Go Joe!" right when the swimmers are expecting to hear the start tone. In some cases, this can (and has) cause a false start for the swimmer. If the Officials do not hear the crowd distract the swimmer, the swimmer will be disqualified from the event.
8. Time your arrival at the blocks to be a couple of minutes before your heat starts. If the event is 50 Freestyle it's possible you will have to be there a few heats early. If the event is 1650 Freestyle you will need to show up when the swimmers have about 200 yards to go. Early arrival results in crowding around the start area and can cause swimmers to miss their events because they are unable to get through the crowd in time. The officials expect swimmers to be at the blocks and ready to swim when the heat in the water has 50-75 yards to go.
9. Please respect those around you. No loud music, yelling, or saying anything that might be offensive to others.
10. Please pick up after yourself before you leave. Make sure you have all of your belongings: bags, suits, towels, chairs, ice chests, food, etc. Also please leave the area you occupied clean by throwing away all trash. Just like our meets, volunteers host other meets as well. It is not their responsibility to pick up other's trash.

## **21.8. WARM-UP**

You can't swim a good race without a good warm-up! Your child should check in with his/her coach first. Swimmers in warm-up lanes all swim down one side of the lane and back on the other side (circle swim.) There will generally be one lane designated for starting dives, which is organized by the coach and another lane dedicated to push-pace (swimmers warming up trying to swim a certain speed.) Swimmers should warm-up according to instructions from his/her coach. A warm-up area may also be available during the meet itself.

## **21.9. THE ROUTINE FOR THE SWIMMER**

Be aware of what event and heat is currently in the water, as your child's event may be next. If the swimmer needs to use the restroom, make sure s/he does so well in advance of the event. Once an event is "called," the officials do not wait very long for swimmers to come from other areas of the pool facility. A swimmer should repeatedly check the heat and lane assignment board prior to the event to know where and when to report to the lane to swim. Swimmers should be at their appointed lane during the event before theirs. Some swimmers like to take a towel or T-shirt to wear while waiting near the starting blocks. On a cool day, it can get quite cold when wet swimmers just stand around. Swimmers should always try to stay warm when possible. Swimmers should not use the timer's chairs as a place to put their towels, shoes, shirts and other items. Those chairs are reserved for the timers.

The Starting Official will announce the event and heat, and this is when the swimmer steps up to the block. Do not step ON the block until the Official signals that it's time by blowing

a single long whistle. Beginning swimmers have the option to dive from the side of the pool if they do not want to dive from the starting block. 25-yard events always start from the opposite side of the pool so understand where each heat is starting well before the heat is ready to begin. In many Long Course meets, all even heats start at one end of the pool, while odd heats start from the other. 50-meter events all start from one end, so it's important to pay attention to where each heat is starting. It is a good idea for the swimmer to ask their coach where their heat will start if the swimmer is not sure.

After each race, all clothing and towels should be collected. Each swimmer can ask the lane time for his/her individual time. Should an official meet your child after his/her race and hand over a DQ or Disqualification slip, don't worry! This is how everyone learns, and every swimmer will have it happen at some point no matter how experienced s/he may be. Officials are strict for young swimmers, to help them learn. The most frequent DQ slips for new swimmers are for stroke infractions. For experienced swimmers, the most DQ slips are for illegal turns, like the sloppy ones the coaches are always yelling about at practice! Officials are usually patient and good about explaining the error. Swimmers should take their DQ slip to their coach so that the coach can help them avoid the problem in the future.

Some time after an event completes event results will be posted. These show all swimmers official times and the placement in the event. Not everyone can win first place, but everyone can achieve a Personal Best Time! Always record the swimmer's time for each event in which the swimmer competes. If the swimmer has placed (usually 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> in their age group and time division, C/B/A, see the meet sheet for details), there will be an awards table, where s/he can check for ribbons, pins or medals toward the end of the meet.

Events pass quickly, at least for the first few hours. It's important to keep swimmers hydrated, so always encourage drinking water. After an event is the best time for a high-energy snack.

All swimmers are winners, and the children really do appreciate the encouragement and participation of family.

Good Luck!

## 21.10. NUTRITIONAL GUIDE FOR SWIMMERS

It is very important for athletes to learn good nutritional habits early. A proper diet, including proper selection of foods, will help training and performance while also achieving a healthy lifestyle. With guidance and reinforcement from parents, coaches and peers, swimmers can become aware of the foods that will benefit them the most.

The current belief, which has been tested and evaluated, is that a high carbohydrate, low fat and salt, mild protein diet is the most beneficial diet for athletes. Carbohydrates are the fastest foods digested and absorbed by the body. Fats should be avoided, as they delay the digestion process. It is also important to consume plenty of fluids such as water, juices, and milk. Swimmers are generally not aware that they are sweating and losing fluids, since they are working out in the water. When added to a day in the sun, this loss can contribute to poor performance as well as serious problems with dehydration. **DRINK FLUIDS!**

Parents, please remind your child to stay well hydrated. This is especially important for active individuals and in terms of the warmer weather. Water is essential. Your child should average approximately one cup of water per hour as a MINIMUM. ALL swimmers should have a water bottle at every single practice, and be drinking it throughout the practice. If they are supplementing the water with Cytomax or the like, they should be drinking a couple of ounces every ten to fifteen minutes. Make sure that supplements are based with Complex carbohydrates and amino acids. Many "sport" drinks are junk; composed primarily of simple sugars that actually cause the athlete to "crash" in terms of energy levels. Be sure to read labels or ask a coach for further advice.

## 21.11. BEST SOURCES OF CARBOHYDRATES

- Fruit and fruit juices: apples, oranges, bananas, dried fruit, and fruit bars
- Foods from grains: cereals, breads, pancakes, waffles, biscuits, muffins, bagels, etc.
- Pasta products
- Potato and rice dishes
- Beans: all types, especially dried types

## 21.12. FOODS TO AVOID

- All forms of carbonated soft drinks and caffeine
- Anything high in refined sugar such as candy, cake, pie, ice cream, and doughnuts
- All fried foods, including chips, butter, cream, and gravy
- High-fat lunchmeats, salad dressings, mayonnaise, etc.

**--- EAT WELL AND SWIM FAST---**

## 22. RESOURCES – FOR MORE INFORMATION

There are many resources available to help you with swimming. Please take advantage of these resources and you will help to ensure that your child has a great swimming experience (as will you!)

- 1) Your coach. Coaches have extensive experience with swimming and can answer many questions. Your coach is available to discuss your child's progress and whether there is anything you can do to help. Your coach can also help when it comes time to enter your child's first meets, to understand which events to enter and what times to use.
- 2) The Board. The Islander Board members are generally experienced as well, in addition to being team parents. The Board has encountered many of the same issues new families encounter and may be able to suggest solutions to problems.
- 3) Other Parents. Parents who have been associated with the Islanders for a while have seen it all. Many times a problem you are having is not new. The person sitting next to you while you watch your children practice is very likely a great resource. Say "Hi" to meet them and you never know what you might learn, or they might learn from you.
- 4) Websites. There are many, many websites associated with swimming. A few you should be familiar with:
  - a. <http://www.alamedaislanders.org> - This is the team website. It contains information on upcoming meets/events, this handbook, newsletters, volunteer point information, photos and much more. Please spend some time perusing our site.
  - b. <http://www.pacswim.org> - Pacific Swimming is the governing organization for the San Francisco Bay Area. Pacific's web site has a wealth of information as well, including time standards, a meet schedule, swimming rules and regulations, information about officiating, and more. This is another good site to know well.
  - c. <http://www.usaswimming.org> - This is the web site for United States Swimming, the national governing body for competitive swimming. A site full of information, including very interesting articles on top US swimmer.
  - d. <http://www.fina.org> - Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) is the international governing body of swimming.

There are many other web sites including swimmer tracking and online stores. Some common ones:

- a. <http://www.swimconnection.com> - Swim Connection is a web site dedicated to helping swimmers and coaches track progress. It provides a flexible interface that a swimmer or coach can use to determine how a swimmer is progressing and what their next goals should be. The Islanders sponsor free membership to

SwimConnection for all members. Just sign up and specify 'AIA' as your "Team Affiliation". We'll take care of the rest

- b. <http://ome.swimconnection.com> - Many meets Islanders can attend may be entered on line, and many of those are entered at Swim Connection's Online Meet Entry (OME) web site. You must register separately at this web site. SwimConnection (and other on line entry sites) does charge a fee for online entry that is clearly stated before you pay.
- c. There are many popular web sites from which swim equipment can be purchased. The Islanders do not endorse or recommend any of these; the list is provided for your convenience only:
  - Norcal Swim Shop (<http://www.swimshop.com>) Norcal is present at many meets the Islanders attend.
  - Kiefer (<http://www.kiefer.com>)
  - Metro Swim Shop (<http://www.metroswimshop.com>)
  - Swim Outlet (<http://www.swimoutlet.com>)
  - Swim2000 (<http://www.swim2000.com>)

# GO ISLANDERS!