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www.swimaqua.org
Hotline 281-488-1582

Bay Area Aquanauts
Houston, TX 77062

Turning today's potential into tomorrow's performance

Bay Area Aquanauts

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Meet Entries
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fifteen AQUA swimmers participated in the Klein Pentathlon Meet and improved times in 64% of events entered.

Swimmers of the Meet, with best times in all five events, were Alyssa Buffum, Mike Cragin, Samy Gharbaoui, and Camille Mullery. AQUA had a large number of individual age group awards as well.

8 & Under Girls--4th, Sarah Cragin
9th, Camille Mullery

8 & Under Boys--2nd, Mike Cragin

10-year-old Girls--5th, Rachel Cragin
6th, Alyssa Mullery
13th, Grace Baliker
16th, Alyssa Buffum

10-year-old Boys--6th, Samy Gharbaoui

12-year-old Girls--1st, Caroline McElhany
2nd, Ellen Lobb
5th, Caroline Baliker

The following weekend, three AQUA swimmers participated in the MAC Senior Meet and 13 attended the FCST BB & Under Meet with a combined improvement of 79% of the events entered. Swimmers of the Meet for the BB & Under events were Blake and Ryan Swaney, with 100% improvement in six events. Other swimmers with 100% improvement were Paul McGuire (3), Natalie Brewer (3), Kyle Gonzalez (3),

Anh Tran (3), Linh Tran (2), and Shanna Jones (5).

On Halloween weekend, 16 AQUA swimmers participated in the Klein Aquatics 14 & Under A and Up Meet and improved in 63% of the events entered. Swimmers of the Meet, with six best times in six events were Mark Grijalva and Josh Hurley. This meet was used to qualify swimmers for the Local Swim Committee [LSC] All Star Meet held November 6-7. Overall, eight of AQUA's sixteen swimmers qualified for this meet. AQUArians had 4 new TAGS times including Jenny Claydon (1), Adriana Sepulveda (1), and Mark Grijalva (2), and 4 new National T16 times by Ellen Lobb (2), Caroline McElhany (1), and the 11-12 girls 400 medley relay of Ellen, Julia Sepulveda, Caroline and Adriana. Accolades continue with seven new team records by Josh Hurley (1), Jenny Claydon (2), Ellen Lobb (2), and Mark Grijalva (1). Ellen also had a Sectional time in the 100 back. For the season, AQUA swimmers are improving at a 79% rate.

At the LSC All Star meet, Caroline McElhany, Ellen Lobb, Cole Cragin, Mark Grijalva, and Josh Hurley highlighted the Gulf LSC All Star team victory over the four other Texas LSC's. Age group high point honors went to Caroline (1st - 12 year-old girls), Ellen (2nd - 12 year-old girls), and Cole (7th - 13 year-old boys). All swimmers represented AQUA proudly. AQUA also recognizes Coaches Harold and Allison for their efforts leading the 12 year-old girls team to the high age group point total of the meet.

CALL FOR MEET ENTRY CHAIRPERSON

Our meet entry chairperson has asked for a volunteer to train and eventually replace her in this vital role for the team. The ideal candidate has a passion for detail and a willingness to learn software that is very user-friendly. Interested parties should contact Coach Harold or Kelli at kbaliker@houston.rr.com for more information.

SHORT COURSE SEASON '04-'05

Upcoming meets include an open meet the weekend of November 19-21 and the LSC Champ Meet Series (Gulf Senior, Winter, and Age-group Champs). Please plan to attend the open meet, particularly if you are new to USA Swimming. This will allow you to obtain official times that can be used to enter the Champ Series meets. At those meets, NT [no times] entries are NOT permitted. Even if you are not new, AQUA times drop faster than Wal-Mart prices. Enter these meets and join the parade of dropping time. Consult the Gulf Swimming website, www.gulfswimming.org, and the AQUA website for invitations, entry rules and other useful information. AQUA coaches also provide guidance on meets, so feel free to consult them with any questions.

NEW LONG COURSE '05 SCHEDULE, FORMATS

The Gulf Swimming Technical Planning Committee will recommend DADS host (with SCAT as co-host) two meets that had been scheduled to utilize a new pool in League City. The construction schedule for that facility is not known. Also, UH will host two meets, and Summer Champs will be split as B and Under, BB with Gulf Champs cut-off times, and Gulf Champs. This should make Summer Champs a more tolerable meet.

AQUA Board Meeting
Tues., December 14, 2004
8:30 pm - Room 113 - Gloria Dei
Nassau Bay

SAFETY FLASH

Dear AQUA Parents:

Recently we have had a few instances where very young swimmers have left the pool area to wait for parents in parking lots and have been left unattended for up to 20 minutes. We also had one instance where an older swimmer left a practice site on foot. AQUA is very concerned for the safety of all our swimmers! Unfortunately, neither the coaches nor the parents on deck can supervise swimmers outside the pool area.

Therefore, we ask that all AQUA swimmers be escorted by a parent or designated representative all the way poolside to ensure their safety. We also ask that swimmers remain poolside in the bleachers or seating area after practice until a parent or designated representative picks them up inside the pool area.

Please tell your swimmer(s) about this policy so they are aware they should remain in the pool area until you or a designated representative escorts them to the parking lot and your car.

We know this may take you a little more time! However, we feel, as we're sure you do, that the safety of all of our swimmers far outweighs any inconvenience.

Sincerely,

Ken Baliker - AQUA board president

BOARD CHANGES

Patty McElhaney has decided to step down as president of AQUA. The board is thankful to Patty for her sacrifice and commitment to AQUA, and all acknowledge her service and leadership in many areas. The board is pleased to report that Patty will continue her service on the board. According to our By-Laws, former vice president, Ken Baliker will serve as president until the next scheduled board elections in April 2005. Any related reorganization of board member responsibilities will occur at the December board meeting.

WHAT EVENTS SHOULD MY CHILD ENTER AT MEETS?

This is probably the most frequently-asked question among parents and swimmers on any USA Swimming club team. Many teams rely completely on the coaches to determine this, and kids literally find out what they are swimming the morning of the meet upon review of a heat sheet. AQUA is different. Here, swimmers and parents regularly consult with coaches before or after practices or via email. We encourage swimmers and parents to use this question as a conduit for communication with the coaches, and to decide together what to swim at any given meet.

Parents and swimmers should also understand that among the responsibilities of the coaches (and in particular the head coach), is to make decisions and to design a training regimen for AQUA swimmers. Training decisions will always benefit from feedback coaches receive from a meet on the current level of conditioning of the athletes, and meets help identify events, including those that are not offered at every meet, for which athletes may have a previously unknown aptitude.

For this reason, the head coach will sometimes request that swimmers in a particular training group swim an unusual distance event. So far this season, Coach Harold has made two such requests, 1) that all blue-and-up swimmers do the 500 free at the open Oct 2-3 meet or 13+ meet the following weekend, and 2) that all gold-and-up swimmers do the 400 IM at the Oct 30-31 meet. These requests are not the norm, and with few exceptions these entries provided the coaches with the desired information. If there are unusual circumstances and a swimmer cannot swim one such requested event, please contact the head coach early, discuss the situation, and determine if a reasonable alternative entry or schedule can be identified.

In deciding what to swim in meets, we need to each make a commitment - *swimmers* to the direction and guidance of the coaches, and *coaches* to the mission of the team and performance improvement of the swimmers

- in order to gain the maximum benefit and improvement in the sport.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Our next board meeting is Tuesday, December 14, at 8:30 pm in room 113 at Gloria Dei church in Nassau Bay. These meetings are informative. They allow parents to keep up on events and team plans, and the board always welcomes participation by parents.

P.E. WAIVERS TAKE NOTE

Along the theme of meet participation, Coach Harold has revised slightly the P.E. waiver policy of AQUA. 90% of the grade each grade period will be based on practice attendance, and 10% will be based on attending one meet each grading period. Swimmers may decide and should be encouraged to attend more, but these are the criteria for grading. Please keep up with attendance, and make sure your child is attending at least the number of practice hours each week required by your school district P.E. Waiver policy.

KEEP UP WITH PRACTICE SCHEDULE CHANGES

AQUA continues to utilize Clear Lake, La Porte and Friendswood pools. The Friendswood (Stevenson Park) outdoor pool is heated. Also note that HS event conflicts continue periodically at Lake and La Porte, and these are reflected in the practice schedule. Please consult weekly training schedules regularly.

AQUA TOWELS

Are you interested in a monogrammed AQUA towel? We are taking orders — white with our AQUA fish and swimmer's name for \$13.59 each. Please contact Patty McElhany if you are interested, at mcelhany@earthlink.net.

SWIM EQUIPMENT EXCHANGE

There is a pair of used fins available, size 1-3. Please contact Ed Mullery at Jmullery@houston.rr.com for more information. Also, there are fins of various small sizes and some lightly used kick boards available. For more information on these, contact Kelli Baliker at kbaliker@houston.rr.com.

NEW PROMOTIONS

As a result of improvements at recent meets, the following swimmers received promotions – **Anh Tran** to white, **Katharine Silkowski** to gold, **Samy Gharbaoui** to white and **Kyle Gonzalez** to blue. Congratulate these swimmers on these new promotions.

“AQUAWEAR” AVAILABLE

Check out AQUAwear on the team website www.swimaqua.org. There are a large number of team logo items available, including sweatshirts, t-shirts, parkas, caps, window decals, and towels. AQUA makes these items available to members at cost as we are a swim team, not a clothing retailer. These items offer attractive designs, and really are a great value. If you have any questions, contact AQUA via the website or ask a parent on deck. Other teams comment regularly that our kids are a cohesive and enthusiastic group at meets, and a part of that is the recognized logo and team banner available on AQUAwear.

RECRUITING RULES

USA Swimming has published guidelines on recruiting of athletes from other clubs. The bottom line is **STILL, just don't do it**. We have been very aware of this rule, and our conduct at AQUA has always respected members of other clubs. We follow the rules, including the changes as a team, so we need do nothing different.

What is illegal recruiting? The easiest way to identify this is if you are approached by another swimmer, coach or parent about switching teams. Any contact or comment (no matter how innocent or subtle) by such persons with the intent to sell another program or encourage a transfer is illegal and can result in disciplinary action to the offending party and team. AQUA discourages its members from directly contacting other USA-registered swimmers currently with other teams with the intent of marketing AQUA.

If you are asked questions about AQUA by anyone (including USA swimmers or parents of swimmers on other teams), you can answer without any problem. Generally speaking, we can do broadly cast mailings or inserts to school mailboxes, or post flyers in public places. Targeted phone calls or mailings should be avoided unless we confirm no club affiliation prior to such call or mailing. Likewise, if you are contacted inappropriately, please report any unsavory recruiting activity to a coach or board member.

TRAINING FEES REMITTANCE

Please remember the correct address to which your monthly training fee remittances should be sent:

Bay Area Aquanauts
15403 Pleasant Valley
Houston, TX 77062

Mailing assures [pending the efficiency of the US Postal Service] that your payment will not get misplaced if hand-delivered at the pools.

KROGER MINI-SHARE CARDS

AQUA has mini (ultra convenient) Kroger Share Card stickers that may be used on your key chain Kroger Card. These work the same as the business card-style we have been using. Simply have the cashier swipe the bar code on the card at checkout, and Kroger will donate 1% of the purchase amount to AQUA. If you have had a problem with the bar code wearing off, Marcy, Ed and Barb have plenty of replacements on deck at evening practices. Otherwise, you might try laminating or scotch-taping over your existing card.

This program, along with the similar Randall's program (have a cashier or customer service person code AQUA's Good Neighbor number **9266** into your Randall's card) has become a high-impact, low-effort fundraising vehicle for AQUA and the benefits have helped AQUA maintain low training fees. Benefit of the programs has held steady at about \$60 per month between the two programs. That's nice, but renewed awareness and emphasis on these programs is now needed to reach our goal of \$100 per month. Keep using the cards - and benefit AQUA at no cost to you!!

NEW SWIM RECORD BOARD AT LA PORTE

As a token of its appreciation for favorable pool usage terms for the pool at La Porte High School, AQUA has donated to LPHS a swim record board. Take a look your next time at La Porte.