



Lawrence Aquahawks Swimming

About the Aquahawks

The Lawrence Aquahawks is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a program of swimming instruction for competition for the youth of Lawrence, Douglas County, and surrounding communities. The Aquahawks is open to all youth who have completed basic swimming instruction. The club, is operated by the parents of swimmers, and annually elects a Board of Directors to manage club operations. The Board of Directors, which holds monthly meetings, is responsible for hiring the head coach, providing oversight of the club's operations, and coordinating fundraising and volunteer activities. The Aquahawks' program operates year round and also offers swim lessons and a summer swim team program. The program takes two breaks throughout the year, one in August and one in March. Swim practices are held at the Lawrence Outdoor Aquatic Center (Summer only), Lawrence Indoor Aquatic Center, The Jayhawk Club (Summer lessons only), and Lawrence Country Club (Summer lessons only). Practice times and locations are established each swim season and are subject to change given pool availability. Practice schedules are located on the team's website under the tab "Group Calendars".

Before the founding of the Aquahawks in 1968, Lawrence had four small private club swim teams, each with their own coach. The teams scheduled dual meets throughout the summer and the season concluded with the Douglas County Age Group Swimming and Diving Championships, which were held at Holiday Park Pool. In the summer of 1968, the parents and swimmers of these teams combined to form the Lawrence Swim Club, the original name of the Aquahawks.

One of the first tasks for the new club was to become actively involved in the campaign to support a bond issue for a new municipal pool. The passage of the bond issue provided a facility where the entire team could train together. When the new municipal pool opened for the 1969 season, it was quickly hailed as the premier facility in the Missouri Valley LSC. By the late 1970's, the lack of an indoor pool in Lawrence was a serious constraint on the ability of the club to improve and expand its programs. Once again, Aquahawk families played an important role in promoting the construction of an indoor facility. Finally, in 1980, the Carl Knox Natatorium was opened at Lawrence High School under the combined direction of USD 497 and the City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department. With the addition of an indoor practice facility, the Aquahawks became a year round program.

In 1998, the Aquahawks became active and vocal supporters of a plan that resulted in the City Commission approving a new Indoor Aquatic Center to be built at Free State High School. The Indoor Aquatic Center opened in June 2001 and includes a 50-meter pool as well as a family/recreation pool. The Lawrence Indoor Aquatic Center now serves as the main location for swim meets sponsored by the Aquahawks. In 2008, the Lawrence Aquahawks had its first Olympic Trials qualifier. Also in 2008, the Aquahawk women's team won the United States Swimming Sectional Women's Team Championship.

The Aquahawk program is affiliated with USA Swimming, an organization that governs amateur swimming throughout the country. In addition, the club is an active member of Missouri Valley Swimming. Each swimmer must join USA Swimming and Missouri Valley Swimming in order to be eligible for Aquahawk membership. Registering with USA Swimming allows you to track your swimmers' times and participation at meets. While not affiliated with the City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department, the Aquahawks work closely with the City and USD 497 in scheduling pool time. Without this close cooperation, the Aquahawk program would not be possible.