



USA Swimming Competition

Information

(Revised – 1/1/17)

As each AquaKids' swimmer improves, develops and advances through our program, they will get to the point where our coaching staff determines they are eligible to participate in USA Swimming sanctioned competitions! We will ask the parent (or guardian) if they are willing to commit to the sport and consider participating in United States Swimming sanctioned competitions. Participation on the AquaKids SHARKS Swim Team (AKS) is based upon the legality of the swimmer's strokes, the desire to be a competitive swimmer and their maturity. Competing in these competitions ("meets") is the next step in the development of swimmers in our competitive swimming program! All the USA Olympic Team swimmers began by racing in these sanctioned competitions. "FINA" is the international governing body of Aquatic Sports (Swimming, Diving, Water Polo, Synchronized Swimming and Open Water Swimming). USA Swimming (www.usaswimming.org) is our national governing body of our sport. The (FGC) Florida Gold Coast (www.fgcswwim.org) is our local governing body for United States Swimming and known as our "LSC" (local swim committee). The FGC sanctions all local meets within its' jurisdiction of Dade, Monroe, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Our team "call" letters are "AKS". Swimmers in the Bull, Blue, Dusky, Mako, Hammerhead and Great White SHARKS are usually eligible to compete in these competitions if they are "legal" in all four competitive strokes and ready (physically/mentally) to compete. Some Sand SHARK swimmers will be invited to compete in events in which they are "legal" and an older sibling is racing. USA Swimming sanctioned meets have different levels of competition. The levels are based on the times achieved in races of all distances and strokes. "Time Standards" are classified as "C", "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA" and "AAAA" times in addition to the time standards developed for the FGC Junior Olympics and higher (level) meets. There are time standards for every age group; 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and Open. These time standards are available on our web site at www.aksharks.com.

***This USA Swimming Competition, Financial Information, Meet Procedures & Guidelines is intended to introduce you to participation in USA Swimming Sanctioned Competitions!
Please see Coaches Lou or Harris for any specific questions!***

Financial Information

1. Every swimmer entering USA Swimming Competitions MUST be in good financial standing with AquaKids!
2. USA Swimming Annual Registration/Processing Fee of \$75 (separate from our annual program registration fee). This fee is determined by USA Swimming, our LSC (The Florida Gold Coast), and AquaKids and may be adjusted annually. This fee helps to cover the operational costs of the organizations, a supplemental accident insurance policy and processing.
3. Individual (and Relay) Event Entry Fee for each event at each meet. There are 4 parts to each meet's entry fees.
 - a. An individual event charge based upon the level of the meet; ranging from \$2.50 to \$15.00 (or more for national level).
 - b. A relay event fee (\$6.00-\$20.00) which is divided only among the swimmers who race in that relay.
 - c. A meet host facility surcharge of \$2.00 to \$25.00 per swimmer, it's usually one flat fee, regardless of the number of days the swimmer participates.
 - d. An AquaKids Sharks Coaching and expense fee (per swimmer).
 - i. \$15.00 per swimmer for a local Dade County Meet.
 - ii. \$20.00 for a FGC Meet out of Dade County.
 - iii. \$25.00 for a meet out of the FGC.
 - iv. \$50.00 for a National Level Meet (or any meet requiring travel by air). National level meets may also have additional associated fees.
4. These entry fees help offset the cost of hosting and attending a swim meet! **Once our team entry has been sent to the meet host; all entry fees and surcharges are due – even if the swimmer does not attend the meet (no exceptions)!**
5. Each family, whose swimmer(s) enter a sanctioned competition, will be **charged the entry fees on the following month's invoice**. If you have any questions, please see Coach Lou!



AKS Swimming Meet/Competition Swim Attire Policy

In USA Swimming Competitions/Meets and SHARK Races, the proper AKS competitive swimming attire is required.

- **Swim Suit Policy:**
 - **SHARK Races:** Swimming Suits: Any “speedo” type of swimming suit. Swimming caps must be a Blue or Red AquaKids SHARKS cap.
 - **USA Swimming Competitions:** A navy blue AquaKids SHARKS Speedo Team suit OR any navy blue “speedo” type suit. Swimming caps it must be the Red AquaKids SHARKS racing cap.
 - **AquaKids SHARKS “Tech Suit” Policy:** "Tech Suits" may be worn once the swimmer is 13 years of age AND has achieved a minimum of 1 Junior Olympic Time Standard at Championship Level Swimming Competitions (or any competition designated by the coaches).
- **Team T-Shirt Policy at USA Swimming Competitions:** AquaKids Team T-shirt must be worn at the competition. Team Shirts are available in the pool office!
 - **1 Day Meets:**
 - Navy Blue “SHARK WEEKENDS”
 - **2 Day Meets:**
 - **1st Day:** Navy Blue “SHARK WEEKENDS”
 - **2nd Day:** White “AquaKids” Logo T-shirt
 - **3 Day Meets:**
 - **1st Day:** Red “TBA-Shirt”
 - **2nd Day:** Navy Blue “SHARK WEEKENDS” T-shirt
 - **3rd Day:** White “AquaKids” Logo T-shirt
- **Total Team Wares** is our official vendor for our team suit and necessary training equipment. They are based in Orlando and can be reached toll free at 800-888-8843.

AKS - USA Swimming Meet Procedures & Guidelines

1. The GOAL for each AKS swimmer is the achievement of personal best times while utilizing the proper stroke and racing techniques. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our focus. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past technique and performances, he/she is encouraged to make corrections for further improvement. Each AquaKids SHARK swimmer’s personal improvement is our primary objective! Please Note: Personal Best Times becomes progressively harder the “faster” the swimmer becomes!
2. Sportsmanship is of equal importance to improved performance. Our coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has both a "good" and a "bad" swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded by the coaching staff.
3. A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke and/or time. It is the coach's job to offer positive and/or constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love, support, and encouragement to bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.
4. Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging goals each season, for each meet and relate those goals to practice and direct their training efforts.
5. Our entry procedure requires each swimmer to enter the competition through the online meet entry system on our website (aksharks.com). You will be emailed each meet’s announcement. You then go to the Online Meet Entry System to declare if they are going to attend the competition or not. Also, you may choose which events they’d like to race. You can leave a note for the coach during the entry process. The coach will enter any relays. Swimmers need to learn to swim and compete in every event regardless of the stroke and the distance. It is important for the development of the swimmer that he/she does not get locked into a certain event. Oftentimes, a swimmer’s "best" stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.
6. Coaches have the final determination on the events entered and whether a swimmer is permitted to compete in any swim meet. This applies to the initial sanctioned meet as well as all competitions up to the championship level meets. We believe it is an honor to compete in a championship meet. This honor should be earned through consistent hard work in practice. At times a swimmer may qualify on pure talent. This does not mean they deserve to attend. There is a difference between wanting to go to a meet or making it and earning it.



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS... BUT, WERE AFRAID TO ASK (or didn't know what to ask)!

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some important guidelines to help you through your 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.

What To Take To The Meet

The most important item is our **Team Swim Suit**. Our team vendor is Total Team Wares (in Orlando). You can order one by calling 1-800-888-8843 or they normally have a "portable" store at most of the meets we attend.

Next is the AquaKids SHARKS red racing cap and goggles (if the swimmer uses them). The caps can be purchased at the pool or at the meet from your coach. 1 or 2 times per year, we also order personalized silicone caps.

- Towels. Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two maybe even three.
- Something to sit on. Example: folding chair, sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
- Team T-shirts: Two or three. One will get wet.
- Hoodies/Sweats or Sharks Parka: Bring something so the swimmer(s) can stay warm between swims.
- Entertainment (portable Games): travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
- Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but most of the time they only sell junk food. Suggestions for items to bring: Sports drinks, water, and healthy snacks (bagels, granola bars, yogurt, cereal, etc.)!
- Bathing Caps: After the meet, rinse the cap thoroughly then apply Baby or talcum powder - to "dust" the inside of swim cap. This helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on.

Before the Meet Starts & Warm-up

1. Always arrive at the pool **at least 10 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins**. This time will be listed in the meet direction information sheet on our website. Being late for warm-up is not being prepared to swim fast.
2. Upon arrival, find our team tents! The team usually sits together in one place, so look for some familiar faces. Find a place to put your swimmer's chair, towels, and swim bags under the tent. **Our team tents are for the swimmers first; any available space remaining may be used for parents!**
3. Some competitions may have a "closed deck" which means the area in which the swimmers compete and rest between events is closed to parents. We will provide more information on the "closed deck" competition in the meet information we email to parent immediately prior.
4. At warm-up time, the swimmer should be in his/her suit, have his/her cap and goggles and be ready to report to the coach for warm-up instructions. **It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.**
5. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the team tent area where he/she is to sit and relax until their first event. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink (no carbonated beverages), or just gets settled in.
6. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
7. Meet Programs or "Heat Sheets" are available for sale at the pool entrance or concession area. They generally sell for one to two dollars per day or session (or sometimes are included in the cost of admission). It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer will be "seeded" per his/her previous best time in each event. If the swimmer is racing in an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as "NT" (no-time). A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.



During the Meet

1. It is important for the swimmer to know what events and event numbers he/she is entered. The event may be right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
2. Generally, the girls' events are odd-numbered and boys' events are even-numbered. Each event number will usually be called over the loudspeaker. Although this may not always occur or you may not be able to hear the announcements. Therefore, all swimmers and parents **MUST** pay attention to what races are being swum. **It is the swimmers' responsibility to report to the coach and race on time.**
3. Prior to each race:
 - a. 1 or 2 events prior to their event, the swimmer **MUST** report to the coach for heat/lane assignment and race instructions.
 - b. Then the swimmer is to go immediately to the starting area, paying attention to the heats going before them, waiting behind the timers in their lane for their heat to start.
 - c. The Meet Referee will blow a series of 3 short whistle blasts to call the heat to the block. Then, blow 1 long whistle blast for the swimmers to get up on the block (get in the water for backstroke). In backstroke races, there will be 1 more whistle blast for the swimmer get into starting position.
 - d. The starter then takes over the commands and starts the race.
4. After the race:
 - a. The swimmer is to ask the timer (people behind the blocks at each lane) for his/her time.
 - b. Then the swimmer is to go immediately to the warm down area and swim the prescribed warm-down.
 - c. After warming down the swimmer goes directly to speak with the coach. The coach will review and discuss the race with each swimmer.
 - d. This is also a good time to get a drink or something light to eat.
 - e. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again.
5. Things the parent should do after each swim:
 - a. **Positive reinforcement!** The parent only needs to tell him/her how proud they are and what a great job he or she did! The coach is the only person to discuss the aspects of the race with the swimmer. If a situation or problem regarding the race arises, the parent simply tells the swimmer to go discuss it with their coach!
6. When a swimmer has completed all his/her events, he/she and their parents (finally) get to go home. Sometimes if everyone finishes around the same time, we will go someplace to get something to eat as a team. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, **check with the coach before leaving** to make sure your swimmer is not in another event, included on a relay or make sure if the coach has something else to say or discuss with your swimmer. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there.

What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Race

If your child has a poor race and comes back feeling bad, remain positive and encouraging. Let them know that you still love them no matter how they perform. **It is NOT the parents' job to discuss anything regarding the race.** It is the coach's responsibility to discuss the race and help the swimmer move on!

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," 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 direct the conversation on to something good. "All right, you had a bad race. It's over! Let's get ready for the next one." If the swimmer continues to dwell on it, tell them to go see their coach! **Stay positive!**



Prelim & Finals Meets

Championship level meets follow a preliminaries and finals format. The swimmer's primary objective in the preliminary swim is to swim fast enough to qualify for the evening finals session. If a swimmer places among the top 8 (for an 8 lane pool) after his/her morning preliminary race, they then qualify to swim in the Championship finals in the evening session. Some meets also swim a Consolation or "B" final. If a swimmer places from 9th - 16th place from preliminaries, he/she qualifies to participate in the Consolation (B) finals in the evening session. No points or places are officially awarded until the finals! In the evening finals session, the Consolation (B) heat is usually swum first followed immediately by the Championship (A) heat. During the prelims, the results are usually posted at the venue within 1/2 hour of the conclusion of the event. Sometimes the meet will also be available on the "Meet Mobile" app, but **Meet Mobile results are NOT official!** If a swimmer does not wish to swim in a final swim he or she may "scratch" the event with the coach's approval and not be penalized. This must take place within a half hour of the posting of the preliminary results. Therefore, within approximately 1 hour of the end of an event, a swimmer should know if they have made finals. A swimmer should never leave the meet without making sure if they are a finalist or an alternate (9th & 10th or 17th & 18th place). United States Swimming rules dictate that if a swimmer makes a finals event and fails to show up, they are barred from participating in their next individual event. Alternates should check with the coach about attending finals.

"Circle Seeding" is only used in the prelims of Championship level meets in events with prelims & finals. This affects only the top 24 seeded swimmers (8 lane pool) which compete in the last 3 heats. All other heats are regular seeding. Circle seeding: The fastest seeded swimmer will be in the last heat in lane 4. The second fastest swimmer will be in the second to last heat lane 4. The third fastest swimmer will be in the third to last heat lane 4. The fourth fastest swimmer will be in the last heat lane 5 and so on. The finals are seeded regularly like a normal meet as are any events that are swam as timed finals such as relays, distance freestyles, and other events most often held on Friday evening as a timed finals session.

Let's Do It All Again!

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become routine. These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers, parents, and the entire family! The swimmers get to visit with their friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. Swimmers also get to "race" and see how much they have improved from all the hard work they have put in at practice!



GO SHARKS!