



Parent/Swimmer Handbook

Rev IV
October 4, 2013

RIVER CITIES AQUATICS

Mission Statement

River City Aquatics (RCA) is a year round USA swim team that strives for excellence in competitive swimming. RCA offers a complete competitive swim program designed to allow for the gradual development of swimmers of all ages and abilities from the novice to the elite senior level. The senior athletes at the peak of the program provide inspiration to all of the swimmers in the program. Our program encourages a healthy relationship between parent, athlete and coach. The harmony of this triangular relationship enables the swimmer to reach his or her optimum potential. RCA provides children with an enjoyable, educational experience, and more importantly, prepares them for success in all life's endeavors.

Core Values

- 1) Build Character and develop life skills:
 - Time Management
 - Goal Setting
 - Self-discipline and acceptance of responsibility
 - Positive attitude
 - Learning to accept defeat and victory
- 2) Provide an enjoyable experience for families:
 - Friendly, fun and safe team atmosphere for all ages
 - Team Unity
 - Healthy parent, athlete and coach relationship
- 3) Community Service:
 - Healthy youth activity
 - Bring recognition and revenue to the community
 - Promote aquatic activities and provide swimming scholarships

Vision Statement

Build character through the pursuit of excellence in competitive swimming.

Philosophy and Objectives

River City Aquatics is an Age Group and Senior swimming team directed toward the highest levels of competitive swimming. The RCA program allows each individual to become as good as he or she desires to be. Our program is based on the premise that each and every swimmer will reach his or her full potential and goals in swimming. The objectives of the RCA program are achieved in the spirit of a healthy philosophy, which is to:

- Provide the opportunity for children to participate in competitive swimming and provide skilled instruction towards this purpose.
- Foster a wholesome spirit of competition by promoting a sense of fair play and clean sportsmanship.
- Develop a program of good health practices and ideals.
- Develop self respect and a sense of belonging through acceptance of others. Develop respect and understanding of the beliefs, customs and capabilities of others.
- Improve each individual member's skill level in competitive swimming.
- Through participation, develop each individual's understanding of his or her contribution to the team's performance.

Healthy exercises, friendships, travel and the potential for swimming at the collegiate level are some of the benefits swimmers gain from participation in the RCA program. Further, the program prepares swimmers for success outside the swimming arena.

Individual participants develop life skills through the process of the RCA program. Learning how to set a goal, developing and implementing a plan to accomplish a goal and managing time effectively are vital skills that swimmers gain from their involvement. The program's design also enhances swimmers' self esteem, self reliance, and self discipline. As a result, swimmers leave RCA program with skills they can use as adults.

Longevity in the sport, allowing swimmers to reach their optimum potential, and providing swimmers with an enjoyable, educational experience are the objectives of the RCA program. Swimmers are allowed to develop and their skills through a program that is conducive to their ability level and development.

The Four Basic Concepts of Swimming Fast

1. **BALANCE.** A swimmer must learn to be balanced and relaxed in the water to be fast. Just like a fast skier, fast skater.
2. **STREAMLINING.** Streamlining is making a body longer and less resistant in the water. Vessels of the same displacement become faster if they are made longer. Water has 4 times the resistance of air.
3. **VERTICAL.** Is faster than horizontal. Swim vertical as much as possible.
4. **CORE BODY MUSCLES.** To help put power in your stroke. Use the largest muscles in your body. A strong golf swing, a strong bat, and a hard punch all start with the hips and twist up through the core body to the arms.

These are basic concepts that fast swimming is built around. Miles of swimming will not make you faster, if these four concepts are not applied. Practice without these concepts is not time well spent. Poor technique may help get a swimmer in better condition but not necessarily faster. All RCA drills and techniques will be built around and reinforce these basic concepts.

Swim Team Rules and General Information

Practice:

- Times and locations change depending on season and pool availability. We will use Clinton High School and Clinton Riverview Pool. Times and locations will be posted on the team website, www.rcaswimming.com. Schedules will also be placed in the team mailbox.
- We will have full access to shower facilities at Clinton High, but will have access to the bathrooms.
- We will have full access to shower and bathroom facilities at Riverview Pool.
- All swimmers are encouraged to wear foot cover on the pool decks and in the locker rooms at all times.
- Swimmers are encouraged to attend a minimum of 4 practices per week. Depending on size, the team may be divided into different practice dates/times. Swimmers are encouraged to attend all scheduled practices.
- Swimmers are expected to practice with the RCA swim team as scheduled. Extra water workouts should be cleared by the Head Coach prior to swimming. These workouts may be counter productive to the Head Coaches team training plan. RCA practices should never be skipped to workout with other swim teams or other coaches.
- Parents that attend practice will have designated seating areas. Parents are asked not to address or talk with their children during practice. If you need to talk to your child during practice, please be respectful and ask the deck coach for permission.

Meets:

- All meets on team schedule are available for RCA swimmers, depending on qualifying times (Q times). Swimmers may swim meets not on the team schedule, but coaches may not attend.
- Parents are responsible for driving their children to the meets. Car pooling is recommended, but should not be abused. It is very important to swimmer development for parents to attend meets and team functions. If a swimmer is unable to attend, please inform the Head Coach immediately.
- Events will be selected by the parents and swimmers with input from the coaching staff. Relays will be selected by coaching staff only. **If your swimmer desires not to swim relays, they must do so in writing, and deliver to the Head Coach at start of the season.**
- Parents will be responsible for paying for all events swam or scratched. If their swimmer scratches a relay, and causes that relay to be scratched, the parent of that swimmer will be charged the full amount of the relay entry. (Exceptions made for medical reasons, pre-approved by the head coach).
- Sign-up deadlines for the meets vary through out the season. Deadlines will be posted on the team website and in the entry binder at the pool. If you have signed up your child to swim a meet, and you are unable to attend, please notify the head coach. If entries and fees have already been sent to the host team, your meet fees will be forfeited.
- Swimmers are expected to swim the team recognized warm-up with the other RCA swimmers. Only RCA coaches will coach RCA swimmers. Parents certified in coaching, and registered Unattached USA Coaches will not be allowed to coach RCA swimmers.

Code of Conduct:

- Swimmers, Parents and Coaches are expected to follow a basic standard of conduct that is acceptable to the sport of youth swimming. The following conduct has been deemed unsportsmanlike, is not allowed on the RCA swim team, and may be subject to disciplinary actions:
 - Profane language or gestures.
 - Abuse, verbal and/or physical.
 - Any other conduct deemed unsportsmanlike by the Coaching Staff.
- We are a team, and all swimmers, parents, and coaches are expected to act accordingly.
- Our team has a policy on how to handle issues between parents and coaches. It is listed on page 8 of this parents' handbook. All parents are expected to follow this policy.

Disciplinary Action:

- Should a swimmer, parent, or member of the coaching staff break one of the teams policies, the Head Coach along with the Parent Board will have authority to discipline as they see fit.
- Disciplinary actions by the Head Coach and Parent Board are not limited, and can range from verbal or written reprimand to a swimmer or entire family removal from the team.
- This is a team lead by the Parent Board, and they will work to appropriately address the best interest of the team, its swimmers, and its swimmers' families.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Parents are responsible for familiarizing themselves with team policies, schedules, guidelines, etc. Parents are expected to understand and follow team policies and guidelines.
- Parents are required to work at the swim meets the team hosts each year unless an unavoidable circumstance arises and is excused by the Parent Board. Parents are encouraged to help with other team activities during the year. **If the parents do not give significant help or participate in the team's home meets, they will receive a \$200 fine, which will be added to their team bill.**
- Parents are asked to talk to a coach before or after the practice session. Coaches may also be contacted by phone at the numbers listed. Parents are not to interfere with the coach when he or she is in the process of handling practice, a meet, or working in some other capacity with swimmers.

Swimmer Responsibilities:

- Swimmers are expected to understand and follow team guidelines. Failure to comply with team guidelines can result in disciplinary action.
- Swimmers are expected to conduct themselves as athletes and representatives of RCA. Respect teammates, coaches, meet officials and competitors at all times. Foul language, fighting and any other such unsporting conduct will not be tolerated. Swimmers are expected to contribute to a positive team environment.
- Swimmers are expected to begin team practice and meet warm up sessions with the team at the designated time. Listen attentively when receiving instructions from the team coach and perform practice sets and drills correctly.
- Sportsmanship is number one on RCA. Swimmers are expected to cheer on their team mates and swimmers from other teams. Swimmers are encouraged to make friends with swimmers from other teams and shake hands with other competitors after races.

Newsletter and Swimmer Folder:

- Swimmers in each family have a folder in a file at the pool that is used to distribute awards and other information. Swimmers and parents should check their folder daily. This folder is in a tote box known as the team mailbox.
- Parents should talk to the coach before or after practice if their swimmer has been absent for a period of time to make sure that they have received any meet or other information that was distributed by the coach.

Explanation of Swim Team Dues and Fees

Annual swimmer registration fee:	\$62
Summer only registration fee:	\$37
Monthly practice fee:	\$50 / \$25 / \$15
Meet fees:	Due at meet signup

- The annual swimmer registration will cover the swimmer's USA registration. Membership to the team will be renewed annually. Seasonal memberships will only be allowed under special circumstances authorized by the head coach. Visiting swimmers from other LSC's, that are registered USA swimming members, will be exempt from this fee.
- The monthly practice fee will cover the costs of pool rental, coaches and their expenses, and various other administrative costs. This fee may fluctuate depending on costs associated with practice. The cost is \$50 for 1st swimmer, \$25 for the 2nd swimmer, and \$15 for the all other swimmer.
- All accounts are required to be paid in full prior to the start of each season, and by the first of every month. Once joined, you will be automatically billed the monthly practice fees. If your swimmer does not participate in practice that month, please contact the head coach for account reconciliation. One practice attended constitutes billing for that month.
- Meet entry fees will be due upon signup for each meet. Most meet fees will run between \$10-\$15.
- All families must pay annual registration and first months practice prior to swimmer entering the water. This policy is for team insurance reasons, and will not change. If swimmer decides to quit all ISI paid fees will be forfeited.
- Monthly fees must be paid by the 5th of each month or a \$5 fee will be added to your bill.
- If a swimmers account is not paid in full, they may not be allowed to participate in further team activities to include: practice, swim meets, or other team activities. If your family is in hardship financially, and needs help; the parent needs to contact the Team Treasurer or a member of the Parent Board immediately.
- Questions about billing should be directed to the team Treasurer.

PARENT CONCERNS WITH THE COACH

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreement over coaching decisions or philosophy with other parents rather than taking the matter directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never solved that way, but also in fact, this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach:

- Try to keep foremost in mind that you and the coaches have the best interests of the child at heart. If you trust that the coaches' goals match yours, even though the coaches' approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and constructive dialogue.
- Keep in mind as well that the coaches must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the philosophy of the team or the objectives of the practice group. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the objectives of the group, but in the long-run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short-term inconvenience.
- If you have an issue with an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask the Head Coach to join in the dialogue as a third party.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. The coach is the only person who can resolve the problem.
- When contacting the coaches, please be considerate. The best way to speak with a coach is to meet with them before or after practice. Sending a note to the coach with your swimmer is also a good way to get information to them. Coaches may also arrange a time to meet with you to discuss your concerns.

To have a successful swim program, there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coaches. The progress your swimmer makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. Communication plays an important role in the parent, swimmer and coach relationship.

Contact Names and Numbers:

Coach	Steve Erling	357-6344
Coach	Kristin Naeve	215-913-5334
Coach/Team President	Ross Burns	242-2886 212-6568
Vice President	Dave Hill	212-2973
Secretary	Taryn Deteman	219-2002
Treasurer	Keith & Vicki Norman	815-589-4165 309-737-9937
Parent Rep	Gini Hill	212-4485
Parent Rep	Jim Harden	243-7905
Parent Rep	Randy Miller	242-3166 503-9289
Parent Rep	Allen & Stacey Schutte	259-1217 357-9718

Team Correspondence:

Web Site Address: www.rcaswimming.com

Email: swimrca@gmail.com